



Vivek

Issues & Options

May - 2012

Issue: I No: V



Leadership - Policies And Preparedness

Assertive China: Strategic Dilemmas

Nehru's Ignorance And Intellectual Arrogance

Ad-holism At Its Worst

and many more

Published By: Vivekananda International Foundation

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A Two-Front War In The Near Term

- VIF Paper - 23 September 2011

There are important similarities between the strategic situation in which India finds itself today vis-à-vis China and the situation which we faced in the period 1956-62, which culminated in the humiliating war of October-November 1962. These similarities would point to the temptation facing the Chinese leaders as they themselves analyse their options in the near term. This could lead them to conclude that their strategic dilemmas, especially in the Indo-Pacific region are best served by an attempted repeat of the 1962 war with India. It is the purpose of this paper to try and understand the similarities and the logic that may drive the Chinese leaders in the direction of the exercise of hard power against India.

2. The first similarity is the growing weight of India in Indo-Pacific affairs. More and more countries are turning to India as a reassurance against the growing

weight and assertive behaviour of China. From America to Vietnam to Singapore and the Philippines, many of the countries are looking at India to provide the numerical heft in any strategy to address the Chinese assertiveness. In a way, this is reminiscent of the situation in the late 1950's, when democratic India was contrasted with communist China. Now more than ever, the comparison is economic too, and more and more analysts are coming to the conclusion that India has the better medium-term prospects. China, in fact, knows that too.

3. The second parallel is to be found in the situation in Tibet. In the late 1950's, the challenge to Chinese authority was more overtly military, from the Khampas and other rebel groups inside Tibetan areas. And the Chinese were convinced of Indian complicity in this armed rebellion – confirmed in their eyes by the fact that His Holiness the Dalai

Lama [HHDL] fled to India and was given asylum there. Today, the situation is a bit different, and the challenge to Chinese rule is less of a guerrilla nature. Nonetheless it is equally unsettling to Beijing, especially since it also coincides with growing restiveness in other ethnic minority areas as well. And once again, there is a perception that India is involved in the unrest. In Chinese eyes, this is not just the simple fact that HHDL is living and operating freely in India, but also the fact that the Prime Minister visited Arunachal Pradesh, HHDL himself went to Tawang. Last, but also very important, we allowed the former Speaker of the US House of Representatives to visit HHDL in Dharamshala in 2008, during the periodic troubles inside Tibet. These troubles continue, and are gaining prominence in the world media.

4. A third similarity relates to the leadership issues inside China itself. Whereas in the late 1950's, Mao was facing quiet questioning – as we now know – after the

failure of the Great Leap Forward, and the subsequent famine, today there is a leadership transition under way. This transition is not going altogether smoothly, with former Party leader, Jiang Zemin continuing to play some kind of role behind the scenes, though it is not entirely clear what. But now, as then, the uncertainty is resulting in the growing influence of the military in foreign policy and security matters. The uncertainty is also reflected in the official acknowledgement that there have been over 80,000 cases of civil unrest for each of the past three years in China, most of them over economic issues. However, some of them have taken political overtones. All of these factors are adding up to the growing influence of the security forces, and to the assertiveness of the Chinese postures abroad, which are causing unease among the neighbours.

5. Another, fourth, similarity is also worth mentioning: this is the fact that then, as now, the security establishment was in denial about China's intentions. The situation

is somewhat better today, thanks to the fact that there are independent media outlets, but the official stance of playing down the possible dangers is reminiscent of the late 1950's. It is no one's case that we should whip up hostility, but factual assessments are important; the current secrecy is leaving the public unaware of the true state of affairs.

6. All of the problems faced by China were addressed and/or mitigated by the successful war of October-November 1962. India was no longer equated with China for several decades afterwards; Tibet similarly disappeared from the international discourse for decades. And Mao went on to strengthen his position internally. The key word, of course, is "successful" – had India given a

The key word, of course, is "successful" – had India given a better account of itself, the situation would have evolved differently. And that is the final, but key, aspect of the comparison between the late 1950's and today. We are, of course, much better prepared for any eventuality on the border with China; but China too is much better prepared than it was in 1962. The balance of power thus becomes crucial, and it is far from clear that the answer is of a kind that would give us comfort.

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too is much better prepared than it was in 1962. The balance of power thus becomes crucial, and it is far from clear that the answer is of a kind that would give us comfort.

7. There are some important dissimilarities too, from the earlier period, and unfortunately, they also work against our interests. The most important concerns Pakistan. In 1962, Ayub Khan was tempted to take advantage of India's difficulties, but was held back by strong demarches from the Americans. This was because the Americans

saw China as an overt enemy then, and did not want India to be further humiliated by Pakistan. Today, it is unclear what the American stand would be in any eventuality – sympathetic no doubt, but probably, not of the kind and scale that we saw in 1962. This would be especially true of an Obama Administration. Equally important, it would be fair to argue that Pakistan will not listen to the Americans as Ayub did. There is enough evidence of this in the recent deterioration in relations between America and Pakistan. There is also evidence of Pakistani hostility towards India, especially in the Army [which is what matters], in the kind of ground level activity we are witnessing across the LoC and elsewhere. In recent weeks, there has been some change of nuance, but this is because of their problems with America; several press commentaries in Pakistan have suggested that neutralising India, through diplomacy, would be a good idea while America was piling on the pressure.

8. What this implies is that this time, our nightmare might well come true: a two-front war involving both China and Pakistan. It is usually believed that China does not wish to get involved in Indo-Pak issues, especially wars. Supporters of this point of view argue that both in 1965 and 1971, China stayed out of the action. There are two problems with this view of the history of those wars. For one thing, in 1965, China *did* get involved, and gave us two warnings in the course of the war which lasted from 6 to 22 September. The second was a firm ultimatum issued on 18 September objecting to some structures inside Sikkim [not a part of India then], and give us a 72-hour deadline. As it happened, we did agree to a cease-fire within that time frame, whether because of the perceived threat from China or because of the way things developed in the UN Security Council, it is hard to be sure. But then too, China demolished some of our bunkers in Sikkim, just as they have done in recent months. The second is that in 1971, we had

the Indo-Soviet Treaty to deter the Chinese. The Soviets were then at the peak of their anti-China policy, and their military power, and were only looking for an opportunity to have a go at them. And the Chinese knew this; therefore they decided to lie low throughout the war which ran from 3 to 16 December. The Kargil war is on a different footing altogether, and not really relevant to this issue.

9. It is instructive also to look at the ground situation. Pakistani hostility may be taken as given, and requires no proof or evidence. Sixty years of engagement has provided all the evidence that any unbiased mind could want. China has taken a number of steps that need to be highlighted in this context: first and foremost, they have inducted troops into POK under various guises, so that any action

involving Kashmir would automatically draw in the Chinese. They have not done this by inadvertence, but with the full understanding of its implications. They have also been putting it out that their border with India is 2000 km long, thus leaving out all of J&K, and excluding it as part of

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India in their perception. They have also stepped up their rhetoric on Arunachal, and there are reports of their destroying bunkers in both the eastern and western sectors within our side of the LAC. All this comes against the backdrop of their rapid build-up of

the infrastructure for logistics and basing of weapon systems that can only be used against India. There are credible reports of the deployment of solid-fuelled missiles on the border with India; reports too, of military air bases along the India-Tibet border. Finally, there are press

commentaries in their controlled media, of the need to apply force to fix some of the challenges they are facing from their recalcitrant neighbours, occasionally naming India directly. Taken together, these are too many and too much part of a pattern to ignore.

10. For our part, we are at the trough of our military readiness. Budgets and capital acquisitions are at historic lows, and the low level of preparedness and acquisition in the late 1990's and for much of this decade has left us at our most vulnerable. In the face of the build-up of the Chinese

infrastructure and forces, our preparedness is decidedly sub-optimal. Serviceability of most of our major platforms is around 50%, spares and ammunition stocks are low, and manpower is short. We have, in the past,

In the face of the build-up of the Chinese infrastructure and forces, our preparedness is decidedly sub-optimal. Serviceability of most of our major platforms is around 50%, spares and ammunition stocks are low, and manpower is short. We have, in the past, historically, underestimated the Chinese willingness to resort to force. We have also kept the situation under wraps and been in official denial until it is too late to conceal or deny the gravity of the situation. This pattern is repeating itself.

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11. Thus a two-front war is not the unlikely event that many China scholars claim it is. Accordingly, it would be as well to prepare for such a contingency, however improbable it may appear at the moment. From the perspective of Beijing, the ideal window is in the next two years. For one thing, President Hu will remain Party leader for about a year more, and will continue as Chairman of the Central Military Commission until some time in 2013. He has cut his political teeth in Tibet, and will see the need to

settle the matter his way – if he can - before stepping down. Secondly, Obama, who has shown singular deference towards China [recent behaviour in APEC and East Asia Summit notwithstanding], will remain President at least until January 2013, and a new Administration [if Obama loses in November 2012] will need a few months to get its team in place. America will also remain preoccupied with the Afghan withdrawal, and Pakistan can make things difficult if need be. And thirdly, the Pakistan Army Chief will remain in harness till 2013, and the situation in the country is so unstable that any action to be taken would be best taken while Kayani, a known and experienced quantity, is still in charge. Not unimportant, the Chinese economy is also heading for a significant slowdown, and China's

If China can repeat 1962, this time in concert with Pakistan, it will have achieved a major step in its quest for dominance in Asia. Equally clearly, there are strands of opinion in China that want to do some such thing, and this is reflected in some of the comment that has been appearing in the Chinese media over the last few years. Teaching a lesson and using force are concepts that are now talked about on a regular basis in the media and think tanks.

standing in the global power stakes will be significantly dented over the next few years, as its troubles mount.

12. The bottom line is this: the next two years or so are a window of opportunity for China for all the reasons set out above. If it can

prosecute a successful war against India, that will put an end to a very major challenge to its plans for predominance in Asia. India has been seen as the only real counterweight in terms of size of population, area, GDP, and many other parameters of

national power. If China can repeat 1962, this time in concert with Pakistan, it will have achieved a major step in its quest for dominance in Asia. Equally clearly, there are strands of opinion in China that want to do some such thing, and this is

reflected in some of the comment that has been appearing in the Chinese media over the last few years. Teaching a lesson and using force are concepts that are now talked about on a regular basis in the media and think tanks.

13. Probably the most important issue then is – what can prevent such an eventuality? And there is only one answer: the single reason China will not undertake such action will be if they are not sure they can repeat 1962. We do ourselves a disservice if we think otherwise. The reasoning set out above makes it plain that this time, we are essentially on our own. Others can give us diplomatic support, but we shall have to defend ourselves on our own. The military balance is probably not as adverse as in 1962, but this could be a mistaken assumption. After all, we did not know the military balance was adverse in 1962 until the shooting actually started. Could we be in error again?

14. The above question is one for the national security apparatus to answer. An outsider can only go by the information available in the

public domain. All reports indicate that the serviceability of Army and Air Force weapon systems as well as their ammunition stocks are well below what they should be if we are to fight a successful defensive war on two fronts. A little digression is in order here: this paper is based on the assumption that any war will be sub-nuclear, given our no-first-use doctrine. Nonetheless, our strategic deterrent still has an important role to play in the calculus affecting the decisions of our adversaries. Our nuclear weapons are a powerful deterrent to any attack. We need to speedily refurbish our strategic forces particularly the number of nuclear warheads, MRBMs and sea launched missiles. Subtle signaling that we are doing the same through the publicizing of tests and meetings of the Nuclear Command Authority would make it clear to the adversary that India has developed a credible deterrent and if pushed to the wall would be willing to use the same. This, in the final analysis, is what we went nuclear for, and should play a part

in deterring any Sino-Pak adventure against us.

15. In order, then, to step up our conventional capability, we need to undertake some very urgent measures. It is well known that the main weapon systems are below 60% serviceability, that we are short of critical spares, and that our ammunition will not even last for a month-long war. Accordingly, it would be desirable to undertake the following steps on a crash basis so as to deter and, if deterrence fails appropriately address an attack on us:

- i) since the main purpose of a Sino-Pak attack will be to inflict an unequivocal military defeat on India, as happened in 1962, our minimal aim would be well served by a military stalemate. As in the case of Vietnam in 1979, lack of an outright victory will be seen as a setback for China, and a boost for India;
- ii) the manpower shortage can be addressed by re-hiring some of the OR's that have retired in

recent years. Typically, these men retire in their late 30's and are fit enough even in their 40's. This will readily provide a pool of at least 100,000 men, or more if required, who are well-trained;

- iii) on a war footing – literally – we must bring up the serviceability of our weapon systems and ammunition stocks to the levels required for deterring an enemy, or being able to blunt an attack should deterrence fail. The needs of the Army and the Air Force should come first in this regard;
- iv) speedy acquisition of the capital equipment that is most badly needed – medium guns, tanks, and additional fighter aircraft, night-vision equipment, and weapon-locating radar, to name just the bare minimum. Equally, if we are to raise the number of troops, especially for the Army,

they will need to be equipped with small arms and shoulder-fired arms.

- v) it would be good to keep the Pakistanis and the Chinese occupied elsewhere too. For Pakistan, clearly, Afghanistan is going to be a major concern in the coming years, and the fact that their relations with America are deteriorating opens opportunities to keep them embroiled in the Afghan end-game. Baluchistan is another area where Pakistan is vulnerable, and the situation ripe for keeping it off-balance. China, for its part, is vulnerable in Tibet, of course, but also in Sinkiang. We should also watch developments in Taiwan, where Presidential elections are due early next year, and

could result in a DPP victory, which would also demand increased attention from the mainland. However, none of this will really alter the thrust of this paper – that the American-led strategy in the Indo-Pacific region vis-à-vis China needs India as a lynch-pin, and therefore we are going to be a, if not the, major target for China's strategic riposte. It would be well also in this context to recall what former President Bush said in Mumbai recently: that India is the Number Two target for China, after America itself. Add to this that there is little they (China) can do about America, and it would be logical to expect that India will feel the heat from them.

vi) finally, but very important, we have steadily reduced our intelligence capabilities over the years. This applies particularly to our tactical capabilities on the border, which have been sharply curtailed in recent times.

This can, and must, be rectified in short order.

16. There are, of course, covert actions too that

can be undertaken – indeed, should be undertaken – to keep our adversaries off balance. However, these are outside the scope of this paper, and there is also the question of the

capacities available to us in this direction.

17. To recapitulate, this paper tries to show that there is a real danger of war being forced upon us within the next two years. The probability may not, at present, be above 30% - but that is a high enough probability to warrant

urgent action. Our usual pattern of behaviour has been to scramble for spares and ammunition *after* the shooting starts and that is too late to affect the military outcome. If we are prepared, and seen to be prepared, to

neutralize a joint China-Pakistan military move, then there will be no such action by them. On the other hand, our under-preparedness is an invitation to them to act.

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Fast Track Top Down Defence Reforms - Immediate Need Of The Nation

- *Paper Prepared By Six Defence Experts*

The unsavory leak of the 1962; and the Kargil conflict, Army Chief's letter to the when the then Army Chief said Prime Minister about the that the Army will fight with what lack of preparedness and it has.

hollowness of the Army has resulted into a fierce national debate, along with a feeling of being let down and betrayal by the leadership of the country.

No subject in India arouses more emotions and unity in the Country than the aspect of National security.

Our people are justified in feeling aggrieved, because the reported state of unpreparedness appears to exist for all the three forces. In the last 65 years of our independence, we have fought five wars and additionally thrice in this span of time, our Armed Forces have been found to be in a state of being under equipped and under prepared. Examples being

The K Subrahmanyam Committee in the wake of Kargil operations, over 10 years ago, had concluded that "an objective assessment of the last 52 years will show that the country is lucky to have scraped through various national security threats without too much damage except in 1962. The country can no longer afford such ad-hoc functioning".

A similar situation has once again come to light. The K Subrahmanyam Committee in the wake of Kargil operations, over 10 years ago, had concluded that "an objective assessment of the last 52 years will show that the country is lucky to have scraped

through various national security threats without too much damage except in 1962. The country can no longer afford such ad-hoc functioning". It recommended a number of important reforms, which unfortunately have been given only lip service. There has been no meaningful implementation of the committee recommendations. The subsequent

Group of Ministers recommendations are also languishing unactioned to date.

The ground reality is that we continue to remain in a state of inexplicable complacency. Our political leadership continues to be passive and indifferent to matters of National Security. Some strategic analysts have been propounding the theory of reduced chances of a conventional war in today's

environment, especially due to the deterrence provided by nuclear weapons. This is a fallacy because nuclear weapons are not actually weapons of war but are of strategic restraining value. A ready example of this is the cold war

situation where both USA and the then USSR maintained large conventional standing forces in all three dimensions of land sea and air. If that was not so, America would not have gone through those traumatic conventional war experiences in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq etc.

With our borders unsettled with China and Pakistan; with definite

disquiet in our relationship with China; and with India's quest to emerge as a regional power, we have no option but to be fully prepared for a 'Two Front Conventional War'. This is the only recipe to save embarrassment and avoid war. Remember the age old dictum that 'friendship can be possible only amongst equals'. With our present rate of yearly defense allocations, the defense

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potential differential between us and China would rise to more than USD 1 trillion worth of equipment/expenditure in next 12-13 years.

It is nobody's case that a developing country like ours should spend so much that it becomes an unacceptable burden on the exchequer and adversely affects development. However there is a definite requirement of making up the shortfall of the bottom line requirements of the three services, over next 10 years, which as derived from the open sources, amount to 150 US billion dollars worth of equipment (at today's costs). Even if we start today, the

process will be completed only in 20-25 years. While the fund allocations are crucial, even more crucial is the requirement to provide the ability to spend. This implies that the decision makers should not suffer from the fear of being hounded even well into their retirement. In the Post-Bofors mindset, where every defense acquisition is being considered a scandal, all our defense acquisitions have almost come to a standstill. Even the much heralded Rafale deal with all its exemplary preparatory work over 5-7 years, has now been subjected to an inquiry because of some complaint by a MP. This freeze in decision-making coupled with the inadequacy of funds for modernization has brought us to a pass, where National Security has been relegated to a state of danger. Before we look for solutions let us be clear that the present environment of distrust fueled mainly by the disappointed arms dealers will not allow acquisitions in a manner, which is both expeditious and which results in comprehensive capability building. At best we can continue, with the present day practice of making ad hoc purchases of whatever is available out of a block of equipment. Such a situation makes India's security

unacceptably weak. This warrants looking beyond the existing systems to evolve new ones to cater to the demands of our peculiar conditions. The present controversy is a manifestation of frustration at the present organizational structures and work ethos which is in dire need of drastic changes immediately. There is a grave dichotomy between accountability that rests with the Service Chiefs and the authority of capital acquisitions and budget management that is vested in the Political/Civil bureaucracy. This is the critical primary cause of tension and discord between the MOD and the Military. The lack of institutionalised integration of the Services headquarters and the MOD till today is a glaring example.

Let us broadly analyse as to what needs to be done. First and foremost, there is a requirement of ensuring that the entire leadership of the country is entrusted with the responsibility to oversee policies and ensure preparedness related to the Armed Forces of the country. In a democratic country like ours this should be the order of the day where the National governments change every five years or even

earlier. Coalitions have become the rule rather than the exception, and therefore the introduction of this new system is of paramount importance. This will enable continuity and consistency in defense policies, irrespective of the Government in power. This change is especially relevant, as induction of new weapon systems has a long gestation period of 10 – 15 years. Capital Military acquisitions go through a process of acceptance of necessity, identification and selection of weapon/systems. The time line of acquisition and induction is directly related to production capacity of the feeder country.

Equipping, training, doctrine formation and operationalization of the equipment are part of the gestation. There is an immediate need to create a Supra-governmental Body. This could be a "National Defense Council (NDC)" that should comprise leaders of all major political parties in the parliament. They

must be granted legislative powers over defense policies, equipping and preparedness.

The Chiefs of Staff of the three Services would be required to make annual/bi-annual/ or on as required basis, presentations to them in camera, in the presence of all members of the Cabinet

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Committee of Security, on the state of preparedness of the defense forces. The governments of the day will be obliged to implement and execute the decisions of the NDC. This will bring in total unanimity in decision making at the National level. This would also prevent uncalled for partisan

approach of the political parties. Governments may suffer from their compulsions but no opposition party will like to be a party to lack of defense preparedness.

This recommendation has been configured somewhat on the lines of US Senate Committee of Armed Services. This arrangement will

be without prejudice to all other existing arrangements..

The second important change relates to Civil – Military relations and the much warranted Organizational and structural changes in the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces. The Three Chiefs must start reporting directly to the Raksha Mantri and at least once in six months to the Prime Minister, or more often if they wish to seek his/her intervention on urgent matters. This will ensure easy and smooth political control over the Armed Forces, removing an unwarranted layer of friction in between because of the bureaucracy. This will also facilitate smooth integration of the three services with the Ministry of Defense, unlike the present cosmetic arrangement of calling it ‘Integrated Headquarters of Ministry of Defense’ (Army Headquarters etc) without any substantial changes.

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The third, crying need is of the much awaited restructuring of the command and control set up in the three services. The late Subrahmanyam consistently and the Group of Ministers in 2001, had recommended the need of a Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff and Theatre Commanders. We are badly lacking in respect of joint planning for operations, joint operational planning, joint training and even joint procurement; adopting these will bring in total integration in all aspects; with significant savings in avoidable, infructuous, duplicated expenditure. Instead of the services operating separately we must have joint Theatre commands. Andaman & Nicobar Command and Strategic Forces Command are in existence and have been found to be very successful models. The time has come to brush aside all opposition and reservations with regard to this concept. Not many will perhaps know that a Headquarters for Chief of Defense Staff has already

been in existence for the last 10 years without a head. It contributes reasonably well despite the handicap of being without the top man. It only vindicates the immediate need for India to have a Chief of Defense Staff. Six decades plus of civil control and an exemplary military model has sustained our secular stable democracy. The CDS would only further strengthen the edifice of our democracy along with robust and accountable National Security arrangements.

Similarly all flag rank officers must serve in inter-services appointments as a mandatory requirement for promotions. In order to have the very best officers as Theatre Commanders and subsequently as the Chiefs, it is most important to introduce a selection system for the Theatre Commanders appointments through a selection board, headed by the Chief of Defense Staff and comprising the three Service Chiefs. As a matter of fact, this is the very first restructuring that needs to be introduced. The present system of the senior most Lieutenant Generals, and their equivalents being promoted to Army Commanders, has been found to be wanting and this change will ensure overriding

priority to the merit as the first criteria.

The fourth area of improvement relates to the aspect of procurements. Attempts in this regard by all the well meaning committees, which have been periodically constituted, to draw out effective measures have failed to produce results, the latest of them being the 'Committee of Defence Expenditures' in 2009. It has failed to produce any improvements in the speed and success of procurements. Large chunks of funds go unutilized and even this year the Army had to surrender over Rs 4000 crores from their capital budget. Procurements are just not possible, with the kind of existing, "Them (Services) and Us" approach (the bureaucracy representing the government); with responsibility resting with the Armed Forces and authority (as laid down in the present rules of business), with the bureaucracy. The fear of subsequent backlash for the decision makers in today's environment results in inordinate delay. Let us accept the fact that the present system will not deliver. We need to evolve new rules to empower the decision makers to not give in to the

blackmail by the arms wheelers dealers. To overcome this problem, we need to introduce a system of 'pre-audit', wherein the representatives of CAG and CVC will form part of the procurement teams. This system will not allow 'post decision' complaints. This will not impede procurements. The 'ability to spend' has to be genuinely introduced in the procurement system. Defense procurements being complex, can not be rigidly strait-jacketed. These may work for the other Ministries like Coal, Health, and Power etc. but not for Defense. The 'National Defense Council' will have to approve this special dispensation which will also take away all the politicking in this field. Lastly, all the major countries have big and specialized procurement organizations. We also need to work towards that.

The fifth recommendation relates to the crying need of indigenization. We are the biggest importer of arms in the world;

The fifth recommendation relates to the crying need of indigenization. We are the biggest importer of arms in the world; almost 10 percent of the total arms sales in the world. Besides paying exorbitantly, we are being held to virtual ransom in times of emergency, when the supplier countries hugely jack up the prices.

almost 10 percent of the total arms sales in the world. Besides paying exorbitantly, we are being held to virtual ransom in times of emergency, when the supplier countries hugely jack up the prices. Added to all these problems is the aspect of 'transfer of technology' (TOT), wherein despite the very best of efforts, the spirit of the contracts is not fulfilled to the levels, anywhere close to the original agreements. Also the transfer of crucial parts of the technology are invariably withheld up or inordinately delayed; thereby compelling the buyers continued dependence on the seller. The answer lies in moving towards indigenization rapidly. That will be possible, only if we open up the arms industry to our own private sector. If we can trust the foreigners, why not our own industry? They can also help this process by instituting research and developing dual technologies, which will bring in maximum economy. We should aim towards at least 75 percent of indigenization in next 15-20

years. In the long run, India should also promote arms exports. Only then can we turn this heavy defense expenditure burden into a golden goose generating big business.

10. In the interim, besides the above critical long term measures, there is a requirement for crash actions within the next 1-2 years in removing deficiencies in all types of ammunition including missiles, repairing and preparing of unserviceable assets, upgrading the most critical equipment and finally removing night blindness in respect of all the three services. The much delayed Strike Corps, comprising a minimum of two divisions, must be raised in next two years for the North – East to attain a genuine dissuasive capability. These immediate requirements are a strategic imperative in order to obviate chances of any national embarrassment.

Having said all this, let me unequivocally state as a former soldier, that the Indian Armed Forces will not consider any price too high to safeguard the national honor in a case of confrontation. It is however a price that can be

considerably reduced with a sense of pride and ownership that is top down and inclusive. This is my prayer.

The time to appoint further committees/commissions has long gone by. We have to act united and expeditiously, as our country has always done in such situations in the past!

These recommendations have been worked out by the VIF Defense Syndicate comprising of the following officers—

1. Gen (ret'd) N C Vij
2. Lt Gen (ret'd) Ravi Sawhney
3. Air Marshal (ret'd) S S Inamdar
4. Vice Admiral (ret'd) Barry Bharatan
5. Lt Gen (ret'd) J P Singh
6. Brig (ret'd) Rahul Bhonsle

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Tibet In International Law And Practice

- PP Shukla

“Since Tibet is not the same as China, it should ultimately be the wishes of the people of Tibet that should prevail and not any legal or constitutional arguments. That, I think, is a valid point. Whether the people of Tibet are strong enough to assert their rights or not is another matter. Whether we are strong enough to see that is done is also another matter. But it is a right and proper thing to say and I see no difficulty in saying to the Chinese government that whether they have suzerainty or sovereignty over Tibet, surely, according to any principles, the principle they proclaim and the principles I uphold, the last voice in regard to Tibet should be the voice of the people of Tibet and nobody else.”

Jawaharlal Nehru, 7 December,

1950, Lok Sabha

The plan of study is to divide Tibetan history into three parts: one, prior to the 19th Century, the second from the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, and finally, the 20th century itself, including and bringing the study up to the current period of the 21st century.

The period before the 19th century is important, of course, but so much happened in the subsequent years that the relevance of the evidence from further back becomes debatable. Much of the evidence from the Chinese side is also sketchy over this period and consists of tokens of control which are not relevant to the current practice of diplomacy or international law. For instance, the claim that they appointed representatives [who were

* PP Shukla – Joint Director, VIF

considered as Ambassadors by the Tibetans] or awarded titles is unconvincing. Britain still awards titles to countries like Australia and even appoints the Governor-General. But no one would accept any claim of British sovereignty over Australia. Besides, China itself was ruled during this period by the Manchus, who were themselves non-[Han] Chinese, so it is questionable whether their territories may logically be considered Chinese. It would be akin to India claiming Afghanistan because the Mughals controlled that territory or Burma because the British did.

The 19th century however, saw some important events, and these are important indications of the nature of the relationship between Tibet and China. Two events stand

Nepal invaded Tibet [its second invasion in the 19th Century] in 1854 and the Chinese central authorities did nothing to help Tibet, which was forced to conclude a Treaty in 1856 with Nepal which provided for a tribute – the sum of Rs 10,000 annually, a large sum those days – to be paid by Tibet. Although the Treaty paid obeisance to the Emperor of China, the fact is that Beijing neither helped in the war, not did it play any role in the Treaty signing.

out. The first was the relationship between Tibet and Nepal. Nepal invaded Tibet [its second invasion in the 19th Century] in 1854 and the Chinese central authorities did nothing to help Tibet, which was forced to conclude a Treaty in 1856 with Nepal which provided for a

tribute – the sum of Rs 10,000 annually, a large sum those days – to be paid by Tibet. Although the Treaty paid obeisance to the Emperor of China, the fact is that Beijing neither helped in the war, not did it play any role in the Treaty signing. This is not the attribute of a sovereign.

Nonetheless, the Beijing authorities use this Treaty, among others, to lay claim over both Tibet and even Nepal. The latter is dormant now, but the potential for trouble exists and needs to be recognised.

This particular aspect of Tibetan sovereignty was brought out by the Indian officials in their negotiations with China which took place in the late 1950's and is reflected in the following extract from the Officials' Report.

Excerpt from the Officials' Report (1960):

...during the 300 years prior to 1950, Tibet, whatever her status, had enjoyed the right to sign treaties and have direct dealings with her neighbours on boundary questions, was clearly established by history. The Indian side had already drawn attention to the treaties of 1684 and 1842 signed by Tibet with Ladakh. In 1856, she signed a treaty with Nepal, and the People's Government of China themselves recognised the validity of this treaty, because they felt it necessary to abrogate it in their treaty, signed exactly a hundred years later, in 1956 with the Nepal Government. It was asserted by the Chinese side that the Chinese Amban in Tibet had assisted in the conclusion of the 1856 treaty. This, too, was an incorrect statement of facts; but

even if true, it would only corroborate the Indian position that China recognised the treaty-making powers of Tibet. For it would mean that China assisted Tibet in directly negotiating a treaty which, among other things, granted extra-territorial rights to Nepal.

If the Chinese felt the need to abrogate the Treaty in 1956, it means that they acknowledged its validity till the time of abrogation.

For the second event, the clock needs to be turned back a little further. A few years earlier, starting in 1841, a war broke out between Tibet and the Dogra rulers of Kashmir. This resulted in Letters of Agreement being signed between the warring parties, under which the boundaries between Ladakh and Tibet were clarified and recognised and trade relations were regularised. Ladakh also agreed to pay an annual tribute to Tibet. Again the central authorities played no role in the entire episode. The importance of this agreement between Ladakh and Tibet in further establishing Tibetan

sovereignty is also brought out in the Officials' Report, as quoted above.

Another aspect worth mentioning is the attempt at about this time by Beijing to regulate the selection of the Dalai Lama. This happened in 1793, and the central part of the regulations introduced by Beijing read as follows: "When the reincarnate boy has been found, his name will be written on a lot, which shall be put into a golden urn bestowed by the central government. The high commissioners will bring together appropriate high-ranking Living Buddhas to determine the authenticity of the reincarnate boy by drawing lots from the golden urn." However, the Tibetan authorities ignored this and in 1804, the Ninth Dalai

Lama was selected in the usual way by the Regent.

The final piece of evidence dates to the last three decades of the 19th Century, and involves British attempts to establish direct relations with Tibet. A bit of background would be helpful here.

The final piece of evidence dates to the last three decades of the 19th Century, and involves British attempts to establish direct relations with Tibet. A bit of background would be helpful here. The strategic setting was the rapid expansion of two major Empires – the British and the Russian – towards the heart of Asia. The British Empire expanded west and north from Calcutta, the Russian south and east from St Petersburg.

The strategic setting was the rapid expansion of two major Empires – the British and the Russian – towards the heart of Asia. The British Empire expanded west and north from Calcutta, the Russian south and east from St Petersburg. They met, or drew close, along the Central

Asian redoubts. Tibet at this time was playing host to the famous historical figure Agvan Dorjiev, a Buryat monk who arrived in Lhasa in 1880, and soon became a debating partner of the Dalai Lama. The contemporary British media were replete with articles

about the Russian advance into Tibet through the agency of Dorjiev. For long afterwards, it was doubted whether the Russians and Dorjiev were indeed playing any political role, but recent disclosures make it clear that there were indeed strategic and military matters under consideration between Russia and Tibet, through the mediation of Dorjiev. However, the British had their own plans and fears, and turned to the Chinese Empire in order to use its supposed suzerain status to work their strategy in Tibet.

The British had been trying to open relations with Tibet at this time, mainly to counter the Russian moves described briefly above, and were doing this by attempting to involve the Chinese on their side. With this aim they signed an agreement in 1876 [the Chefoo Agreement the main objective of which was to let the British missionaries enter China, only one paragraph was about Tibet], but the Tibetans refused to accept the validity of this agreement as far as they were

concerned and refused to be bound by its terms. A decade and a half later, they tried again through a second agreement with China, the Convention of March 1890, this time in order to regulate the boundaries between Sikkim and Tibet, as well as [through the Annex] to regulate trade between British India and Tibet. However, this agreement, like the previous effort by the British to work through the Chinese, did not succeed either, and for the same reason. The Tibetans refused to acknowledge the validity of any treaty or arrangement that did not directly involve them. Meanwhile, they were steadily moving to accept Russian protection, under the guidance of Dorjiev. The Russians were already emerging as perhaps the major strategic adversary to the British in Asia. Accordingly, after having waited for the Beijing connection to deliver, the British were forced to conclude that this was not going to work, and they had to move independently and directly on Tibet. This was the genesis of the Younghusband expedition in 1903-04. The spur was the failure of

Beijing to deliver on its part of the agreements signed in the late 19th Century, and the real reason was the success of the Russians in dealing directly with Tibet. The Russians did not entirely ignore Beijing, and did sign a separate agreement with China, but it was clear that they were focusing on working directly with Tibet, which was responding positively.

This was the situation the British faced at the dawn of the 20th Century, and decided that they had to take direct action, since China was unable to deliver on the commitments

undertaken over the past twenty years. The result was the Younghusband expedition. Lord Curzon was the Viceroy and he declared that “the so-called suzerainty of China over Tibet [is] a constitutional fiction, a political affectation which has been maintained because of its

convenience to both parties”. At the end of the expedition, the two sides signed the Anglo-Tibetan Convention on 7 September 1904. Thus, the Tibetans were once more left to fend for themselves in the face of a military attack, without any aid from China. And once again, Tibet entered into a treaty with a foreign power without any role for Beijing.

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The provisions of the Convention of 1904 also make revealing reading; the preamble admitted that “doubts and difficulties about the meaning *and validity*” [emphasis added] had arisen over the 1890

agreement with China [a polite way of recording the fact that Tibet was refusing to recognise and therefore to implement that agreement]; the rest of the Treaty essentially ratified the substance of the earlier agreements between Britain and China on the border between Sikkim and Tibet, and allowed for trade rights for British

India. Finally, another important outcome was to check Russian influence in Tibet and Tibet was required not to cede or lease any part of its territory to any foreign power, and to remove all foreign representatives, and to extend no economic concessions to any foreign power. Russian influence was thus also blocked, though Dorjiev remained active in Tibet for some time longer.

[In the 1940's the British repeatedly told the Tibetan Foreign Bureau that they signed the Convention and then left after a few weeks. They never acted as an invading power

which remains in the invaded territories. They wanted to show the difference of attitude between China and HMG]

What this episode shows again is that China played no role in defending Tibet, and no role in treaty-making by Tibet. What is more, it also showed that treaties

and agreements entered into by China on behalf of Tibet could not be implemented because Tibet would not acknowledge China's right to make any commitments on its behalf. And it demonstrated that such commitments would remain unimplemented.

The 20th Century thus opened with

Tibet becoming an active focus of the power play between the Great Powers, and with China having played no role that a sovereign or suzerain would be required to play, though for completeness, it may be mentioned that Manchu China

The 20th Century thus opened with Tibet becoming an active focus of the power play between the Great Powers, and with China having played no role that a sovereign or suzerain would be required to play, though for completeness, it may be mentioned that Manchu China did help Tibet in 1792 during the war with the Gorkhas.

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But more was to come. Not for the last time, differences arose between the Viceroy in India and London over policy in Asia. In London, the view was that Britain had to work diplomatically with both China and Russia, the former

to block the Russians in Tibet, the latter to prepare for the looming challenge from Germany. Thus, the Lhasa Convention between Britain and Tibet was reaffirmed by China in the British-Chinese Convention of 1906. This “confirmed” the 1904 Convention and stated that the trade concessions granted under the 1904 agreement would not be available to any other state, other than China, thus addressing the fear of Russian influence in Tibet, by co-opting China for the purpose. Unfortunately for Tibet, the British further confirmed the dilution of the 1904 Convention by signing the Anglo-Russian Convention in 1907 which covered Afghanistan, Iran and Tibet. According to this, Tibet was once again, inter alia, deemed to be under the suzerainty of China. All this was the result of London overruling Calcutta in the larger interests of co-opting Russia over the growing differences with Imperial Germany, in the face of which London wished to settle as many issues with the other major powers as it could. Tibet needed to be sacrificed for this purpose. [An

interesting sidelight on the diplomacy of those days is that when the Kaiser Wilhelm examined the text of the Anglo-Russian Convention, he minuted on the text that this was clearly aimed against Germany.]

This was the tangled situation in the early 1900’s, when the Chinese Empire collapsed in 1911, and was replaced by a republican government. One of the early developments following this was the Tibet-Mongolia Treaty of 1913, under which each recognised the other as an independent country. Although there have been some efforts to deny the existence of any such agreement, the Government of Mongolia made this Treaty public in 1982, at a time when relations between the Soviet bloc and China were extremely hostile. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama had also formally declared Tibet an independent country in 1912 and all Chinese officials, including all armed personnel, had been expelled. Representatives of Nepal had witnessed the agreement and its implementation. The Chinese

were again expelled from Tibet in July 1949.

This was the setting for the Simla conference in 1914. The conference began early in the year, and representatives from Britain, Tibet and China were all present. They examined and accepted each others' credentials, thus indicating that all three were participating as equals. The major result for India was the boundary between British India and Tibet – the McMahon Line. It also divided Tibet into an Inner and Outer Tibet [with the latter being autonomous, the former not], an issue that still rankles among Tibetans, for it left many Tibetans under direct Chinese administration [interestingly it is these populations who today oppose the Chinese rule on the Tibetan plateau]. The Chinese withdrew their representative, Chen I-fan [Ivan Chen], in protest because

“Since the Chinese Revolution of 1911, when Chinese forces were withdrawn from Tibet, Tibet has enjoyed de facto independence. She has ever since regarded herself as in practice completely autonomous and has opposed Chinese attempts to reassert control. This was reiterated in the House of Commons in December 1949.

they did not approve of the line dividing Outer Tibet from China. This was the only reason, and had nothing to do with either Tibet signing an agreement with the British as a sovereign country, or with the delineation of the McMahon Line. This fact was highlighted in the Eden Memorandum addressed to TV Soong, the Foreign Minister of China many years later, in 1943. By then, the Second World War was coming to a successful end – the Germans had already surrendered at Stalingrad – and the civil war in China was causing concern as to the eventual outcome. This was why Eden communicated to the Nationalist Government that Britain had, since 1921, been regarding Tibet as an autonomous country under Chinese suzerainty, but with treaty-making powers. A brief quote from the Eden Memorandum will bring this out.

Excerpt from the Eden Memorandum 1943:

“Since the Chinese Revolution of 1911, when Chinese forces were withdrawn from Tibet, Tibet has enjoyed de facto independence. She has ever since regarded herself as in practice completely autonomous and has opposed Chinese attempts to reassert control. This was reiterated in the House of Commons in December 1949.

Since 1911, repeated attempts have been made to bring about an accord between China and Tibet. It seemed likely that agreement could be found on the basis that Tibet should be autonomous under the nominal suzerainty of China, and this was the basis of the draft tripartite (Chinese-Tibetan-British) convention of 1914 which was initialled by the Chinese representative by was not ratified

Leaving aside the early period, by 1949, it was clear to most observers that the Communists were heading for victory in the civil war. The British resident in Tibet warned the Government in Delhi of the dangers for India through Tibet in such a development. Prime Minister Nehru's assessment of this caution was typical in its combination of ignorance and intellectual arrogance, as he discounted any possibility of any such security threat.

by the Chinese Government. The rock on which the convention and subsequent attempts to reach an understanding were wrecked was not the question of autonomy (which was expressly accepted by China) but was the question of the boundary between China and Tibet, since the

Chinese Government claimed sovereignty over areas which the Tibetan Government claimed belonged to their autonomous jurisdiction.”
[Emphasis added].

The American archives show a similar disposition in the US Administration which also made recognition of Chinese suzerainty conditional on autonomy for Tibet. And this was the situation that independent India inherited in 1947. Leaving aside the early period, by 1949, it was clear to most observers that the

Communists were heading for victory in the civil war. The British resident in Tibet warned the Government in Delhi of the dangers for India through Tibet in such a development. Prime Minister Nehru's assessment of this caution was typical in its combination of ignorance and intellectual arrogance, as he discounted any possibility of any such security threat. Writing an internal Note on 9 July 1949, he observed:

Excerpt from Nehru's noting 1949:

“Whatever may be the ultimate fate of Tibet in relation to China, I think there is practically no chance of any military danger to India arising from any possible change in Tibet. Geographically, this is very difficult and practically it would be a foolish adventure. If India is to be influenced or an attempt made to bring pressure on her, Tibet is not the route for it.

“I do not think there is any necessity at present for our Defence Ministry, or any part of it, to consider possible military

repercussions on the India-Tibetan frontier. The event is remote and may not arise at all.”

This was the strategic appreciation that seemed to guide Nehru through the early traumatic years after the Chinese invaded and occupied Tibet in 1950. He seemed to be deeply committed to working with the Chinese in order to bring about a grand Asian revival, and Tibet for him was a hindrance in this grand scheme. But in the process, he made blunders on Tibet which that unfortunate country, and India too, is still paying for. It is noteworthy that Nehru had overridden Nationalist Chinese objections during the 1947 Asian Relations Conference which he hosted in April, and allowed Tibet to take part as an independent country, and to travel on Tibetan passports, but he did not show anything like the same firmness in approaching the Communists. What made this even more inexplicable is the fact that the Nationalists had been active supporters of the Indian freedom movement, whereas the

Communists had had choice things to say about Nehru and Indian freedom.

In time-honoured and indeed, treaty-bound tradition, the Dalai Lama, now already the [current] Fourteenth, then a teenager, turned to India when the Chinese troops occupied to seek refuge and support in 1950-51. He was preparing to go the UN to lay out his case [he took refuge in Chumbi Valley a few months after sending his appeal to the UN GA], when the Indian Government decided that it would not sponsor any discussion on Tibet in the UN. As a non-member, Tibet could not bring up the matter in the UN itself. The reasoning of the Indian Government was that there was nothing anyone could do in military terms to help Tibet; further, any discussion in the UN would only antagonise the

The British and the Americans accepted the primacy of the Indian role in matters Tibetan, and went along. The US archives show that the Americans did try several times to persuade Nehru to do more to help Tibet, including at the UN, but it was not to be – Nehru was more concerned about his role in the Korea conflict.

Chinese, and make the situation worse for the Tibetans. Of course, this quite disregarded the fact that Tibet itself wanted the matter discussed at the UN. Further, it emphasised the irony that while India took the Jammu & Kashmir question to the UN, it would not support a reference on Tibet at the UN.

Finally, [tiny] El Salvador agreed to sponsor the discussion. But just as the matter was coming up for discussion at Lake Success at the end of November 1950, the Indian delegation

informed the UN that they had received word that China was willing to settle the matter peacefully. Hence, said the Indian representative, the matter should be withdrawn from consideration. The British and the Americans accepted the primacy of the Indian role in

matters Tibetan, and went along. The US archives show that the Americans did try several times to persuade Nehru to do more to help Tibet, including at the UN, but it was not to be – Nehru was more concerned about his role in the Korea conflict.

It was not until 1956 that things began to change, as the ground situation continued to worsen and Tibetan resistance to Chinese occupation grew. For the purposes of this paper, however, it is important to emphasise that the matter did finally come up in the UN General Assembly in later years – in 1959, 1961, and 1965. The first of these was confined to the violation of the rights of the Tibetan people, but the second, in 1961, carried a call for the right of self determination of the Tibetan people. It was a short Resolution, but the operative part is worth quoting from:

Excerpt from UNGA Resolution 1723 of 20 December 1961

“The General Assembly

...

Considering that these events violate fundamental human rights and freedoms set out in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, **including the principle of self-determination of peoples and nations**, and have the deplorable effect of increasing international tension and embittering relations between peoples,

1. *Reaffirms its conviction* that respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is essential for the evolution of a peaceful world order based on the rule of law;
2. *Solemnly renews its call* for the cessation of practices which deprive the Tibetan people of their fundamental human rights and freedoms, **including the right to self-determination;** [Emphasis added].

India did not sponsor or support either of the Resolutions, and the explanation must be Nehru’s continuing commitment to seeking peace at any price with China. It did not work, and the war of 1962 brought such humiliation and hurt

upon Nehru that it would not be wrong to say that it destroyed his standing in the country, and hastened his death in 1964. Notably, however, India did speak and support the next UN Resolution, in 1965, symptomatically, under a new Prime Minister. The 1965 Resolution did not specifically reiterate the call for self determination, but it reaffirmed the earlier Resolutions, and had the support of India, among other major powers. Thus, the UN is committed to giving the Tibetans the right of self determination, but this will obviously not happen as long as China remains willing to use its veto power in the UN Security Council. Nevertheless the legal position is clear and worth recording.

There is one other issue that needs to be addressed. This concerns the two legal agreements entered into by the People's Republic of China

with Tibet in 1951 and with India in 1954. As to the first, it was always under a cloud because the Tibetan delegation that signed it in Beijing was coerced into doing so, and moreover, the seals were forged in Beijing itself. This had to be done because the delegation was not empowered by the Dalai Lama to enter into any agreement on the status of Tibet [the Dalai Lama got the information through radio when he was in Chumbi Valley], but only to negotiate the withdrawal of the Chinese troops. Furthermore, even though the Dalai Lama was persuaded in the end to accept the 17-point Agreement as it has come to be known in history, it cannot be considered binding any more. It was denounced by the Dalai Lama in 1959 after he fled from Lhasa in Lhuntse Dzong, on his way to the Indian border. The International Commission of Jurists examined this denunciation and found in 1960, after the Dalai Lama had

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been forced into exile, that the denunciation was legally valid and tenable.

ICJ Report on Tibet and China (excerpt) (1960) [p.346]

“The view of the [Legal Inquiry] COMMITTEE was that Tibet was at the very least a de facto independent State when the Agreement of Peaceful Measures in Tibet was signed in 1951, and the repudiation of this agreement by the Tibetan Government in 1959 was found to be fully justified.”

As to the India-China agreement of 1954, it was valid for eight years to begin with, and lapsed in 1962. This happened in the month of April 1962, when relations between the two countries were extremely tense and war was to break out a few months later, in October. However, since the agreement has

lapsed, there is no legal validity to this commitment. Legally, it means that Tibet and India revert to the previous Agreement i.e. the Simla Convention of 1914, which can be considered as a valid Treaty once the regulations of the 1954 Panchsheel Agreement have lapsed. What is noteworthy is

There is, of course, a question mark on all this in light of the Dalai Lama’s own stated position that he no longer seeks independence from China but only a wide degree of genuine autonomy. This, however, is only a proposal and does not alter the legal status of Tibet. That will happen only when and if a new agreement is reached along the lines suggested by the Dalai Lama among the countries concerned.

that China used to insist on an inclusion in all the Joint documents with India that it should carry a reiteration of Tibet as a part of China. However, since the last two years, this reference is missing.

There is, of course, a question mark on all this in light of the Dalai Lama’s own stated position that he no longer seeks independence from China but only a wide degree of genuine autonomy. This, however, is only a proposal and does not alter the legal status of Tibet. That will happen only when and if a new

agreement is reached along the lines suggested by the Dalai Lama among the countries concerned. The Dalai Lama's quest for genuine autonomy is different from the traditional British definition of 'autonomy' in this context, because London wanted responsibility for Foreign Affairs to remain with Lhasa.

This is also the appropriate place to mention that the Dalai Lama is getting on in years, and the Chinese have made it clear that they are preparing for a struggle over the succession and his reincarnation. In a reprise of the 1793 effort, they have again laid down their perspective on the reincarnation – something strange for an avowed socialist and atheist state to do. Nonetheless, they have the Panchen Lama under their control, and it would be unwise to underestimate their determination to ensure their control over the choice of the next Dalai Lama. His Holiness is, of course, well-versed

in the ways of the Chinese, and is clearly preparing for the succession. However, the unambiguous status of the current Dalai Lama is a unique asset for Tibet, and every effort needs to be made to settle matters with a reasonably short period of time.

In closing, it is worthwhile reflecting upon the Tibet-Mongolia Treaty of January 1913. Both countries recognised each other's independence. The Mongolians turned to Russia for guidance and protection, the Tibetans to Britain and later India for the same. Mongolia is today an independent country – a condition extracted by the Soviet leaders from Nationalist China and then the People's Republic, regardless of the fraternal ties between them. Tibet is a country and culture on the verge of extinction, a sorry reflection on the Indian leadership.

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The Arc Of The India-US Partnership

- Kanwal Sibal

US-India Geo-political Convergence?

Is there a geo-political coherence in the India-US partnership that can be delineated on the ground by tracing a curving line across the globe or a sizable part of it that connects points of convergence? Where will this arc begin? In what we call West Asia? Will it begin in Afghanistan and go eastwards? Or will it begin in Thailand and go right through South-East Asia and end up in Japan? Does the arc begin in the Indian Ocean and go right up to the South China Sea? Such a line would confine the scope of the India-US relationship to the Asia-Pacific region largely, now the focal point of US geo-strategic interest in the wake of China's rise.

What about the so-called global issues? Can they be connected coherently with an arc of

partnership? Issues connected with climate change concerns, environmental issues, democracy, human rights, non-proliferation, terrorism and religious extremism. Is there enough convergence between the two countries on these issues?

In many ways, India's most difficult relationship with any country has been with the US, the foremost global political, economic and military power. Over decades the US has curbed India strategically by imposing sanctions in the critical areas of nuclear and space technologies, and high-technology in general. India has felt US pressure on the issue of human rights. Our democracy may have shielded us from the worst, but on the positive side it has brought no particular bonus.

The US has bolstered Pakistan. Its strategic outreach to China from

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the 1970s added to our problems by exposing us to joint pressure from Pakistan and China, with the US overlooking some of the worst proliferation activity by the two that today puts constraints on US efforts to restrain Pakistan's conduct on issues of terrorism and religious extremism.

The US approach to terrorism and religious extremism had been ambivalent until 9/11, at India's cost because the US has, over the years, ignored Pakistan's use of terrorism as an instrument of state policy because India, not the US,

was principally the victim. India's view, that terrorism had to be viewed and fought against as a global phenomenon, obtained no support.

Shift in US-India Perceptions

Today, the India-US relationship is a transformed one with the

change in Indian thinking about America being the most important element. Being 'pro-American' is not a stigma any longer whether in politics or business. The wider public accepts that establishing good relations with America is a desirable objective. Pragmatic thinking in India supports the inclination of the government to bring India and the US closer, though not at the cost of becoming subservient to the latter.

The urbanised Indian middle class is very positively oriented towards the US, and so is the entrepreneurial class, especially

that section involved in the knowledge economy. The business community as a whole, that today wields far more influence on policy making because of the liberalisation of the Indian economy and the declining role of the state sector, is an engine for the growth of Indo-US ties. The

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media devotes a lot of attention to the US. In any report card of the relationship over the last decade this change in attitude is not only very important, it is key to a progressively enhanced relationship with the US in the years ahead.

The evolving defence relationship with the US reflects this change in attitude. The US continues to arm Pakistan, and India, though unhappy, is willing to take a broader view of shared interests. Currently, the US has bagged the largest number of arms contracts - about \$8 billion worth in the last five years - despite the stringent and intrusive end-use monitoring requirements. India is likely to order more C-17s and P-8I aircraft. The contract for attack helicopters and light howitzers could well go to the US too. India no longer allows fears of a cut-off of US arms supplies in the event of regional tensions to stand in the way of enhanced defence ties.

The elimination of US fighters from the competition for the MMRCA contract, which continues to rankle feelings in the US, is not

a defining decision. The US expected a political decision in its favour, whereas India wanted to insulate the decision from politics and base it primarily on technical and financial considerations. Despite our exceptionally close ties with Russia historically, the Russians too were eliminated from the MMRCA competition. In the area of military-to-military cooperation India and the US have organised numerous exercises, over 50 in the last seven years. With no other country have the Indian armed forces engaged in so many joint exercises. This is an important building block of mutual confidence. In the larger security related context, the US decision to liberalise export controls for India and lifting sanctions on some of our entities are important steps towards building a partnership.

India's Stand on India-US Congruence

Despite these positive trends India, however, remains cautious about developing operational cooperation with the US because of its political implications, both in

terms of domestic politics and India's external ties. India wants to develop broad-based mutually beneficial relations with various global power centres rather than being seen as excessively leaning towards one power centre. No doubt there are many values that draw India and the US together such as the spread of democracy, pluralism, respect for human rights and entrepreneurial freedom.

The problem lies in the methods used to promote these positive values. The West, led by the US, is prone to use military means

to promote or even impose these and often selectively. Authoritarian friends are protected and authoritarian adversaries targeted. India does not want to be caught in a situation in which it becomes party to a selective application by the US of principles that are, in

themselves, positive. As it happens, it is Russia and China that are the principal hurdles in the United Nations Security Council in denying the US and her allies a free hand to change regimes they dislike for geo-political reasons.

Often these regimes are unsavoury but the issue is not that they might be disreputable, it is the management of international relations in a consensual and equitable manner, with due respect accorded to sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in the

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internal affairs of countries. If governments should not have total immunity for heinous crimes against their own populations because of the sovereignty principle, neither should such crimes be exaggerated and amplified by the West-controlled international media to justify

intervention, nor should other reasons be trumped up for mobilising support for regime change.

India is therefore unwilling at this juncture to sign some pending defence agreements with the US that might be construed as opening the door for operational cooperation. The LSA for logistics, CISMOA for interoperability and BECA for geo-spatial cooperation have been shelved for the time being. India does not perceive any particular advantage in these agreements.

Recent Developments in Iran

Developments relating to Iran illustrate the kind of problems India can be confronted with if certain expectations of India-US congruence in policies are raised with an expanded defence relationship. India has no reason to support either US military

action against Iran or steps at economic strangulation. Even on the central issue of Iran's nuclear programme, India can hardly view the situation in as catastrophic as the US would want us to. US hands on the nuclear issue with India have not been clean. Worse, it has deliberately overlooked Pakistan's nuclear activity in connivance with China in the past

and continues to do so even today.

However reprehensible Iran's conduct, Pakistan's has been far worse from our point of view as it directly affects our security, which the Iranian

programme does not. Already our efforts to preserve our energy relationship with Iran have become a contentious issue with the US. So long as the strategic visions of India and the US in our region in particular are not sufficiently aligned, our defence relationship will be subject to political limits.

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Impediments in Indo-US Nuclear Cooperation

The Indo-US nuclear deal has been at the fulcrum of the changed India-US relationship, though the process was politically painful. Despite the non-proliferation caveats it contained and the sharp controversy they provoked at that time, that criticism has subsided. Now the attention is on realising actual commercial benefits from the nuclear agreement.

Here, the Indian Nuclear Liability Act has put a spoke in the wheel for US nuclear suppliers. India believes its act is compliant with the Convention on Supplementary Compensation, whereas the US does not. The US has been pressing India to ratify the CSC which India has committed to doing by the end of the year but the US demand that this be done in active consultation with the IAEA has not been acceptable to India. It is by no means clear that with such ratification India's international obligations will override its domestic law. In any case, India has failed to ratify the CSC as promised. On the other

hand, India has drafted the regulations under the Liability Act and placed them before the Parliament.

These regulations limit supplier liability financially and in duration, but their finalisation awaits the disposal of an amendment that has been proposed. It appears that the US is still not satisfied with the effective dilution of the liability provisions of the Act in the regulations that have been framed and would want India to still conform to the so-called international practice of placing all liability on the operator. Meanwhile, an 'early works agreement' between US companies and NPCIL is being proposed but substantial progress on setting up US supplied plants can only be made after commercial negotiations are completed on a viable tariff for the power produced.

The problem of liability has been compounded politically by the Fukushima disaster and anti-nuclear protests in India that threaten even to delay the

commissioning of the almost ready Russian-built nuclear power plant at Kudankulam. The French site at Jaitapur has run into problems with local communities. Another Russian site at Haripur in West Bengal has been abandoned. The India-Japan nuclear negotiations too have suffered because of Fukushima. All this does not augur well for US companies.

The lack of progress on the nuclear power front has raised the issue of deliverables by Indian in return for US leadership in bringing India out of the nuclear cold.

To some extent, this is regrettable because if the nuclear deal was strategic in intent, it should not be reduced to a transactional one. In other words, it should not be seen that the deal was primarily intended to open doors for US companies to secure lucrative Indian contracts, even though this would have been

a natural outcome. While it is legitimate for US companies to actively push their commercial interests, to assume that India is obliged to reward the US through its companies and failure to do so in time is grounds for grievance, would be a mistaken notion. Lack of progress should not, hopefully, cause the US to slow down in the

implementation of the other steps envisaged to normalise as far as possible India's status as a responsible non-NPT nuclear power by making it a member of the NSG, MTCR, the Australia Group and the Wassenaar

The US attitude towards China's decision to supply two additional nuclear reactors to Pakistan, is troubling for us. India has refrained from making an issue of it to avoid differences on nuclear issues with the US when after decades of contention both countries have resolved their bilateral differences over India's nuclear programme.

Arrangement.

The US attitude towards China's decision to supply two additional nuclear reactors to Pakistan, is troubling for us. India has refrained from making an issue of it to avoid differences on nuclear issues with the US when after decades of contention both

countries have resolved their bilateral differences over India's nuclear programme. India has also wanted to avoid a diplomatic dispute with Pakistan as well as China on this issue for its own reasons, namely, to avoid disrupting the on-going dialogue with Pakistan and in recognition of the futility of raising the issue with China. With the US/West showing complacency over this China-Pakistan agreement, India, as a non-member of the NSG, had additional reason to avoid inviting a diplomatic rebuff in agitating the issue.

In view of US concerns about the safety of nuclear materials and the world-wide initiative it has taken to galvanise action on this front globally, one should have expected the US to have shown more concern than it has about the security of the fast expanding Pakistani nuclear arsenal, particularly as the country is falling prey to religious extremism and terrorism. The US should be fearful of the danger of nuclear material falling into the hands of extremist elements not necessarily

from outside the system. The powerful anti-US wave sweeping Pakistan should intensify these concerns. The US could have, therefore, done more to oppose this inopportune China-Pakistan deal. Critics construe the relatively complacent attitude of the US as intended to allow Pakistan some satisfaction through China to balance the nuclear deal with India in the face of persistent Pakistani demands for a similar deal from the US for itself.

US and India-Pakistan-Afghanistan

The set of issues involving terrorism, religious extremism and Afghanistan, which are vital for Indian and US security, could delineate the arc of the India-US partnership more sharply but here too, while concerns are shared, the way to deal with them reveals serious gaps in thinking. The US has travelled a long way from ignoring Pakistan's use of terrorism as an instrument of state policy - despite India clamouring against this for years - to Admiral Mullen acknowledging this in his Congressional

testimony before retirement. India has been charging Pakistan with duplicity, an accusation that the US now makes liberally against Pakistan. India has long called Pakistan an epicentre of terrorism and now the US recognises Pakistan as such. Yet the US has continued to arm Pakistan and this even when General Kayani, who is now regarded with less admiration by the Pentagon, insists on his India-centric strategy. The US has just announced a \$2.4 billion aid package for Pakistan that includes a sizeable chunk as military aid.

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India and the US have successfully overcome some early differences of opinion about India's role in Afghanistan. The US now supports India's development assistance to Afghanistan to the point that the

two countries are discussing joint projects there. The US has not viewed negatively the declaration of a strategic partnership between India and Afghanistan and the provisions relating to India providing training the Afghan security forces and contributing to the enhancement of their combat capability. This implies acceptance by the US of India's legitimate long term interests in Afghanistan and reduced concern about Pakistan's India-related sensitivities about that country.

The problem area is US's exit strategy axed on reconciliation with the obscurantist Taliban leadership so long as it breaks links with Al Qaida and confines its Islamist agenda to Afghan territory. The decision to allow the Taliban to open an office in Qatar

gives respectability to this retrograde movement as a political interlocutor. To begin to obfuscate the reality of what the Taliban represents, as Vice-President Biden's recent statements suggest, in order to have some kind of an orderly exit from Afghanistan may serve US political needs but it does not serve India's interests. India cannot be comfortable with such a US strategy. Our problems arise from the strength of Islamist ideology in our region, embodied all along by Pakistan and now set to gain strategic depth in Afghanistan. It is this Islamist ideology that has given nourishment to political confrontation with non-Islamic India with its large Muslim population. Whatever the likelihood of potential problems between the Taliban Pashtuns and Pakistan, India cannot manoeuvre in a Taliban-influenced political dispensation in Afghanistan. A 'Talibanised' Afghanistan will also obstruct India's efforts to build any meaningful relationship with Central Asia. Afghanistan's membership of SAARC will also become problematic from India's

point of view as this membership is predicated on a constructive Afghan role, not a disruptive one.

India needs a moderate Islamic government in Kabul with no religious bias against India and not vulnerable to manipulation to serve Pakistan's anti-Indian obsessions. What India would worry about is a US-Pakistan deal that gives the Taliban a role in the Afghan political structure as a guarantee for its self-defined interests as against fuller Pakistani cooperation to help in the US/NATO exit from Afghanistan without the Afghan house crumbling in its wake.

India-US bilateral cooperation in combating terrorism is now acknowledged as being helpful. It appeared earlier that this was more in the nature of enhancing India's technical capabilities rather than joining hands to curb Pakistan as a source of terror directed at India. But now it seems actionable intelligence is being shared, though the Hadley episode has created a trust deficit. In the area of homeland security,

India can gain much from US expertise, systems and equipment.

The China Factor

The US has been exhorting India to move from a “Look East” policy to an “Engage East” policy. Now the call is for an “Act East” policy, in consonance with the presumed wishes of the South-East and East Asian countries. In actual fact, India does not need such exhortation as its Look East policy has always meant engaging the East and acting in that direction. India’s trade and investment profile in South-East Asia has grown enormously; we have signed FTAs or CEPAs with ASEAN or individual countries such as Thailand, Singapore, Japan and South Korea. India plays an active role in the ARF. It is part of the East Asia Summit where it intends to work closely with the US and others. If India’s eastwards activity does not match

China’s, it is balanced by the fact that we are not perceived as a threat either.

As part of its eastwards oriented concerns, India has been conducting numerous naval exercises with the US to ensure the security of the sea lanes of communication in the Indian Ocean through pass trade and energy supplies of China, Japan and South Korea. Naval exercises have been held in a larger format with Japan, Australia and Singapore. India has tried to engage the navies of South-East Asian countries to build

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goodwill in what are called the ‘Milan’ exercises. Now a decision has been taken to have tri-lateral exercises involving India, US and Japan, as well as a tri-lateral dialogue amongst these three countries at the foreign office level. These are signs of a developing a hedging strategy

against the rise of a more economically and militarily muscled China that is already causing anxiety in the region with its claims in the South China Sea.

India supports the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, a position aligned to that of the US. India would support enhanced US presence in the Asia-Pacific region as a factor of stability and therefore, the pivot towards Asia announced by President Obama would be viewed without any misgiving. The US alone is in a position to exert pressure to contain China's ambitions even as the profound American economic linkages with China as well as US's debilitating mistakes in West Asia feed these ambitions.

Yet here again, India has question marks in its mind about America's China policy. Some flow from the unhealthy mutual financial and economic inter-dependence that has developed between the two countries. Too much is at stake in China for the US to risk a confrontation with that country. China is playing a subtle, long-

term game of extracting the maximum it can from the relationship with the US until it steadily builds up its capacity to counter US power in Asia and beyond. It, therefore, takes in its stride, US criticism of its human rights record and even while resorting to rhetoric, continues its systematic engagement of US political and economic circles.

US capacity to moderate China's conduct is being steadily eroded and in time, as the power equations change in China's favour, the US will have even less of a capacity to influence China's behaviour. India will, therefore, have good reason not to allow its China relationship to deteriorate on account of some assumptions about US-China tensions, given the likelihood that US and China would work out mutual arrangements over the heads of others if the circumstances so warrant. If the US is obliged to engage China even as it develops hedging options as a precaution, India should be called upon to do likewise.

India must also take into account that its real problems with China are in South Asia, not in East Asia, with renewed strident Chinese claims on Indian territory, the lack of movement in border negotiations despite 15 rounds of talks at the level of Special Representatives, the questioning of India's legal position in Jammu and Kashmir, the continued transfers of nuclear and missile technologies to Pakistan, Chinese presence in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and its involvement in major infrastructural projects there even as China protests against the India-Vietnam agreement on oil exploration in the South China Sea and continues the militarisation of Tibet.

On these issues of strategic importance to India the US is silent. Not that India wants the US to intrude into these problems we have with China, though the US could have a clearer policy on the China-Pakistan nexus directed at India. On the contrary, the US seems to suggest that China is now behaving as a responsible

nuclear power. In the past, the US has spoken of working together with China for peace and stability in South Asia, a thinking reiterated recently by Admiral Wilard. Xi Jinping, set to take over the reins from Hu Jintao, has noted in an interview in advance of his visit to the US in February that the China and the US have "actively coordinated" their policies in South Asia. India, on the other hand, sees China as a strategically disruptive power in South Asia. The US repeatedly endorses the principle of China's territorial integrity, accepts Tibet as part of China, but does not support the principle of India's territorial integrity or formally accepts J&K as part of India, in deference to the sensitivities of Pakistan and China. The US expresses no view on the militarisation of Tibet that not only suppresses the Tibetans but threatens India's security. Here there is a serious strategic gap in the relationship and bridging it will not be easy.

The US, as the world's most powerful nation, is used to shaping

the international environment in conformity with its values and interests. India has to live in an international environment shaped by others; it seeks changes but does not have the capacity to enforce them. The political configurations it is involved in - the RIC, BRICS, IBSA, the Group of four for the permanent membership of the Security Council - give it room to politically manoeuvre outside a framework dominated by the US/West but without altering the current balance of power. The US and some other western countries criticise India for being a freeloader in benefitting from the efforts that western powers put in to make the global system work, without sharing responsibility.

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If India, as a rising power, is now being accommodated in leading global groupings, the expectation is that it will endorse the broad thrust of western policies. The assumption is that India must change its thinking and approach, and contribute to enlarging the consensus behind these policies, not that India's views will be taken into account in modifying them. It is this assumption that explains the ire at India for its voting in the Security Council on Libya and Syria that has goaded some to question the rationale of US support for India's permanent membership of the Security Council. India's latest positive vote on Syria has, of course, earned favourable notice.

If India is asked to assume greater responsibility for upholding the

international system, then some genuine attempt has to be made to remove its present deficiencies. Military intervention and the right to protect are products of mindsets habituated to the use of military power to advance national or alliance interests.

India's rise invites attention from the developed world, but the challenges of development are enormous. Its interests converge as well as collide with the West. We have difficulties over US policies towards Iran and earlier towards Myanmar, not the least because the US has enlarged the geo-political space for China around us. Similarly, the US enlarged the space for religious extremism and terrorism in our region by supporting the Islamists against the Soviets, adopting a soft posture towards the Taliban when they took over in Afghanistan and wanting to accommodate them even now, and overlooking Pakistan's use of terror at the state level and its clandestine nuclear programme that today gives Pakistan the confidence and capacity to defy the

US even when vital US stakes are involved.

On the economic side, US exports to India have increased rapidly; the US is India's largest economic partner as an individual country, though purely in terms of trade in goods China has become our largest partner to some discomfiture of policy makers and specific sectors of the economy in view of the mounting trade deficit and commercial practices of Chinese companies. The US is pressing for further reforms of the Indian economy, especially in the financial, retail and labour sectors. India will move at its own pace because of the limitations of its system, coalition government, domestic distractions and slow decision-making in the government. On climate change and WTO-related issues, India and the US have differences but these are not bilateral issues and should not be allowed to become one.

To sum up, the report card of the Indo-US partnership is a mixed one. The strategic relationship has to be imparted greater content. The backlog of past

misunderstandings is being steadily removed. Anti-US political opinion and instincts exist but they are now secondary. There is general goodwill for the US though some aspects of US policies continue to cast a shadow on the relationship. The main drivers of the relationship on the Indian side are the acceptance that the relationship is vital and that no other relationship can substitute for it in its entirety; the people-to-people relationship is unmatched; educational linkages are very important; the India-American community is a positive force; India has hopes for access to high technology. On the US side, India's large market, its human potential, shared values and the China factor are driving elements, but India figures less prominently in US calculations than the US does in India's external relations.

To sum up, the report card of the Indo-US partnership is a mixed one. The strategic relationship has to be imparted greater content. The backlog of past misunderstandings is being steadily removed. Anti-US political opinion and instincts exist but they are now secondary. There is general goodwill for the US though some aspects of US policies continue to cast a shadow on the relationship.

The major constraints are a mismatch between US interests and priorities as a global power and India's as a regional power; outdated conditionalities linked to arms supplies, the negative activity of American non-proliferation die-hards, the complexity of export controls especially on dual technology items, US desire to shape the Indian system to suit the requirements of its companies, which is a long-term exercise. Others relate to policies towards Pakistan and on issues of terrorism and religious extremism as well as uncertainties about the end-game in Afghanistan, in particular a deal with the Taliban brokered by Pakistan.

The India-US relationship is supposedly strategic but it is being judged too much on a transactional basis especially as

what India can now deliver to the US in return for the nuclear deal, forgetting that the deal was highly controversial in India. US limitations in conducting its China policy even when it pivots towards the Asia-Pacific keeping the future China threat in mind are factors India has to keep in mind. The declining US economic strength and its inward pre-occupations are other constraints on US policies.

In the next decade or beyond, much will depend on how the US reforms its economic and political functioning to give a new élan to the country; the general belief is that the reserves of US strength will surface even though the US will not be in a position to dictate as much as before. It is important that the liberal international order

underpinned by the US remains intact with needed reforms; undiluted by the authoritarian Chinese model.

The eventual India-US model of partnership will neither be that of US-Britain, US-Japan or US-France. India is neither a historical ally like the UK nor is it a fractious one like France, and it is not security dependent as Japan. India will seek to maintain its independence in decision-making as much as possible but also seek convergence with the US. It will be a unique model as India is sui generis and US believes in its own exceptionalism.

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President Zardari's India Visit: A Precursor To PM's Pak Visit

- *Satish Chandra*

President Zardari's upcoming visit to India on April 8th shares some commonalities with Zia's visit in February 1987 and Gilani's visit in March 2011.

In all three cases the visits were arranged at short notice and their ostensible purpose--- a pilgrimage to Ajmer in the case of Zardari and to watch a cricket match in the case of the other two---was different from the real objective notably to touch base with the Indian Prime Minister. Furthermore, as happened during the visits of the earlier two Pakistani dignitaries the Indian PM will host a lunch for Zardari, and like in those visits little by way of concrete agreements is likely to emerge.

While it was only with much reluctance that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi agreed to receive Zia, Dr Manmohan Singh went out of his way to host the Gilani visit and now the Zardari visit and

may, in fact, even have engineered them. This difference in approach is reflective of the qualitative differences between Rajiv Gandhi-- the realist, steadfast in not making any concessions to an unreliable Pakistan which could compromise the national interest--and Dr Manmohan Singh---the woolly headed idealist ready to make any sacrifice to woo Pakistan quite unmindful of its inimical mindset vis a vis India.

Though it is unlikely that any agreements will be signed during the Zardari visit one may expect that discussions would focus on a variety of India-Pakistan issues. One would expect that terrorism would be at the top of the agenda particularly in the context of the bounty of \$10 million recently announced by the US on Hafiz Saeed. Other important issues likely to be discussed are Kashmir, on which the revived back channel must have provided inputs, Siachen, Sir Creek, visa

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liberalization, trade, water etc as well as the strategy to be adopted for follow on talks.

The importance of Zardari's visit to India lies not in whether or not anything tangible emerges therefrom, in terms of resolving differences, but in building up an atmosphere of warmth quite divorced from reality which would facilitate Dr Manmohan Singh's visit to Pakistan in the coming few months. It may be recalled that an invitation for the same was extended by Hina Rabbani Khar during her official visit to India in July 2011. This was reiterated by Gilani during the SAARC Summit in the Maldives in November 2011 and in his meeting with Dr Manmohan Singh in Seoul in March 2012. President Zardari will no doubt repeat it in New Delhi and perhaps even reach some understandings on the areas on which it may be feasible to sign agreements when Dr Manmohan Singh visits Pakistan so as to be

able to project the same as a grand success.

It is regrettable that Government has been complicit in helping create the illusion of increasing warmth in India-Pakistan relations by its acts of omission and commission. Firstly by failing to impose any penalties on Pakistan for its involvement in the Mumbai attacks of November 26th 2008 as well as subsequent terrorist attacks like those in 2011 in Mumbai and Delhi it has virtually brushed this issue under the carpet.

Pakistan continues to export terror to India with impunity. India's tolerance for Pakistan's recalcitrance on this count has enabled the two countries to maintain the façade of a business as usual relationship. Secondly, contrary to commitments made by Government including by PM himself in Parliament in July 2009

that Pakistan had “to act and act effectively on terrorism” for any comprehensive dialogue with it the same has been undertaken without the latter having brought to book the perpetrators of the Mumbai attacks or having shut down the infrastructure terror. Thirdly, India last year went so far as to withdraw its opposition to a EU concessional trade package for Pakistan even though this action has hurt our own textile exports. It has been argued that Pakistan reciprocated our generosity by moving some way towards an MFN regime for India. It needs to be noted, however, that this Pakistani move, which has been hailed with so much fanfare by our leaders, is no favour to us as we had accorded MFN treatment to Pakistan way back in the mid 90’s. Moreover, by not according MFN treatment to India, Pakistan was only depriving itself of access to competitively priced Indian goods and having to pay much more for similar imports from elsewhere. In brief, by more or less taking terrorism out of the equation, by resuming the composite dialogue process, by frequent meetings at the head of state and head of government level albeit on the sidelines of other regional and international meetings, and by hailing

Pakistan’s belated moves towards according India MFN treatment as suggestive of a change of heart towards India, a wholly erroneous impression is being sought to be created that we are on the cusp of an improved India-Pakistan relationship which is at complete variance with the fact that Pakistan has given India no satisfaction on terrorism and through 2011 pumped in as much as Rs16 billions of fake Indian currency into the country in support of terrorism.

In this backdrop, one needs to be concerned about the nature of agreements that Dr Manmohan Singh is likely to arrive at when he goes to Pakistan given our proclivity to readily make concessions and Pakistan’s aversion to make the slightest compromise. While a settlement on Kashmir is not on the cards as any Indian leader would be most unwise to commit himself in this matter without a prior consensus within the Indian political firmament, agreement on issues of lesser import like visas, Sir Creek and Siachen are a possibility. On the latter two it is hoped that in our anxiety to reach out to Pakistan there is no deviation from our existing negotiating positions as they are minimalist in

nature. On Sir Creek one should maintain the stance so far taken by us that the boundary should be in the mid channel of the Creek as per international practice and not succumb to a settlement on the basis of Pakistan's claim that the boundary should be on the Eastern side of the Creek. Should we do so not only would there be an obvious loss of some territory in the Creek area but also serious negative implications in determining our maritime boundary and exclusive economic zone. Similarly, on Siachen, we need to hold firm to our position that any demilitarization of the area would be contingent on a formal recognition in the text of the agreement, and not in any side-letter or annex, of the existing

disposition of the forces of the two sides and the positions that they would be redeployed to, accompanied by a map and a clear assertion that no forward movement in the area would be undertaken by the forces of the two sides. Pakistan's reluctance to plot the positions of the forces of the two sides in the main agreement places in doubt its bona fides.

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Gilani's Conviction: A Soft Constitutional Coup And The Crisis Of State

- Sushant Sareen

Even before the Supreme Court of Pakistan had pronounced the verdict against Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani, the writing on the wall was very clear: the so-called 'independent' judiciary was hell bent on gaining the dubious distinction of breaking new constitutional ground by convicting a sitting Prime Minister on the charge of contempt of court, which is really short-hand for a soft constitutional coup. Anyone who has followed the proceedings in the said case knew that the judges had decided to convict Prime Minister Gilani even before the case started.

Only, they had to go through the motions – lawyers call it due process – to keep up the charade of being even-handed so that the charge of one-sided justice and witch-hunt against the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) could be watered down.

Prime Minister till 'the rising of the court' i.e. about 30 seconds, appeared to be a bit of an anti-climax because it belied expectations of a spectacle – the PM being taken to jail and/or the court disqualifying him as a Member of Parliament. But even this half-a-minute sentence was enough to do the damage and create an unprecedented constitutional and political crisis which the country can ill-afford at this juncture. With the conviction of a sitting Prime Minister, Pakistan has entered uncharted constitutional waters that hold the potential of sinking the ship of state. As things stand, the Pakistani judiciary has breached the limitations implicit in the constitution – the most appropriate term is the Hindi word '*maryada*' – and created a situation which the framers of the constitution would have neither imagined, nor catered for.

On the face of it, sentencing of the

If the reactions to the conviction

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are anything to go by, the portents are not good. The ruling PPP and at least some of its allies are gearing up for a bruising legal and political battle aimed at not only protecting the PM but also making hell of a noise to undermine the judges and their judgments. Prime Minister Gilani has already called the ruling 'not appropriate' and is showing no signs of putting in his papers. The leader of the main opposition party, Nawaz Sharif, has sounded the bugle by declaring that he and his party no longer acknowledge Gilani as the Prime Minister and has demanded his resignation and early general elections. The right-wing religious parties like Jamaat Islami and neo-Jamaat/Talibanesque parties like Imran Khan's Tehrik-e-Insaaf have cast their lot with the judiciary and are going hammer and tongs at the Zardari-Gilani combine. In short, the stage is all set for political pandemonium, in the corridors of power, chambers of courts, the streets of the country, and of course, the ubiquitous TV studios. The powerful military establishment is meanwhile watching everything from the sidelines, biding its time but also calculating whether or not it will be required to step into the political slugfest.

The judgment against Gilani has not only sharpened the political polarization in the country but has also politicised the judicial processes. Sample this: on the eve of the judgment those supporting Gilani made it clear that the ruling would decide whether justice would be done (i.e. Gilani would be acquitted) or the PPP would once again be victimised; those baying for Gilani's blood (actually, the real target is Asif Zardari) were waiting to see if rule of law would be upheld (i.e. Gilani would be sentenced) or if the judges would once again buckle under pressure! In such a deeply polarized environment, it is impossible to expect that judicial verdicts will be accepted ungrudgingly by either side.

In other words, every judicial decision in Pakistan today is something of a political minefield. To a great extent, it is the judges themselves who are responsible for the situation coming to such a pass. Right from the time this government took office in March 2008, the judiciary has been a mill-stone around its neck. The reluctance of Asif Zardari to restore the chief justice was only partly the result of his own personal grudge against Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry – he had

humiliated Zardari and consistently denied him any relief during the Musharraf years. Partly, Zardari resisted the restoration because the suspended chief justice spooked the army which leaned on the PPP government to avoid restoring him. But after having been forced to restore the Chief Justice, it would have been ideal if all sides had decided to let bygones be bygones and started with a clean slate. After all, there was no one in Pakistan – not the judges, not the politicians, not the faujis, not the media mujahids and jihadis, no one really – who was not sullied.

While the sins of all others seemed to have been wiped clean, Asif Zardari remained a pet object of hate for the right-wing, Punjabi mafia that runs Pakistan which wanted to punish him for all his sins (more of commission than of omission) despite the fact that he had been jailed for over 11 years without having ever been convicted. Despite Zardari having

become President and enjoying complete immunity under the constitution against any prosecution, the judges did not relent in trying to fix him. If only the judges, most of them with an Islamist proclivity – a favourite judge of the chief justice is now the chief legal counsel of the assassin on the former Punjab governor and the chief justice himself has made observations against secularism – had shown the same dogged determination against terrorists like Hafiz Saeed and others of his ilk as they have shown against Asif Zardari and Yusuf Raza Gilani, Pakistan might well have been a happier place.

Forget about Islamist terrorists, these very same judges are very careful when it comes to throwing the book either at the generals or even their favoured politicians like Nawaz Sharif. The zealotry with which Gilani has been convicted is somehow completely absent when it comes to convicting top army generals and ISI officials for flouting court orders (for instance in the missing persons case).

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for flouting court orders (for instance in the missing persons case). Gilani's supporters also point out how the Supreme Court judges have acted against fellow judges for ignoring an order declaring the emergency imposed by Gen Pervez Musharraf in November 2007 but have refused to act against the officials (including the current army chief) who had also ignored the very same order. Even in the cases involving politicians of a certain persuasion, the judges seem to be very guarded in their approach. For instance, while the chief justice showed remarkable alacrity in taking suo moto notice against an actress who was caught with two bottles of liquor, the somnolence of the judiciary knows no bounds when it comes to a murder case against the former chief minister of Punjab, Dost Khosa, who was a stand-in for Shahbaz Sharif for a few months and is the son of a

close associate of the Sharifs and who is believed to have killed his wife.

It is against such a backdrop that the judiciary is being judged by supporters of the PPP who also question the constitutionality of the judgment not just because the constitution provides immunity to the Prime Minister under article 248(1) for any action he takes (or as in this case, doesn't take) in the discharge of his judgment of this very Court. The game-plan of the PPP is going to his responsibilities but also because according to the Attorney General of Pakistan there is currently no law on contempt of court and the ordinance under which that the Supreme Court is prosecuting the Prime Minister had lapsed as a result of the two-fold. At the political level, there is a slim possibility that the party decides to ask Yusuf Raza Gilani to resign and selects his replacement in the next couple of days, in which case the crisis over a convicted PM will be resolved but the issue of the controversial letter will remain open.

under which that the Supreme Court is prosecuting the Prime Minister had lapsed as a result of the two-fold. At the political level, there is a slim possibility that the party decides to ask Yusuf Raza Gilani to resign and

selects his replacement in the next couple of days, in which case the crisis over a convicted PM will be resolved but the issue of the controversial letter will remain open. Alternatively, and perhaps more likely is the possibility that the PPP will ask Gilani to continue in office and at the same time will use this conviction to play the victim and use the 'political martyrdom' card to try and cement its core support base in South Punjab and Sindh. The only problem is that given the rather poor performance of the government, it is unlikely if this ploy will find too much traction. Although the PPP might win sympathy from some quarters, whether it will also receive the votes, especially in the next general elections, cannot be said with any degree of certainty. At best what the PPP can hope for is that the political martyrdom at the hands of a vindictive judiciary might help it to reclaim lost ground after the next elections.

On the legal plane, chances are that the PPP will use every trick in the book to drag the matter and prevent the disqualification of the PM. But how long they can drag this case is again a matter of speculation: the PPP supporters believe that they can pull this

thing for around four to six months and then if matters reach a head elect another PM and repeat the whole drama all over again; the PPP detractors are of the view that at best the ruling party can drag this for a two to three months after which it will have to choose another PM. As the latter see it, the appeal against the conviction could be set aside in a matter of weeks after which the disqualification reference will be moved before the Speaker who has to decide on the matter within 30 days. After this period, the case will automatically go before the Election Commission which is currently headed by a serving Supreme Court judge in a temporary capacity. He is unlikely to take too much time before disqualifying Gilani. This ruling will then be challenged before the High Court and then appealed before the Supreme Court. Given the mood of the Supreme Court, the odds are that this entire process could be decided without too much delay.

While the legal processes will follow their own course, the issue of writing the controversial letter to the Swiss authorities to reopen the cases against Asif Zardari will continue to hang like a sword over the head of the government. If the

government continues to defy the Supreme Court, there is a possibility that the court might ask the army to intervene. This would pretty much mean an end of the democratic order for the foreseeable future. If however the army refuses to follow the 'illegal' orders of the Supreme Court, then the Court will become a lame-duck. There is a possibility that the Court might not push very hard on the letter issue and wait for the next government (likely in March 2013) to write the letter against the President whose term expires in August 2013. But even before this happens, a caretaker government is likely to be in place by around November/December this year and this government could also write the controversial letter. In other words, the letter will ultimately be written and written even while Zardari is in office. Therefore, the question is what the PPP and Zardari hope to gain by holding out on the letter for another few months.

There is of course another possibility: the government might plead immunity for the president, something that the Supreme Court has already asked it to do. This is however a risky strategy because if the immunity plea is rejected then the government will have to

write the letter. On the other hand, if the court accepts the immunity plea, then questions will be raised and fingers will be pointed against the judiciary for creating such a massive constitutional and political crisis for the last two and half years even though it was clearly laid down in the constitution that the President enjoyed immunity. After all, if the case against Zardari hasn't been decided in the last 16 years, heavens would not fall if it continues to remain undecided for another year or so.

The big problem for the Pakistani state is that all this political and constitutional tumult is taking place at a time of monumental, even existential, challenges and threats. The economy is on the verge of collapse and requires some very tough decisions if it has to survive; at the strategic level, relations with the US and the West are very precariously placed and need bold decisions from the government; the situation in Afghanistan is threatening to go out of control and the Taliban, both the Afghan and Pakistani, could wreak havoc in the region; the internal security situation is abysmal with an insurgency in Balochistan and deep disaffection in Sindh (exacerbated by the

alleged murder of the Sindhi nationalist leader Bashir Qureshi), rising sectarian violence and what have you. The spectre of serious instability that was already hanging over the country has only become more ominous after the Supreme Court judgment and cemented the impression of the state sliding towards failure because how can a government that is only engaged in

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Do We Ever Think Before We Act, Or Is It Ad-Hocism Zindabad?

- *Dr. M.N. Buch*

Britain has a coalition government in power, with David Cameron as Prime Minister, the Conservatives as the lead party and the Liberals as the junior partner. The Deputy Prime Minister is a Liberal.

The common ground between the partners was identified in advance, there is unity in policy and any disagreement is sorted out quietly and without publicity. On such controversial issues as raising education fees, Afghanistan, the European Union, etc., the coalition has spoken as one. This is what one can call a true coalition of responsible partners, not necessarily ideologically totally like minded, but prepared to give and take, cooperate and to settle controversies in a civilised way.

India has had coalition governments after Mr. Narsimha Rao. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA), with BJP as the lead party and Atal Bihari

Vajpayee as Prime Minister was in power up to 2004. Since then the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), with Congress as the lead party and Dr. Manmohan Singh, as Prime Minister, has been in power. Some of the alliance partners were common, some changed sides, while others have been consistent in their alliance. In both the NDA and UPA there have been regional partners with a high nuisance value who have held the balance of power and the lead party has had to perform a juggling act to hold the partners together. Atalji seemed to do this a little better than Manmohan Singh, but even he had to make some unforgivable compromises. In the case of UPA the motto seems to be that survival justifies all act of surrender and that to remain in power no compromise is too humiliating. This has emboldened partners such as Trinamool Congress and D.M.K to make the most outrageous demands on government, which has been only too willing to oblige.

* *Dr. M.N. Buch – Visiting Fellow, VIF*

As will be demonstrated this has negated all policy planning and has made all decision making a captive to the whims and fancies of coalition partners who find that a tantrum here, a threat there works wonders and brings government to its knees. This extends even into areas of international relations. The standard excuse for pandering to the outrageous demands of the partners is that there is the compulsion of coalition. What is unsaid is that actually it is the compulsion of narrow political interests and the fear of losing power which now drives decision making in government, including acquiescence in massive corruption. As, I believe, Arun Jaitley said while paraphrasing the statement that “power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely”, now the correct position is that “power corrupts and the fear of losing power corrupts absolutely”.

This paper is not so much on the compulsion of coalition as it is on trying to find out whether our policies are framed on the basis of knowledge, after weighing up various options and after taking into consideration that which is in our short term, middle-term, and long-term interest. The reasons for

deviating from what is best can be many, including political compulsions, but that by itself does not explain whether any thinking at all goes into our process of decision making, especially in the matter of our relations with other countries. Our immediate neighbours with whom we have problems or with whom we should maintain good relations are Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. This list should also include Bhutan and Maldives. Going a little further we have our very large neighbour, China, to contend with and here we have serious problems about boundaries, territories, economic interests and a power struggle in South and South East Asia. Then we have Iran which is a major source of fossil fuels for us and friendship with Iran is essential for us to have a toehold in the Islamic world. The Gulf countries are important because so many Indians work there. Japan, the United States and the European Union have their own place not only in our economy but in the culture of liberalism in which India tries to live. Our interest in Africa is to compete with that of China and it is a continent which India cannot ignore. However, for each group of nations we have to

evolve a policy which addresses the specifics of that nation or group and enables us to prepare an appropriate response and to create an environment in which India's interests are well-served. How does one do this?

The normal contacts between countries are diplomatic, commercial, governmental and people to people. In this last named contact there can be problems of language, capacity to travel and entry given by foreign countries to our nationals and vice versa, in an environment of cordiality and easiness. The visa is one of the biggest hurdles in people to people contact and that is so even between immediate neighbours such as India and Pakistan. Therefore, our understanding of a country has to come through a process of intelligence collection, collation and analysis, which is why India maintains an establishment called R&AW. One of the mistaken

For a successful conduct of foreign relations we must have within government, in all the organisations which might have an impact on our foreign relations, country specific individuals or units whose sole job is to study the country in question, look at the economic trends and their effect on India, understand the psychology of the people and the rulers of that country and prepare a whole series of options for our government to adopt in its policy towards that country.

notions is that R&AW is engaged in espionage only. A great deal of its work consists of trying to understand the country under study and for this purpose a whole set of disciplines is involved. Covert and overt espionage activities are generally engaged in where the country concerned is either hostile to India, is unfairly competitive or is likely to constitute a future threat to our national interests. R&AW has the job of conducting such espionage, just as the Intelligence Bureau is required to take counter measures against espionage conducted against India by other countries. Undoubtedly intelligence is one of the inputs which goes into policy framing, but cannot be the only one.

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country specific individuals or units whose sole job is to study the country in question, look at the economic trends and their effect on India, understand the psychology of the people and the rulers of that country and prepare a whole series of options for our government to adopt in its policy towards that country. There must also be parallel thinking in our universities and research institutions, which must be engaged by government to either look at specific problems which are posed to them or to carry out country specific studies which could assist government in framing policy. This was one of the tasks that the Jawaharlal Nehru University was supposed to undertake. There are many eminent scholars attached to the university who, from time to time, write in the areas of their specialisation. However, there is no evidence to indicate that these papers are of such a seminal nature that they have influenced the thinking of government. We must institutionalise the arrangement whereby, on the basis of carefully conducted research and studies, inputs come to government which would go into the framing of country specific or region specific policies. That,

however, does not seem to be the case.

Let us take the case of Afghanistan. One thing is clear, the United States will have to quit that country sooner rather than later. It is a matter of some doubt whether Afghanistan is a nation state as we understand it. There is a territorial entity called Afghanistan, but history indicates that it has always been a confederation of tribes rather than a united country. The history of Afghanistan is one of an uneasy balance maintained by inter-tribal relationships, which balance is easily upset if the tribal balance or the ethnic balance is disturbed. The Mujahideen largely consisted of Pakhtuns, who are not very welcome amongst the Uzbeks, Tajiks and Hazaras who constitute the population of Northern and Western Afghanistan. The Pakhtuns are the dominant tribes, but when fundamentalism in the form of the Taliban took over the government of Afghanistan, the other ethnic groups resisted this. Ultimately the direct attack on the United States on 11th September, 2001 resulted in massive retaliation by the United States against Al Qaeda and, ultimately, because the Taliban sheltered Osama Bin Laden, it brought the

Taliban into direct conflict with America. The Northern Alliance was activated, in which India also played a role and ultimately the Taliban were ousted. They have made a come back and America is now determined to quit Afghanistan by 2014.

This foray into history has been made to look at the future.

When America quits Afghanistan, Pakistan will certainly try and gain a stranglehold over Afghanistan and for this purpose Pakistan is hardly likely to support a Karzai type of government. That brings the fundamentalists back. India will have to deal with a

situation in which as Pakistan's influence increases in Afghanistan, India will be increasingly isolated and ousted, our development projects will close and the Indian presence will be eliminated. How do we react to this? Do we reactivate the Northern Alliance and build

further bridges with the Central Asian Republics which border Afghanistan? Do we ally with Iran to rekindle a Shia movement based on the Hazaras and the city of Herat? Do we try and reach out to the Pakhtuns? One thing is certain. Pakistan will certainly use fundamentalism in

Afghanistan to foment Jihad against India. A few years down the line the independent minded Afghans will probably throw out the Pakistanis and the situation may change. What do we do in the meantime? Can we consider exploitation of the fault lines in Pakistan, which would include a very clever support of separatism in

Sindh and Baluchistan so that Pakistan remains embroiled in its own problems of survival? Long term thinking demands that all the scenarios should be studied in detail, informed options be compiled and government presented with a raft of options of which government can take a

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considered view. At present we have only ad-hocism.

Let us take the case of Nepal. This country has had a totally organic relationship with India in which our culture, language, religion, traditions and economy are closely intermeshed. Nepali citizens have all the rights of Indian citizens within India, including the right to vote. Now that the Maoists have taken over power in Nepal, though fortunately not absolute power as yet, strenuous efforts are being made to increase China's influence and not only reduce Indian influence but, so far as is possible, to completely negate it. What is our thinking on Nepal? What are the levers available to us to counter the policy of the Maoists? How do we ensure India's predominance in Nepal? So far no cohesive or even comprehensible policy regarding Nepal has emerged. All our actions in Nepal are totally ad hoc. Can we retain our influence in Nepal by knee-jerk reactions? The border of India with China, which should have been beyond the Himalayan ridgeline separating Nepal from Tibet/China, now threatens to move down to the Terai as Nepal drifts away from India.

This brings us to two other vital neighbours, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. After years of hostility to India fostered by Khalida Zia and the fundamentalists, Bangladesh has moved towards democracy under Sheikh Hasina. The present Bangladesh Government is trying to curb fundamentalism and it wants to establish the friendliest relations with India. Recently the Prime Minister visited Bangladesh with the draft of a friendship treaty. One of the major components of this treaty was the sharing of the waters of the Teesta River. This is where the compulsion of coalition stepped into an area of foreign relations. Mamata Banerjee publicly said that Teesta was a West Bengal River and as the upper riparian West Bengal was not prepared to give even a drop of water to Bangladesh. Treaties with foreign countries are within the exclusive domain of the Union Government. That government is expected to consult the State Governments concerned and to address any issues which affect the States, but in the broader national interest friendship with a neighbour is more important than the riparian rights of an Indian State. Had there been a group of people working assiduously on various aspects of our relations with

Bangladesh the sharing of Teesta waters and the rights of West Bengal would have been factored in when framing policy and that would have formed the basis of our policy towards Bangladesh. Obviously we have no one who does any long term thinking or planning and even the proposed treaty with Bangladesh was based on pure ad-hocism. The compulsion of keeping Mamata Banerjee mollified effectively torpedoed the treaty.

Up to 1935 Sri Lanka had administrative and political connections with India. The administrative system in Sri Lanka is very much the same as that in India and the basic ethos of government is identical. Sinhala is a Sanskrit based language and there are lakhs of Tamils of Indian origin who live in Sri Lanka. Because of Sinhala intolerance the Tamils increasingly moved towards breaking away from Sinhala majority areas and ultimately this took the form of demanding an independent Tamil State in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka under the aegis of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Ultimately LTTE developed into the most powerful instrument of insurgency in the world and virtually threatened the

very existence of Sri Lanka as a united country. Initially we supported the insurgency and when it threatened to spill over into Tamil Nadu, India decided on military intervention. Why we decided to send in IPKF into Sri Lanka to fight a shooting war, why we did not adopt other measures such as helping the Sri Lankans to blockade Jafna so that the supply of arms to LTTE dried up, why we did not use the Air Force and Navy to ensure that Sri Lanka did not run to other powers for help, is beyond comprehension. Without thinking through all the consequences of armed intervention Rajiv Gandhi plunged us into Sri Lanka. At the cost of horrendous casualties the Indian Army did suppress LTTE and gave breathing space to the Sri Lankan security forces to eliminate highly violent militancy launched by JVP in Central and Southern Sri Lanka. At the very movement when we could have permanently eliminated LTTE VP Singh suddenly withdrew the Indian Army. The only possible consequence of this could be civil war and ultimately Mahinda Rajapaksh, the President of Sri Lanka, built up the Sri Lankan Army into a formidable fighting force and dealt a deathblow to

LTTE. Today Sri Lanka stands united once again.

India has several interests in Sri Lanka, the first being that no other power, China, Pakistan, or the United States should have a dominant role in that country. Our second interest lies in ensuring that the rights of the Tamils in Sri Lanka are protected and for this purpose we have to encourage the Sri Lankan Government to work for the proper rehabilitation of the Tamils who have suffered during the civil war. Our third and perhaps most important role is to ensure that the devolution of power enshrined in the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution, to the provinces in Sri Lanka, but within the framework of a unitary constitution, take place early and the people at local, district and provincial levels become partners in government. We can only do this if we retain our influence in Sri Lanka and manipulate the various levers of power available

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to us. That would be the sensible thing to do. Instead, under pressure from DMK, our government for the first time in its history voted for a country specific resolution in United Nations Human Rights Commission and sided with the United States on a resolution sponsored by the United States which expressed dismay at the human rights record of Sri Lanka and demanded that Sri Lanka gives justice to the Tamils. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, China, Indonesia, Malaysia all voted against their resolution and India stood isolated as the only Asian country to vote against an Asian friend. Here the pressure of a small group in Parliament which the UPA Government was cultivating in order to retain power, resulted in our slamming a torpedo mid-ship into our own ship and sinking us in Sri Lanka. The excuse given is that as a principled country we had to use the resolution to pressurise the Sri Lankan Government into devolution of

power. What it has done is to remove whatever influence we had in Sri Lanka and open up that country to both Pakistan and China. This is ad-hocism at its worst. Perhaps savants in the National Security Council, R&AW and the Ministry of External Affairs will come back at me and say that I write out of ignorance

and that in fact all our policies are based on deep study and analysis. However I, for one, have yet to see any signs of any such a thinking process being in existence at all in government, leave alone it being exercised. Ad-hocism zindabad!

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Some Bold Ideas From Mr. Purno Sangma

- *A. Surya Prakash*

The former Lok Sabha Speaker Mr. Purno Sangma has recently flagged some weighty issues which are extremely pertinent in the context of the crisis of governance in India, the declining influence of national parties, the decay of institutions, the fractious nature of coalitions and the precipitous fall in the prestige of the office of prime minister.

Some of these issues figure in his book *A Life in Politics*, which was released by the Vice-President Mr. Hamid Ansari on April 10. They have also been dealt with in a more elaborate manner in a lecture he delivered a fortnight ago at the VIF on 'The Functioning of Parliamentary Democracy in India'. All these issues are inter-related. With the people opting for diverse political choices across the country, the two

national parties that are at the core of the two main coalitions have got weakened. They are now facing greater pressure from regional players within their coalitions and outside. This in turn has injected instability into the coalitions and produced a crisis of governance. The ruling United Progressive Alliance at the Centre is now a pale shadow of the sturdy coalition that ruled this country between 2004 and 2009 and the prime minister no longer exercises the power and authority that he did some years ago. For a politician like Mr. Sangma who has a strong nationalist streak and a desire to pool political and intellectual resources available in the country to try and stem the rot, this is the time to speak up and to press for action. He also offers some out-of-the-box prescriptions that could, especially in a deteriorating social and

* *A. Surya Prakash – Senior Fellow, VIF*

political environment, gain ground.

The weakening of the office of prime minister is on top of Mr. Sangma's agenda. He is very clear that the prime minister must be a member of the Lok Sabha – a

person who is directly elected by the people to the House. He does not favour Rajya Sabha members becoming prime ministers, because when that happens the authority and legitimacy of the office stands weakened and the prime minister remains beholden either to the leader of his party or to the leaders of a

coalition who have together chosen to install him. Mr. Sangma says that under the Constitution, the Union Cabinet headed by the prime minister can survive in office only so long as it commands the support of the majority in the

Lok Sabha. Therefore, it makes sense to have a prime minister who is a member of that House. Also, is it not absurd to have a prime minister who cannot vote on behalf of his government in the Lok Sabha!

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In the preface to his book *A Life in Politics*, which is a collection of his speeches, Mr. Sangma dwells on the decline of institutions. He says: "Our institutions are in a state of decay. I am particularly worried about the institution of prime minister. I strongly feel that the prime minister being subjugated by an

extra-constitutional 'super' authority is a dangerous precedent. Without any personal bias, I also feel that since India is the largest democracy, it would be in the fitness of things if the prime minister is elected by the House

from members of the Lok Sabha. We should also start thinking and debating the desirability and possibility of electing the prime minister directly by the people. With a population of more than 1.2 billion people, India is capable enough of producing an able prime minister”.

Mr. Sangma elaborated on this theme at the VIF lecture on March 31. Over the last 16 years, there have been several instances when the Lok Sabha has failed to throw up a prime minister, he said. In 1996, a chief minister (Mr. Deve Gowda) was

Mr. Sangma elaborated on this theme at the VIF lecture on March 31. Over the last 16 years, there have been several instances when the Lok Sabha has failed to throw up a prime minister, he said. In 1996, a chief minister (Mr. Deve Gowda) was chosen for that office. In 1997, it was a member of the Upper House (Mr. Gurjal) and again from 2004 onwards (Mr. Manmohan Singh).

chosen for that office. In 1997, it was a member of the Upper House (Mr. Gurjal) and again from 2004 onwards (Mr. Manmohan Singh). During these periods, no member of the Lok Sabha was considered to be qualified for the job. He feels so strongly about it that he says

the Constitution should be amended to achieve this objective.

As regards no-confidence motions, Mr. Sangma suggests that we adopt the German system of a constructive vote of no-confidence, meaning that the Lok Sabha can vote out a prime minister only when it has a successor in place.

“We can perhaps consider the feasibility of adopting the German model of constitutional/legal provisions for constructive Votes of No Confidence. Under this model, the parliament may express its lack of confidence in the head of government only by electing a successor by the vote of a majority of Members and requesting the President for the appointment of the successor”.

Next, Mr .Sangma talks of coalition politics and federalism. In his view, the functional efficiency of a coalition

government will largely depend on whether or not the coalition has put in place coordination mechanisms to “manage” contradictions. He says governance through coalition arrangements has more or less become the order of the day in the multi party system. “In the current (15th) Lok Sabha, forty political parties have their presence. As of now, the present UPA II coalition consists of 11 parties and is supported from outside by 9 parties. Running the government by coalition formations like this is like running a handicapped race. The government gets to be hamstrung in taking effective policy/reform measures”.

Mr. Sangma says coalition partners have their regional, local and ideological agendas which they are often unable to harmonize with the overall coalition programme. While the Government tries to ventilate its helplessness by referring to “coalition compulsions,” the constituent partners complain of violation of “coalition dharma” by

the government. The success of a coalition will therefore depend on what late Prime Minister V.P. Singh characterized as “management of contradictions”. This is feasible only if coordination mechanisms are perfected and made functional within a ruling coalition.

Following the recent elections to five state assemblies, which saw a further fall in the vote share of the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party, especially in Uttar Pradesh, the regional parties have got further emboldened. The mushroom growth of regional parties has inflicted considerable damage on governance and encouraged the politics of blackmail. How does one resolve this? Mr. Sangma says that the idea that only national political parties should be allowed to contest parliamentary elections, could be explored.

Even more significant is his view on what the national parties should do in the present circumstances. The biggest problem right now is that there is a crisis of leadership. India no

longer has an acceptable national leader and the two main national parties are on the decline. The plight of the Congress and the BJP is a matter of concern from a national point of view; he says and hopes that they will become stronger. Meanwhile, there could be a “temporary solution” – the Congress and BJP agreeing to share power and to provide a national government.

Mr. Sangma also focuses on two other issues which are generic in nature. The present electoral system – the First-Past-the-Post system - has its flaws. In many instances, because of the multiplicity of parties and low voting, candidates who have polled the highest votes but have lost their deposits are declared elected. This system needs a fresh look. Compulsory voting may resolve this problem, but this must be implemented alongside the

The biggest problem right now is that there is a crisis of leadership. India no longer has an acceptable national leader and the two main national parties are on the decline. The plight of the Congress and the BJP is a matter of concern from a national point of view; he says and hopes that they will become stronger.

demand for voters to have the right to reject all candidates, if they wish to.

A clutch of bold ideas from a former Speaker of the Lok Sabha, among them: a power sharing arrangement between the Congress and the BJP to shake off “political blackmailers” and whimsical coalition partners; a

prime minister who is directly elected by the Lok Sabha or the people; a constructive vote of no-confidence; institutionalised arrangements for coalition management; compulsory voting alongside the right

to reject all candidates. Any takers?

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Setting Up A Central University: Vision, Issues And Debates

- *Anirban Ganguly*

Though the setting up of a Central University is the prerogative of the Union Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) it shall be in the right spirit of adherence to the Constitution and to our federal structure if it is done in consultation with the state in which the university is proposed to be set up by trying to appreciate the special needs and perceptions of the state administration,

the elected representatives, leading academics and intellectuals. A unilateral imposition without taking into consideration the actual ground reality or expectation is bound to generate an atmosphere of distrust and bickering and invariably dilute the larger vision and goal of the effort.

While it is a more fundamental

debate as to why a large number of central universities have to be created without adequate resources, space and manpower and more importantly without a distinct goal for excellence, it would perhaps be in the best interest of the entire project if the selection of a location for the Central University of Bihar (CUB) is best left to the people of the state to deliberate and decide upon. The Bihar Legislature has already adopted unanimous resolutions asking the Centre to establish the CUB at Motihari in East Champaran district and there is a debate going on within Bihar itself on the proposed location of the new university with a group pitching in for Gaya, which was the initial proposal of the MHRD and another voting for Motihari which has been the favourite spot for the Chief

* *Anirban Ganguly – Research Associate, VIF*

Minister, Nitish Kumar. By appearing to be intransigent on its choice of Gaya, the MHRD is only further widening the divide and generating adverse reaction at a time when it can well do without such a furor. In fact our national tendency of parachuting a central institution of higher learning by disregarding the ethos of the people and the ground realities has nearly always prevented such institutions from evolving into centres of academic excellence. It is true that regional aspirations are growing and it is legitimate that the young in the states and in the districts aspire for national institutions that can bring them *en par* with the youth in the metros but it does not seem to serve the purpose if such initiatives are divorced from the actual needs and possibilities of the region. Therefore passing an act that declares the setting up of 14 central universities all over the

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country is one thing, but to formulate a unique vision and aim for each one of them needs a different approach altogether.

Historically; the setting up of institutions of higher learning had been a vibrant part of the Indian civilisational experience. The ancient Indian universities of

Takshaśilā,

Nālandā, Valabhī and Vikramaśilā

were some of the leading knowledge-lighthouses of the ancient world and were unique in their growth and in their approach to knowledge and in their method of imparting it. The ancient Indians

were adept at creating these institutions which grew in an organic manner over a period of time. The process of this growth seems to have been so steady and so rooted to the ethos and demands of the age that the institutions thrived for centuries providing intellectual direction to

the evolution of civilisations and more importantly also served to facilitate – in those days of intimidating distances – interactions between world civilisations. They lived dynamically and grew and only saw decadence and destruction at the hands of invading hordes. It has been rightly pointed out that the centres of higher learning in ancient India ‘were unique in their organisation and scholarship during those distant times when elsewhere in the world very few had thought of organised education at the university level.’ Most of these universities were international as well as inter-provincial in nature and maintained a high standard with well laid down and meticulously conceived stipulations and criteria for admission.

In *Nālandā*, it is well known that, ‘streams of pilgrim-students wended their way in search of knowledge’ from Tibet, Korea and China and in India from the central regions, from distant provinces such as the North-West, ‘Kāñchipura in the South,

Purusapura (modern Peshawar) in the North and Samatata in the East.’ The university of *Takshaśilā* is said to have had such a vibrant and erudite faculty that they ‘could attract hundreds of students from distant parts of the sub-continent, in spite of the long and dangerous journey which they had to undergo.’ It was then believed that the ‘knowledge of these teachers put together represented everything that was worth knowing in those days’ and the institution developed a great reputation in the field of medicine. History says that ‘the royal physician *Jivaka* who had cured the king Bimbisara of Magadha and also the great Buddha himself of some painful diseases, had studied medicine’ at *Takshaśilā*.

This hoary tradition of developing seats of higher learning was eventually broken; a long interregnum followed and came to an end when British administrators decided to form universities on the British model in the Indian presidencies. The civilisational memory of past indigenous institutions of higher

learning was lost or at best became opaque and the British pattern of the university was upheld as the one to be emulated and replicated countrywide. Such a perception was briefly challenged in the first decade of the last century by a dynamic nationalist group of Indian scholars and opinion-leaders who advocated the need of creating national education institutions modelled on the spirit of past Indian educational institutions. The movement, though short-lived, did generate much debate and saw efforts made at building some such

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representative institutions. Satish Chandra Mukherjee (1865-1948), Aurobindo Ghose (Sri Aurobindo) (1872-1950), Benoy Kumar Sarkar (1887-1949), Lokmanya Tilak (1856-1920) were some of the pioneers of this movement.

The much deeper issue, however, is that post-independence, a wide debate on the need to develop a system of national education, or to evolve models of higher education institutions in tune with the Indian civilisational spirit never took off. Even those models of education developed by some of our leading national figures – the *Basic Education*, or the *Nai Talim* model, or the *Visva-Bharati* model – were not sufficiently explored or experimented with in the early years after independence when it was possible to chart out a wholly new

and refreshing direction for Indian education. The various dimensions of education and perceptions of knowledge-imparting within the classical Indian paradigm were not considered and a serious and wide-ranging effort of re-

discovering some unique facets of the Indian educational past was never undertaken in right earnest allowing – with some modifications – the continuation, replication and perpetuation of the British presidency model of universities. And in our present zeal for creating such institutions we seem to have ignored again our civilisational memory of this past experience and appear to have omitted deriving inspiration from the collective spirit that inspired such landmark creations of the ancient world.

Without entering into the politics of the current debate on setting up the CUB one can very well point out that the reasons for setting it up in Gaya, as proffered by the Union HRD minister does not appear to be very original, innovative or justified. One of the reasons cited is that Gaya has better infrastructure, is well connected and is a 'historical and cultural centre of international importance' while Motihari is 200 km from the state capital Patna, and does not have proper support infrastructure and has hardly

more than half a dozen good hotels.' Connectivity, support infrastructure, quality of life in the surrounding and faculty quality does not seem to have been taken into serious consideration when deciding to reconstruct the Nalanda 'International' University in the same state. The area then was designated and the university was allowed to take shape and it was thought that infrastructure and the surrounding area would grow with the growth of the university. Why is this precedence being overlooked by the MHRD in the current debate is difficult to explain. The backwardness of an area cannot in real earnest be the major deciding factor for setting up an institution of higher learning. By depriving the area of such an institution one shall simply relegate it to the realm of perpetual underdevelopment and isolation. Universities in ancient India never functioned in isolation; they were an organic part of the surrounding and did initiate great efforts to develop these areas through a number of public service initiatives. The surrounding localities, villages

and towns were never allowed to stagnate while the university achieved academic excellence and fame.

Similarly, today central universities that come up in remote locations in the states could try and develop such a vision of community growth and development, such an approach is in tune with the past Indian educational experience. A number of leading Indian educationists had given thought to this aspect of the functioning of a university. In fact, there were some formidable

educationists who had undertaken such an approach in the early years and had called for its serious consideration. In his paper on *'The Quest of Academic Values in the University'* veteran philosopher of history, scholar of culture and civilisation and former Vice Chancellor of the Lucknow

University Professor Radhakamal Mukherjee (1889-1968) who had himself actively participated in the national education movement brought notice to this vital aspect. It would be worthwhile, for the sake of broadening the discussion, to cite Mukherjee's views in some detail. Recalling the initiatives he had taken on trying to integrate the university with the surrounding community, Mukherjee wrote:

Universities in ancient India never functioned in isolation; they were an organic part of the surrounding and did initiate great efforts to develop these areas through a number of public service initiatives. The surrounding localities, villages and towns were never allowed to stagnate while the university achieved academic excellence and fame.

During my term of Vice-Chancellorship I set up the University Council of Social Work for a wide minded programme of adult education, Community Centre, Children's play movement, *sramdan* for the common people. Constructive social work undertaken by the student community in the slums and villages can not only harness its best energies and aspirations in constructive channels but also abridge the present cleavage

between the classes and the masses that thwarts social progress in so many directions. A full-fledged Department of Extramural and Welfare under the Dean of Students' Welfare is a necessary adjunct of a modern University that must recognise its obligation to the region, the neighbourhood and the common people around it...

There has been no concerted effort at developing such a broader goal of social responsibility. Just because Motihari does not have more than half a dozen good hotels does not mean that no new development initiative can come up there! A central university could very well be the starting point of greater development in the area. A central university in Motihari can work wonders for the development and growth of the whole of northern Bihar and may even go a long way in arresting the rising tide of naxalism in the entire belt. If remoteness is indeed a criteria what explains the setting up of an IIT in then remote Kharagpur in 1950. The historic Hijli detention camp which

detained some of our most valiant young freedom fighters was converted into housing the IIT which rose to become one of the premier institutions of technical education in the country. In fact, like Hijli Motihari and East Champaran too are intrinsically linked to our freedom struggle and to the memory of Gandhi launching his Satyagraha.

In this context one can also recall that when the Pondicherry Central University was set up in 1985 in the outskirts of Pondicherry no major infrastructure support, except for the town itself, existed in the area with the nearest airport, Chennai, a good 150 km away. Today after two odd decades of the University's functioning the area has grown significantly and has seen major infrastructure development. A number of central universities founded in the states – in Tamil Nadu, Odisha for example – are located in remote areas. Their failure, for the moment, to attract the requisite number of faculties for effective functioning – the Central

University of Odisha at Koraput has been able to fill ten out the sanctioned strength of 48 faculty members, and the Central University of Tamil Nadu located at Thiruvarur has been able to recruit six of a sanctioned strength of 24 – reflects on the MHRD’s attitude towards these newly spawned institutions and not on their location or other local factors. Adequate publicity, attractive incentives and guarantees for research and education growth or even special recruitment drives with special provisions bypassing some of the more tedious bureaucratic procedures could have attracted a greater number of academics – especially the young – to these institutions.

The MHRD seems to have failed to effectively undertake such a drive. The Central University of Karnataka, for example, located at

Kadaganchi, 30 km from Gulbarga and 250 km from Hyderabad the nearest airport, has succeeded in attracting a good number of faculty members demonstrating that academic scope and teaching opportunities evolved by those laying the foundation of the new institution can and actually does determine the responses to these far-flung

In a country like ours, with massive disparities at all levels especially at the educational, it is only with such initiatives of setting up universities at remote locations that one can really hope to bring about greater educational parity. Therefore remoteness of location cannot, in all fairness, be the principal criteria for rejecting the proposal.

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The MHRD appointed Site Selection Committee comprising experts have also stated that Motihari falls in the seismic zone

and a 1000 acres fertile land would go non-productive if the CUB comes up in the area. Shedding the blinkers, one could think of turning these factors into some of the most unique features of the proposed university – make it a new age model earth-quake resistance edifice with a special focus on agricultural and high-yield paddy research. In any case the people of the area are for the initiative and do not appear to be resisting any move at developing the university. It is a skewed view of things which says that seismically active zones be relegated to the national periphery when it comes to implementing development schemes. Under that logic, large tracts of northern India, including some of the leading corporate hubs, which fall within a high seismic zone, should perhaps be abandoned. What is urgently required is the revamping of our national

Gaya should have had long back a global education institution in keeping with its international spirit and its spiritual message, that such an institution has not been thought of in the past six decades reflects our attitude towards the preservation of our spiritual-cultural heritage and the dissemination of their perennial message.

understanding and vision of a university with the entire nomenclature and our understanding of it requiring massive revision and rethinking. Moreover, from an international outreach point of view, a university in Motihari, which is close to the border with Nepal, - with Birgunj, the gateway to Nepal being roughly 55 km away – can very well be developed with an international outlook and invite students from the neighbouring country, grow into a pre-eminent knowledge hub in the area and work towards developing that segment of the border region important for both the countries. Famed author of the Animal Farm, George Orwell (1903-1950), linked by birth to Motihari, has in any case already given the place an international profile! Gaya should have had long back a global education institution in keeping

with its international spirit and its spiritual message, that such an institution has not been thought of in the past six decades reflects our attitude towards the preservation of our spiritual-cultural heritage and the dissemination of their perennial message.

Instead of making it an opportunity for jointly working out a grand educational vision between the centre and the state the effort at developing the CUB is fast degenerating into an avoidable blame game and a false show of strength. An effort at evolving a consensus by setting up a joint committee comprising of experts from the state and the centre and with the centre being sensitive to the needs and demands of the state can at least start making things move. In fact a high-level national committee

can be formed with leading educationists, intellectuals and education administrators to examine in great detail the entire exercise and vision of setting up central universities in the country. Such periodic scrutiny shall avoid *ad-hocism* in this very vital sector of our national life and perhaps aid in developing a broad educational vision for higher learning in India in consonance with our civilisational legacy of education and learning.

Meanwhile the CUB must come up and come up with a grand vision and programme fulfilling the aspirations of the people of that region!

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A Tale Of Two Abductions In Odisha

- *Dr. N. Manoharan*

A bductions or hostage-taking are not new to CPI (Maoists). To take recent statistics, between 2005 and April 2012, nearly 1000 incidents of abductions by the Indian Maoists have been recorded.

But, this is for the first time that two separate groups of Maoists have resorted to simultaneous, though uncoordinated, kidnappings, that too from a single state (Odisha). Odisha has now joined Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand as top three states of India with maximum number of abductions by Maoists.

On 14 March 2012, Paulo Bosusco, a 51-year old Italian tour operator was kidnapped by the Odisha State Organising Committee (OSOC) of the CPI (Maoists) led by Sabyasachi Panda from the Daringbadi area of tribal-dominated Kandhamal district along with an Italian tourist, Claudio Colangelo, while they were trekking. While Colangelo was freed on 25 March as a

“goodwill gesture”, Bosusco continued to remain in Maoist captivity. Meanwhile, on 24 March, Andhra Odisha Border Special Zonal Committee (AOBSZC) of the Maoists led by Ramakrishna kidnapped Jhina Hikaka, a 37-year old tribal leader and a first time member of the state legislative assembly from the Laxmipur constituency, in Koraput district of Odisha. Interestingly, one group did not know the plans of the other. However, analyzing the demands of the two groups, it is clear that than anything else they wanted release of their ‘comrades’ who have been languishing in various jails.

Maoists have found hostage-taking of high-profile people the best bet, especially to free their colleagues. Earlier they used to indulge in jail breaks. But, with the increase in security measures, jail-breaking has been found difficult, risky and uncertain. This apart, such tactics are capable of motivating cadres, especially when the chips are

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down. Although the OSOC placed 13-point charter of demands¹ to release Bosusco, they relented as soon as Subashree Panda was released. The kidnappers of Hikaka were more direct; they placed just one demand: release of 30 prisoners. They insisted that the release had to be in the form of instant swap of prisoners with the legislator led by Hikaka's wife accompanied by lawyer Nihar Ranjan Patnaik in the Narayanpatna area. The list of 30 prisoners includes 15 members of Naxal-backed Chasi Mulia Adivasi Sangha (CMAS) and a Naxal leader Chenda Bhusanam alias Ghasi, who is accused in the killing of at least 55 security personnel and carrying Rs 10 lakh reward on his head. They also want the state government to drop all charges against the prisoners.

When the Odisha Police Association and Odisha Constable, Havildar and Sepoy Manasangh threatened to boycott counter-insurgency operations if hardcore Maoists like Bhusanam were released, the government finally agreed to "facilitate" release of 23 prisoners. "Facilitate" here meant that Maoist groups had to move bail pleas for release of jailed rebels instead of seeking their immediate release and physical

presence for executing the prisoner-hostage swap. The Maoists later climbed down to leave Ghasi from the list, but stuck to 29 and gave a deadline of 18 April. In the bargain, the government has moved its numbers to 25 including 17 members of CMAS, but has glued to its earlier position of "release only through bail". However, as the 18 April deadline ended and as the Maoists refused to extend the deadline any further, the government of Odisha agreed to drop charges against 13 (eight CMAS members and five Maoists). Rejecting the offer, the AOBSZC has conveyed its decision to "try" MLA Hikaka at a "Praja Court" ("People's Court") on 25 April 2012.

It has become very difficult for the government to negotiate with the kidnappers of MLA Hikaka because of AOBSZC's refusal to engage any mediators. The communication has thus far been through the media. But, in the case of Italian hostage-taking the presence of mediators acceptable to both parties – Dandpani Mohany, convenor of Jan Adhikar Manch and B. D. Sharma, former IAS officer and tribal rights activist – made the job of negotiation easier for the

government and in bringing down the trust deficit. The government's negotiating team, consisting of Odisha Home Secretary U. N. Behera, Panchayati Raj Secretary P. K. Jena and Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste Welfare Secretary S. K. Sarangi, though not specialised on hostage negotiations, handled those subjects that fell under the charter of demands placed by OSOC.

Of the two groups, OSOC seems more concerned about the local public opinion. Hence, it did not lay hands on any local official or leader who is more popular. The OSOC in fact slammed kidnapping of Hikaka, who

remains popular among the people of his constituency. OSOC leader Panda remarked, "We condemn the Maoist violence in the Andhra Pradesh-Orissa border region. There was no reason to abduct the MLA when the talks between the Naxals and the government were going on in a cordial manner." The groups operating from other

states, like for instance AOBSZC, seem more hardline and do not bother much about public opinion in Odisha. So they target high-profile people from border districts of Odisha as they did in the case of Vineel Krishna, the then district magistrate of Malkangiri district, last year.

The spate of abductions clearly shows that Maoists have become desperate. They have lost key leaders like Kishanji and Azad; some of the important Naxal leaders like Kobad Ghandy are in prisons of various states; although not highly successful, 'Operation Green Hunt' has been keeping the Maoists on their toes; their numbers are depleted; they are not even in a position to convene its Party Congress that is overdue.

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keeping the Maoists on their toes; their numbers are depleted; they are not even in a position to convene its Party Congress that is overdue. It is, therefore, crucial not to bend to any of Maoists' demands. History of hostage-taking in India teaches an important lesson: 'do not be penny wise and pound foolish'. Conceding

to Maoists demands will be a big blunder in the long run. It is nothing wrong to negotiate, but not on their terms.

End Note:

The Charter of demands included: release of five Maoist leaders including Sabyasachi Panda's wife, Subhashree Panda; actions be taken against police officers who are charged with rape, custodial deaths and violence against tribals and villagers; access to potable water; provision of primary education, and health facilities; irrigation cover for land in every village; lifting of the ban imposed on 'mass organisations';

complete halt of "Operation Green Hunt"; withdrawal of the Central forces from the tribal regions of the state of Odisha; ban on the visit of tourists to tribal areas; withdrawal of cases against tribal people lodged in jails 'in the name of Maoists'; implementation of the 'agreement' with the rebels for the release of the then collector of Malkangiri district in February last year; cancel all MoUs with MNCs; ensure the Forest Conservation Act, the PESA and other laws are adhered to and minimum displacement of tribals takes place.

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Need For An Indian Aerospace Command; Now And Here

- Radhakrishna Rao

Deteriorating security environment in South Asia region along with a massive beef up in defence preparedness by the People's Liberation Army(PLA) of China, have underpinned the need, as never before for India, to bolster its military might in all its manifestations to blunt the edge of the emerging multi-dimensional security threat.

Moreover, in the context of India's declared national policy of no first use of nuclear weapons, the country should be extra vigilant in guarding against any threat to its territorial integrity. And looking beyond the possibility of the security threat, India in keeping with its status as an emerging technological power, should showcase its military muscle encasing the technological prowess that is immune to the threats of technology denial regime. Clearly and apparently, India cannot afford to lose the opportunity of positioning itself as a military

power of global standing.

Indeed, in the context of the growing need to take care of Indian interests across the world, the need for a heightened situational awareness and quick mobility has become all the more pronounced. Only a well - equipped aerospace command supported by a range of advanced technology satellites could help India meet its emerging strategic challenges and security threats with courage and confidence. Of course, to begin with, India has the expertise, infrastructure and technology to create the nucleus for the proposed tri service aerospace command .But the only stumbling block is the green signal from the ruling dispensation in New Delhi. There is no denying the fact that an Indian tri service aerospace command would be a big morale booster for the Indian defence forces. As such, Government of India should seriously work towards giving a final go ahead for the proposed tri

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service aerospace command. For the creation of an aerospace command is a dynamic and continuously evolving process focussed on absorbing technological developments as it manifests.

Indian Air Force (IAF), which has been vigorously advocating the need for an aerospace command for well over five years now, has already made a detailed study of the issues related to the structure and functions of aerospace commands in other countries. But then the type of the aerospace command India would need to set up—of course after getting clearance from the political leadership of the country—would reflect the needs specific to the Indian situation, extent of funds available as well as technology and expertise that could be pressed into service for the purpose. The objectives, however, of the proposed Indian tri service aerospace command, would be similar to aerospace commands in other countries: enhancing situational awareness in all its manifestations, a homogeneous platform for

seamless integration of the capabilities of all the three wings of the services and ensuring free access to space while denying the adversary the opportunity to use space platforms in the event of a war. Other well identified objectives of the Indian aerospace command would include setting up a system to give out missile launch warnings and monitoring the launch of enemy satellites. The missile defence shield being put in place by the Defence Research and

Indeed, the whole exercise of creating a multi layered aerospace command should ultimately be aimed at ensuring that in a fast changing battlefield scenario, all the available tools should be harnessed to stay at the winning edge of the war.

Development Organisation (DRDO) could very well become an important component of the aerospace command. And so are the unmanned drones for surveillance and reconnaissance, Unmanned Combat Air Vehicles (UCAVs), AWACS(Advanced Warning and Control System) aircraft, a range of missiles meant for a variety of end uses and a constellation of satellites high up in space. Indeed, the whole exercise of creating a multi layered aerospace command should ultimately be aimed at ensuring that in a fast changing battlefield scenario, all the available tools should be

harnessed to stay at the winning edge of the war.

Perhaps the biggest trump card in the endeavour to set up an Indian aerospace command lies in the expertise that ISRO has built up in the area of designing and developing state of the art satellites for wide ranging applications. Incidentally, ISRO has so far built and launched more than fifty satellites for uses such as scientific research, earth observation, weather watch as well as communications, broadcasting and navigation. As things stand now, India does not yet have a dedicated defence satellite even as all the three wings of services have been clamouring for exclusive satellite capability to boost their preparedness and fighting fitness. Not long back, DRDO chief V.K. Saraswat had pointed out to the well-conceived plan to build and launch a series of home grown defence spacecraft systems with surveillance, imaging and navigation capabilities that would not only help keep an eye on “hostile developments in the neighbourhood” but also help guide the cruise missiles and high precision weapons to hit targets with a high degree of accuracy.

“There will be a series of defence satellites. Each year, you will find one or two satellites going up. I cannot reveal you the numbers because they are classified,” noted Saraswat. However, he made it clear that each of these satellites would be equipped for a specific mission and would carry payloads for a variety of end uses including surveillance and reconnaissance, imaging, navigation and communications. Going ahead, Saraswat stated that “the army, the navy and IAF each have their own requirements and it would not be appropriate to say how many each of them would need.” According to Saraswat, with these satellites in orbit, Indian defence forces would be in a position to get a holistic picture of the movement of troops and such other things in the immediate neighbourhood. Saraswat also made a point that satellite systems hold the key to the successful operationalization of India’s ballistic missile defence shield.

Saraswat also revealed that the road map of the series of satellites required by the Indian defence forces has been handed over to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). But then with its current infrastructure and support level, ISRO is having

tough time meeting its own requirements. With a single operational launch vehicle in the form of the four stage Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and a single launch complex spread across Sriharikota island on India's eastern coast, ISRO is not in a position to accomplish more than 3-4 orbital missions a year. There is no denying the fact that India would need to build a second launch pad which is very critical to boosting the launch missions by a substantial extent. In the context of India's plan to offer its launch services to international customers, ISRO would need to boost its launch frequencies to at least six a year. China, which has three landlocked launch complexes, is now building an ultra-modern costal orbital complex at Wenchang in Hainan Island which happens to be the epicentre of a massive Chinese naval build up. On its part, ISRO has hinted at a plan for a second launch complex. But whether it would assume a practical shape

China, which has three landlocked launch complexes, is now building an ultra-modern costal orbital complex at Wenchang in Hainan Island which happens to be the epicentre of a massive Chinese naval build up. On its part, ISRO has hinted at a plan for a second launch complex. But whether it would assume a practical shape within a foreseeable future no one is sure as yet.

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Similarly, the glaring failure of the Indian space agency to qualify the home grown cryogenic engine stage required to operationalize the three stage Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) well on time could jeopardise many of the high profile projects lined up by ISRO in the near future. To meet the growing needs of Indian defence forces, ISRO would need to not only build multiple launch centres and a variety of launch vehicles equipped for varying orbital missions but also involve the Indian industry in a big way in the task of building and delivering satellites and launch vehicles in a ready to use condition. Clearly and apparently, India lacks the "industrial culture" fine-tuned for building spacecraft and space vehicles on a turnkey basis.

Perhaps a major hindrance in the way of setting up the Indian aerospace command is involving ISRO, a civilian space agency

committed to the “peaceful use of space,” in the entire exercise. As such, the ruling dispensation in New Delhi should factor the possibility of such a step attracting international censure including the US technology embargo and trade sanction. In fact, in early 1990s, USA had prevented Russia from transferring the cryogenic engine technology to India, by citing the potential for the diversion of such a technology for military build up. In late 1990s, USA had pressurized India into dropping its Agni surface to surface missile programme with the observation that the Agni series of missiles developed under India’s Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) had drawn from the solid fuel technology developed for India’s first civilian basic launcher SLV-3 which had its successful debut flight in 1980. As it is, SLV-3 was developed under the leadership of the former Indian President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam during his stint with ISRO. Incidentally, Dr. Kalam who subsequently moved to DRDO, spearheaded the IGMDP which served as a launching pad for developing a range of Indian missiles.

Indeed, satellites serve as the “ears and eyes” of a well equipped aerospace command. The stunning success with which US led allied forces were able to pull off their intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq has highlighted the vital importance of the space based assets in realizing the strategic goals in a cost effective and timely manner. Meteorological satellites forecasting weather for facilitating bombing raids and missile launches, navigation satellites guiding lethal weapons to designated locations, reconnaissance satellites locating the exact geographic position of military targets, electronic ferret satellites gathering data on radar frequencies, communications satellites providing real time secure links between defence forces scattered over a vast geographical stretch for a coordinated strategy and ocean watch satellites snooping on the naval movement of adversaries which have all become a puppet in the string of the modern day warfare. Not surprisingly then, the massive intelligence failure suffered by the Indian army before and during the short lived Kargil skirmish of 1999 has been attributed to the lack of access to satellite resources.

On its part IAF is confident that a full fledged tri service aerospace command would go a long way towards ensuring the safety of Indian space assets and guarding the Indian air space with heightened vigil. The IAF's defence "space vision 2020" outlines the need to evolve a strategy for the optimum utilization of space assets for sharpening its combat preparedness. By all means, for IAF uninterrupted access to dedicated constellation of military satellites is critically important to sustain its strategic superiority through the concept of "see, reach, hit and protect". Satellites hold the key for the coordinated and synchronized functioning of the aerospace command by seamlessly integrating weapons systems, missiles, radars and sensor suites, unmanned aerial vehicles, weaponized drones, electronics and communications network, fighter jets, transport aircraft, logistics and support systems, defence forces spread

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across a vast geographical swath for sustaining "strategic superiority" from the word go.

The clamour for setting up an Indian tri service aerospace command assumed strident dimensions following the early 2007 anti satellite test carried out by China. This exercise meant to refine Chinese space warfare techniques

involved the destruction of an aging weather watch satellite positioned at an altitude of 537 kms above the earth by firing a ground based medium range ballistic missile. And while addressing the United Commanders Conference in New

Delhi in mid-2008, Antony did not mince his words while underscoring Indian angst over the "emergence of anti satellite weaponry, a new class of heavy lift off boosters and improved array of military space devices in our neighbourhood."

Of course, Saraswat has been stressing on the need to develop

technological elements of anti satellite systems to prevent the rogue satellite systems from immobilizing the Indian space assets. He has also hinted at developing space laser sensor to monitor and track space based killer devices. To support the Indian aerospace command, DRDO has also a plan up its sleeve to develop and launch electronics intelligence and communications intelligence satellites as exclusive defence space platforms.

Space capability also constitutes a key element of the network centric system to integrate the resources of all the three wings of the services. Air Force Network (AFNET), inducted into IAF in 2010, on which an integrated air control and command is being built, will be allotted a slew of transponders on-board Indian satellites in INSAT constellation being operated by ISRO. The fibre optic technology based AFNET grid which will help link IAF's command bases, radars, missiles, batteries and airborne fighters would ultimately pave the way for the complete situational awareness of the area that IAF wants to secure and dominate. In the ultimate analysis, the success of the aerospace command

depends on the smartness with which the information super highways and communications channels are exploited for real time coordination of the "strategic moves" of the defence forces spread across a vast geographical swath.

Equally critical to the successful operation of an aerospace command is a versatile and well endowed C4ISR system. While the C 4 components of the system—computers, command, communications and control—constitute the backend, ISR(intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) make up for the front end. The ISR made up of orbital, airborne, maritime and fixed or mobile, ground based sensor systems help find, fix and track hostile targets and evaluate the damage to enemy targets. On the other hand, with an increasing number of smart weapons including missiles rapidly becoming autonomous, they would need to be controlled and manipulated through a network enabled command and control structure supported by a constellation of satellites.

Meanwhile, with the Indian Space Research Organisation(ISRO) preparing for the launch of India's

fully home-grown microwave earth observation satellite RISAT-1 sometime towards the end of April, Indian defence forces will have the reason to cheer. For they can look forward to fall back on a “smart eye in the sky” to enhance their situational awareness and surveillance capability along India’s borders with China and Pakistan.

Significantly, it is the all weather and day and night imaging capability of RISAT-1 that is particularly relevant to Indian defence forces from the point of view of strategic planning. For the high performance Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) payload of RISAT-1 is capable of functioning even under conditions of cloud, dust and haze. Right now, Indian defence forces have limited access to the IRS constellation of earth observation spacecraft being operated by ISRO. But then these satellites being passive systems can function only under the conditions of brightness.

Clearly and apparently, Indian defence forces can easily exploit the potentials of RISAT-II to boost the intelligence gathering capability of Indian armed forces in big way. For earth observation and surveillance are considered the two faces of the same coin. RISAT-II’s revisit capability of four to five days is considered advantageous factor in the dynamic monitoring of the developments of strategic importance.

In April 2009, India’s four stage PSLV had orbited RISAT-II microwave imaging spacecraft that ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) had realized in tie up with Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) on a fast track mode. The launch of 300-kg.RISAT-II featuring an X-band SAR payload was widely perceived

as a response to the insecurity complex generated by the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack. The all weather RISAT-II has been described by strategic analysts as a high tech space platform meant to keep a tab on terrorist movements along India’s international borders with Pakistan.

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four to five days is considered advantageous factor in the dynamic monitoring of the developments of strategic importance. Added to that the highly agile RISAT-II can be manoeuvred to change its viewing angle as per the requirements of the users.

At the moment, Indian defence forces don't have a dedicated satellite systems meant for surveillance, reconnaissance and intelligence gathering .Of course, the ISRO built GSAT-7 satellite which is expected to be launched during 2012-13 will serve as Indian navy's exclusive space platform for reliable , robust and fool proof communications.

While India has a robust level of technological infrastructure and human expertise required to create a tri service aerospace

command in a phased manner, the political leadership of the country should shed its "complacency and indifference" to give a go ahead to the setting up of the tri service aerospace command. For in the context of growing, multi-dimensional threat to India's national security and taking into account the need to position India as a military power of global standing, the setting up of a tri service Indian aerospace command cannot be delayed under any circumstance. For the Indian defence forces, an aerospace command could very well be a force multiplier and game changer. And for India, it would be a hedge against the forces bent upon challenging the territorial integrity of the country.

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Seminar On 'Towards Reducing Earthquake Risks Of India'

The Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) organized a seminar 'Towards Reducing Earthquake Risks of India' in collaboration with National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on April 12, 2012. Held, by coincidence, against the backdrop of a powerful earthquake which had taken place a day before off the coast of Indonesia leading to a Tsunami warning across 28 littoral states of the India Ocean including India, the conference attracted a large number of people including subject experts. Coming shortly after the success of VIF's first conference on disaster risks reduction, which was held on 24 November 2011, the latest seminar on reducing risks from



earthquakes clearly demonstrated the Foundation's unwavering commitment to create mass awareness about the recurring phenomenon of natural disasters in India as also what needs to be done to insulate the country from their devastating consequences both in terms of life and property.

The conference witnessed an impressive array of technical experts, including

representatives from the NDMA and the reputed Indian Institute of Technologies (IITs) sharing a whole range of perspectives on earthquake risk mitigations culled from both global and national experiences. Mr. Tejendra Khanna, the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Delhi and Mr. M. Shashidhar Reddy, Vice Chairman NDMA, were among notable

invitees who shared their valuable insights on the subject. Prof. Tsuneo Katayama, former President, International Association for Earthquake Engineering and the present Director, World Seismic Safety Initiative, shared a Japanese perspective on disaster risk management. Prof. NVC Menon, former member NDMA, Prof. CVR Murty, IIT Chennai, Prof. Ravi Sinha, IIT Mumbai, Mr. Anil Sinha, Vice Chairman, Bihar State Disaster Management Authority, Mr. Mihir R. Bhatt, Director, Disaster Mitigation Institute Gujrat and Mr. KM Singh, member NDMA were among other key speakers at the seminar. Mr. Ajit Doval made the welcome address while General NC Vij, a retired Chief of the Indian Army and former Vice Chairman NDMA made the valedictory address at the seminar. The vote of thanks was proposed by Lt. Gen (retd) Ravi Sawhney, the former DG of Military Intelligence.

The inaugural session witnessed two speeches, one each by the Chief Guest and the Guest of

Honour, the Hon'ble LG of Delhi and the Vice Chairman of NDMA respectively. The agenda for the ensuing discussions however was set by the Director himself who said in his welcome address that India rose marvelously to natural disasters but she lacked advance preparations to meet them. The national level initiatives in this direction were outlined by Mr. Reddy in his inaugural speech. He assured the audience that the early warning system put in place by India in the post 2004 Tsunami phase has come up as one of the best in the world. Citing from a recent study on earthquakes done by Nicholas Ambraseys and Roger Bilham, Mr Reddy said that more than eighty percent of deaths which occurred due to earthquakes occurred in countries which were high on corruption index. Corruption leading to poor building constructions is largely responsible for the maximum number of deaths during earthquakes. The situation however is particularly bad for India, a country woefully short on the number of trained technical manpower - architects, and

masons among others. In so far as Delhi is concerned, there are many unsafe buildings in the city which do not even need an earthquake to collapse. Mr. Reddy however expressed his satisfaction that people are becoming increasingly aware about the problem. The Finance Commission has approved a pilot project worth Rs. 24 cr which is aimed at disaster risk mitigation and includes among other measures retrofitting of select buildings across India. At present, there is no laid down policy with regard to retrofitting in the country. The NDMA however hopes to come out soon with these guidelines. Besides, the agency has been also active on several other fronts including conducting mock drills to sensitize the general public to respond efficiently to earthquakes as also scenario-based exercises for technical experts to learn from past experiences.

Sharing the perspective of the Delhi government on the risks from earthquakes in Delhi, the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor Mr. Tejendra Khanna remarked that a

staggering seventy percent of the buildings in East Delhi were unsafe from earthquakes as these were built on pieces of soil, whose load bearing capacity were much less compared to other parts of the city. He further observed that strict enforcement of regulations and building bye laws were necessary to protect the city from natural disasters such as earthquakes. To that end, it is important that all those who are in the business of constructing houses, especially the builders, adhere to correct safety norms. While the Hon'ble LG stressed the need for a policy and an institutional framework to undertake retrofitting of unsafe buildings, he categorically stated that people living in unsafe houses needed to be moved away to temporary shelters to allow for reconstruction to take place, should there be no scope for retrofitting of those buildings.

Over the next two sessions, a galaxy of eminent panelists gave detailed presentations on various dimensions of the problem. While the first session focused on the

magnitude of the problem, the second session centered on managing the earthquake risks efficiently. Giving a historical perspective of Japan's preparedness against earthquakes, the globally renowned professor of seismology, Tsuneo Katayama underlined that while earthquake prediction is difficult to realize in the near future, structural reinforcement remains the only practical solution. He also made a point that whatever laws are enacted to protect us against the wrath of the nature must be observed meticulously by everyone. The noted seismologist wisely cautioned, "Nature is not always kind to us. Nature is watching for our most unguarded moment". A three dimensional visual presentation was also made during the seminar as part of an effort to sensitize the audience towards earthquakes. Also on display were some of the equipments used by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) as part of their relief and rescue operations across India and overseas.

The seminar concluded with General (ret'd) NC Vij, former Vice Chairman NDMA delivering the valedictory address.

He made the following key observations:

1. An informed and well prepared public i.e community is the best response to earthquakes.
2. Compliance of the techno-legal regime.
3. Creating credible disaster response forces at all levels coupled with Civil Defence and fire and emergency forces will provide a very credible response capability at all levels.
4. Disaster resilience must be built up as part of the developmental process. This should be applicable to States and Corporate as well, as it has already been made applicable in the Centre.
5. All the housing loans in the country should be linked with earthquake safety norms.

Report prepared by Sanjay Kumar

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Talk On 'Sufism And Indian Islam'

A talk on 'Sufism and Indian Islam' by Hazrat Maulana Syed Mohammad Ashraf Sahab Kichhouchhawi, General Secretary, All India Ulama & Mashikh Board was held at Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) on 23 Apr 2012. The event, which was organized by the VIF in collaboration with the Global Foundation for Civilizational Harmony (GFCH), aimed at understanding and projecting the Sufi legacy in India of tolerance. It was opposed to the more extreme ideologies, which promoted terrorism, thus strengthening India's social and religious harmony. The evening session, presided by Mr. Subhash Chandra, the founding Chairman GFCH and ZEE Television networks, was attended by a large



number of people including social activists and religious enthusiasts, among others. Mr. Ajit Doval, KC, Director VIF welcomed the guests while Dr. Khawaja Ikram, Associate Professor at JNU's Centre of Indian Languages briefed the audience on the evolution of Sufism in India. Mr Doval's initial remarks, part of his welcome speech, stressed the global need to develop a greater understanding among all human beings, regardless of caste, creed or religion. He also underscored that Sufism, the inner, mystical dimension of Islam had contributed significantly to India's rich cultural and religious legacy. Dr. Khawaja Ikram noted that while the tradition of Sufism preceded Islam, the major trends

of Sufism could be found in many religions across the world.

Hazrat Maulana Mohammad Ashraf, the renowned scholar of Sufism, identified love for the entire humanity and unconditional devotion to the Almighty among the basic tenets of Sufism. Sufism stresses that purging of all base thoughts from the soul is a prerequisite for the attainment of higher spiritual goals. The self becomes complete only when Ilm (Knowledge) is fused with Isque (devotion). He however said that the primary reason for Sufism not being very popular is that it dwells more upon practice, less on theory. "The notion of heaven and hell doesn't affect a Sufi practitioner because fear of hell and greed for a place in heaven are trivial for a Sufi", the noted scholar observed. He further said, "In our society, people are

segregated into different classes based on their religion, caste, and region. A place like India where language changes virtually every 50 kms, it is imperative that people live in harmony and respect and appreciate the diversity". Rejecting the notion that Jihad means offence, Hazrat Maulana asserted that it is essentially a form of defence, especially against the evil which is present within all of us. Mr Subhash Chandra wrapped up the proceedings and said that he felt personally motivated by the thoughts expressed by Hazrat Maulana and extended all possible cooperation in spreading the teachings of tolerance and harmony across the entire nation.

Report prepared by Sanjay Kumar

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