

# LISA JOURNAL

Issue No: 25

Editor: Saeed Ismat

Jan –March 2013

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# EDITORIAL

## **Whither Aman ki Ashaa (desire for peace)**

One step forward, two steps back. That appears to be the norm of the dysfunctional India-Pakistan relationship. You make a little progress, inch by painful inch, dragging yourself up the steep hill that is the Indo-Pak diplomacy, only to be thrown off course by some incident or the other. The recent incidents of firing and killing on the Line of Control (LoC) that divides Indian Held Kashmir from Kashmir has put the process of dialogue back to square one again.

The army of rabble-rousing Indian television hosts, retired generals and diplomats, the 'online' hate brigades and the religious extremists of Hindu Shiv Sena have managed to generate an unprecedented wave of jingoistic fervour across the country, demanding swift lessons for Pakistan. The BJP leader Sushma Swaraj talks of bringing ten Pakistani heads for one Indian soldier.

Indian Prime Minister says that it cannot be 'business as usual' with Islamabad after the 'barbaric act'. "What happened at the LoC is unacceptable," asserted the prime minister. As The Hindu noted, "The relentless political attacks on his Pakistan policy are taking a toll."

Singh's warning follows the Indian Army Chief Gen Bikram Singh's call asking troops to be "aggressive and offensive in the face of provocation and fire" from Pakistan. Already under fire for its muted and incoherent response to recent public outrage over corruption and the horrific Delhi rape tragedy, the Indian government has been put on the defensive by a hawkish media and Hindutva groups baying for blood

Syed Aijaz a commentator on South Asian affairs says: "Need I add anymore? It's time India and Pakistan stood back from the brink in the interest of mutual survival, if for nothing else. India cannot allow its foreign policy to be dictated by television studios and insecure politicians.

## **Rape Capital of India**

Rape cases in New Delhi jumped 23 per cent in 2012 from a year earlier, according to official figures, highlighting rising crime against women in the sprawling metropolis. The numbers were released as the trial of five men was set to begin on Monday on accusations of murder, rape and kidnapping over the death last month of a 23-year-old gang-rape victim, whose assault sparked nationwide protests.

New Delhi, a city of 16 million people, has long been called the “rape capital of India”. It is known as the least safe major Indian city for women with more than twice as many rape cases registered in 2011 than commercial hub Mumbai. Analysts attribute this to Bollywood’s culture of exposure, nudity, vulgarity and violence. This should also serve as a lesson for India’s neighbours who are crazy in importing sensual Bollywood’s culture in South Asia where its youth is as sex starved as India and have lost the traditional family values .

## **Pakistan: Democracy for Cheats and Corrupt**

Soon after the New Year set in a highly unprecedented phenomenon was witnessed in Islamabad. Pakistanis are not used to attending demonstration and marches with such unity, faith and discipline as they did under the leadership of Dr Tahirul Qadri. Large crowds almost everywhere and more so in Pakistan are used to going on rampage instead. Everyone was surprised at the discipline shown by the followers of Dr Tahirul Qadri. The resilience, patience and fortitude of well over 100,000 Pakistani’s was astonishing. It was a rare and highly laudable display of a hidden Pakistani national character professed by its Quaid Mohammad Ali Jinnah; *Unity-Faith and Discipline*. *Cyrus Howell* wrote; Qadri phenomenon stole the march on a snoozing nation that want democracy without even knowing what it means.

During the entire four days of sit-in at Islamabad, despite discomfort and disquiet, the event was never marred with violence or even destruction of public or private property. Such peaceful and purposeful rally of thousands is a rarity. It shows the commitment to the cause and the adherence to the clarion call of the Leader.

Before the Long March even started, Political Parties and their leaders heaped their venomous insinuations upon Dr Qadri; questioning his antecedents, nationality, the sincerity, the impossibility of sustaining the Long March with inadequate logistic support. They ridiculed his enthusiasm and in the end, they shamefacedly made a bee line to sign the Long March Declaration that he dictated and which was countersigned by the Prime Minister of the country - a man on the borrowed lease of time into the Premier slot. The OUTSIDER who was accused of adopting Unconstitutional means was finally acclaimed to have helped them strengthen the Democracy in Pakistan

Dr Qadri is not without critics but the most vehement condemners are the mainstream media that is in cahoots with the corrupt politicians who saw ominous signs of threat to their corrupt system they relish. Whatever the deriding analysts, one thing is quite clear that Dr Qadri has achieved his objective of canvassing and convincing the nation that most of our present politicians are corrupt and that there is a dire need for the **Electoral Reforms** if you want clean and honest politicians to rule this country. Who can disagree with that? Whether he succeeds even partially depends upon the political dynamics to unfold in next few months.

Federal Board of Revenue in Pakistan has confirmed that some 260 parliamentarians, 200 members of the National assembly and 60 senators do not pay taxes and do not file a tax return. That is about 75% percent of parliamentarians including 62% sitting ministers in the Federal Cabinet are tax thieves. This list includes the Prime Minister and the President of the country. The President did not file return for 2011. The Prime Minister Raja Parvez Ashraf paid £896 and the Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar paid £100 in taxes... This is utterly shameful but just calling them so should not end the matter. The Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi could be sentenced to four years for tax fraud, US Senator Ernie Newton was in jailed for four years for corruption, US Vice President Spira Agnew was accused of non payment of tax, he resigned and was sentenced three years probation. If Pakistan has to survive as a democratic and sovereign nation, the mighty Supreme Court of Pakistan should take *suo moto* notice and

send all these tax dodging cheats who rule over the destiny of this hapless country to jail.

The crimes committed in Pakistan in the name of democracy are countless. Would Pakistanis like to continue with this sham democracy where the lawmakers are the biggest lawbreakers where the head of the thief catcher (chairman National Accountability Bureau says that 7-12 Billion Rupees i.e. \$125 million are gobbled in corruption every single day. Sane elements in Pakistan consider this a serious national security matter since the nation is at the verge of economic collapse. The question arises why the custodians of National Security and Justice, the Army and the Supreme Court respectively are quiet on the subject.

The majority of members of the parliament in June 2012 favoured the law protecting mafias controlling stock markets, who act as their fund managers through Benami (namelender) accounts. Since majority do not file tax returns and wealth statements required under the law, they were not interested in blocking the bill tabled on 17 December 2012 aimed at whitening ill gotten and untaxed assets. *This confirms existence of unholy anti-people alliance of the corrupt.* Immunities and amnesties are given to deprive the nation of billions of Rupees in taxes. Pakistan has become a haven for tax evaders under the leadership of its parliamentarians who will continue their plunder with impunity unless there are genuine and meaningful Electoral Reforms. Dr Qadri at least theoretically was not wrong.

Babur Sattar an eminent journalist writes, "Pakistan has had intelligent folks from their 'first post-independence generation' tell us that in not supporting Dr Qadri we might have lost our last opportunity for revolutionary change and that the present brand of democracy isn't really worth saving. *Hearing self-styled prophets of moral virtue in this land of the pure it is hard not to believe that incinerating non-tax paying fake degree-holding politicians will bring instant salvation to all.*"

## **Silence on Rapes in Kashmir**

Abdul Majid Zargar

In the backdrop of recent incident of gang-rape of a girl in Delhi, Mr. Wajahat Habibullah, Chairman National Minorities commission & former Chief information commissioner of India has admitted that there have been numerous & widespread allegations of rape against Indian Army in Kashmir which have largely remained un-investigated with the result that culprits have gone unpunished. But regrettably it has taken nearly ten thousand rapes of Kashmiri women (Figure provided by a reputed news portal-Kashmir Media Service) for his conscience to arouse and speak truth.

Mr. Habibullah has worked in various top positions in Kashmir and is privy to many dirty things & covert operations having been committed in Kashmir .One such covert operation hatched by then Director General of Police that Killed Dr.Abdul Ahad Guroo in 1993 was revealed through his book “My Kashmir Conflict and the Prospects of Enduring Peace”(page 81-82).But one wonders whether he has fully come out of deep slumber or is it like a lucid interval for an insane person as in a recent TV programme it was shocking to hear his bizarre explanation of unidentified mass graves being unmarked because of persons of Wahabi sect buried therein which does not permit the names of dead to be inscribed on graves.

All Tyranny & barbarism needs to gain a foothold are for people of good conscience to remain silent. This is what Kashmir is witnessing today. The long struggle of Kashmiris against occupational violence is an everyday reality in the valley. Violence has served as a tool to affirm power and increasingly, women have become a medium through which the armed forces assert their authority and inflict human rights abuses. Rape in Kashmir is not merely a matter of chance nor is it a question of sex. It is also not a casual act by some erring soldier. It is rather a question of power and control which is `structured by male soldiers' notions of their masculine privilege. Being cheaper, more destructive and easier to get away with than other methods of warfare, it has assumed an instrument of State policy to punish, intimidate, coerce, humiliate and degrade the local population with the sole purpose of forcing them into submission. Dr Maiti, a professor of political science

at Rurdwa University, West Bengal, explains, "*Rape continues to be a major instrument of Indian oppression against the Kashmiri people while the majority of victims are civilians. This concept stands fortified by a report of International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) dated March 6, 2001, which mentions that women are raped in order to humiliate, frighten and defeat the enemy 'group' to which they belong. While addressing a seminar at the UN in Geneva, entitled, "Defending the Democratic Processes", British parliamentarian, George Galloway, has also confirmed that India is using rape as a weapon of occupation in Kashmir.*

A study done by "Doctors without Borders" reveals that Kashmiri women are among the worst sufferers of sexual violence in the world.

It further mentions that since the beginning of the armed struggle in Kashmir in 1989, sexual violence has been routinely perpetrated on Kashmiri women. With victims numbering around ten thousand, Kashmir has surpassed the figures of Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and Chechnya. A media portal of UK maintains that non-governmental organizations hardly took interest in documenting the plight of these silent sufferers of Jammu and Kashmir. This serves as a telling comment on the plight of women and on the indifferent attitude of the state towards addressing the issue. This has even been admitted by UN Special Representative Margot Wallstrom when she said recently. "*It has become such a way of life in some conflict zones like Kashmir that many victims are simply too afraid to report it and you can understand that,*" And even in those cases, where the victims manage to transcend these fears and report the matter to police, they achieve little or no justice because of the legal immunity provided to the erring soldiers.

With no remedy available at the national level, the rapes in Kashmir become eligible for an appropriate response at the international level. The state has to be held accountable for breach of its obligations under various relevant treaties and customary international law. The prosecution of individuals alleged to have committed rape should be done by the international criminal tribunal on the precedent of Nuremberg as the domestic courts and military court-martials have failed to deliver justice in these matters and are motivated by a state centric approach. The focus of the tribunal should be to punish the wrongdoers and not on providing compensation and support to the victim. If the international community remains a mute spectator to the war crimes in Kashmir, the people will lose trust in international law because of the strong developing perception that it applies only to the poor and weak and not to the strong and powerful? If you want global security,

there are a lot of things to do, but the first thing is to have values or standards that are equal and fair.

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## **Gang Rapes in Kashmir**

The case of gang rape in Delhi has remained a focus of almost all the print and electronic media in the country, followed by the violent and angry protests at India Gate, in the heart of New Delhi. Not only the residents of Delhi, but also the whole country has condemned this heinous crime. Living their own life of peace, far from turbulent Kashmir, the young generation of the city has rarely witnessed such protests, yet it arose in anger to protest against this brutal incident. However, this has also exposed the duality of attitude of majority of Indians. If an incident of gang rape against a medical student, on a moving bus in the national capital, is a matter of grief and sorrow for the whole country, provoking it to demand justice, what about Kashmir where many such cases of rape against innocent girls involving Army have come to fore and yet have been overlooked by majority Indians? Why hasn't the rest of India demanded justice for these girls?

One of the major rape cases in the history of Kashmir and indeed whole of India is the Kunan Poshpora mass rape incident. A village in northern Kashmir's Kupwara district, Kunan Poshpora, witnessed incidents of alleged mass rape of 20 women by the Indian Army.

# Our Terrorists

Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed

*Islamic fundamentalist militants are the enemies of Israel and Western governments, right? Think again.*

Once upon a time, the CIA trained, financed and supported Osama bin Laden and his mujahidin networks in Afghanistan to repel the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. After the end of the Cold War, bin Laden turned against the West and we no longer had any use for him. His persistent terrorist attacks against us for more than a decade, culminating in 9/11, provoked our own response, in the form of the ‘war on terror.’ This is the official narrative. And it’s false. Not only did Western intelligence services continue to foster Islamist extremist and terrorist groups connected to al-Qaeda after the Cold War; they continued to do so even after 9/11.

Graham Fuller, the former Deputy Director of the CIA’s National Council on Intelligence, alluded to the strategy in 1999. ‘The policy of guiding the evolution of Islam and of helping them against our adversaries worked marvellously well in Afghanistan against the Red Army. The same doctrines can still be used to destabilize what remains of Russian power, and especially to counter the Chinese influence in Central Asia.’

Throughout the 1990s, US intelligence sponsorship of Islamist extremist networks was linked to destabilizing Russian and Chinese influence in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Central Asia, the Caucasus and North Africa – which contain the world’s largest energy reserves after the Middle East.

## **Afghanistan – Big Oil and the Taliban**

In 1997 a US diplomat commented: ‘The Taliban will probably develop like the Saudis... There will be Aramco (consortium of oil companies controlling Saudi oil), pipelines, an emir, no parliament and lots of Sharia law. We can live with that.’

Continued US sponsorship of the al-Qaeda-Taliban nexus in Afghanistan was confirmed as late as 2000. Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Sub-

committee on South Asia, Dana Rohrabacher – former White House Special Assistant to President Reagan and now Senior Member of the House International Relations Committee – declared: *‘This administration has a covert policy that has empowered the Taliban and enabled this brutal movement to hold on to power.’* The assumption was that *‘the Taliban would bring stability to Afghanistan and permit the building of oil pipelines from Central Asia through Afghanistan to Pakistan’*. US companies involved in the project included Unocal and Enron. As early as May 1996, Unocal had officially announced plans to build a pipeline to transport natural gas from Turkmenistan to Pakistan through western Afghanistan. US officials held several meetings with the Taliban from 2000 to the summer of 2001, in an effort to get the Taliban to agree to a joint federal government with their local enemies, the Northern Alliance. In exchange, they promised the Taliban financial aid and international legitimacy. But eventually US policymakers concluded that the Taliban would never bring the stability needed for the pipeline project. According to an ex Pakistani Foreign Minister Niaz Naik, who was present at the meetings, US officials threatened the Taliban with military action if they failed to comply with the federalization plan. Even a date for threatened military action – October 2001 – was proposed. The Taliban rejected the plan. So months before the 9/11 terrorist attacks, a war on Afghanistan was already on the table. Jean-Charles Brisard, a former French intelligence officer, thus speculates that 9/11 may have been a pre-emptive attack by al-Qaeda to head off the declared US military invasion of Afghanistan.

There is still keen interest in the pipeline. ‘Since the US-led offensive that ousted the Taliban from power,’ reported Forbes in 2005, ‘the project has been revived and drawn strong US support’ as it would allow the Central Asian republics to export energy to Western markets ‘without relying on Russian routes’. Then-US Ambassador to Turkmenistan Ann Jacobsen noted that: ‘We are seriously looking at the project, and it is quite possible that American companies will join it.’ The problem remains that the southern section of the proposed pipeline runs through territory still *de facto* controlled by Taliban forces.

### **Chechnya – Jihad in the Caucasus**

The US flirtation with the al-Qaeda-Taliban nexus in Afghanistan was only part of wider US plan to secure key energy resources.

Chechnya is one victim of this strategy. The encroachment of US-sponsored mujahidin operatives linked to Osama bin Laden transformed the character of the Chechen resistance movement by the late 1990s. Al-Qaeda's hardline Islamist ideology was empowered, at the expense of Chechnya's populist Sufi culture and traditions.

Back in 1991, CIA veteran Richard Secord, a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, landed in Baku to set up a front company that would fly hundreds of al-Qaeda mujahidin from Afghanistan into Azerbaijan. By 1993, 2,000 mujahidin were recruited, converting Baku into a base for regional *jihadi* operations, which quickly extended into Dagestan and Chechnya.

US intelligence remained deeply involved until the end of the 1990s. According to Yossef Bodansky, then Director of the US Congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, US Government officials participated in a formal meeting in Azerbaijan in December 1999 'in which specific programmes for the training and equipping of mujahidin from the Caucasus, Central/South Asia and the Arab world were discussed and agreed upon'. This, he said, culminated in 'Washington's tacit encouragement of both Muslim allies (mainly Turkey, Jordan and Saudi Arabia) and US "private security companies"... to assist the Chechens and their Islamist allies to surge in the spring of 2000 and sustain the ensuing *jihad* for a long time.'

The US saw the sponsorship of 'Islamist *jihad* in the Caucasus' as a way to 'deprive Russia of a viable pipeline route through spiralling violence and terrorism'.

### **Algeria – state terrorism in disguise**

Covert operations were deployed in the same period in Algeria, where the army cancelled national democratic elections in 1992 that would have brought the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) to power in a landslide victory. Not long after the coup, hundreds of civilians were being mysteriously massacred by an unknown terrorist group, identified by the Algerian junta as a radical offshoot of the FIS – calling itself the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). The GIA was formed largely of Algerian veterans of bin Laden's mujahidin forces in Afghanistan, who had

returned in the late 1980s. To date, the total death toll from the massacres by the GIA is an estimated 150,000 civilians.

Yet in the late 1990s, evidence emerged from dissident Algerian Government and intelligence sources that the GIA atrocities were in fact perpetrated by the state. ‘Yussuf-Joseph’, a career secret agent in Algeria’s *secr  t   militaire* for 14 years, defected to Britain in 1997. He told the *Guardian* newspaper: ‘The GIA is a pure product of [the Algerian] secret service. I used to read all the secret telexes. I know that the GIA has been infiltrated and manipulated by the Government. The FIS aren’t doing the massacres.’ Joseph’s testimony has been corroborated by numerous defectors from the Algerian secret services. Secret British Foreign Office documents – revealed for the first time during the 2000 London trial of an alleged Algerian terrorist – referred to the ‘manipulation of the GIA’ by the Algerian Government as a ‘cover to carry out their own operations’.

Currently, the militant Algerian splinter group, the al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb, plays a predominant role in regional terrorist violence. Yet in a series of extensive analyses for the *Review of African Political Economy*, social anthropologist Jeremy Keenan of Britain’s University of East Anglia has unearthed the role played by Western intelligence agencies. He documents ‘an increasing amount of evidence to suggest that the alleged spread of terrorist activities across much of the Sahelian Sahara, has indeed been an elaborate deception on the part of US and Algerian military intelligence services’. Keenan argues that an al-Qaeda hostage-taking of European tourists in early 2003 ‘was initiated and orchestrated by elements within the Algerian military establishment’ – an operation ‘condoned by the US’ – and that al-Qaeda leader Ammar Saifi (also known as ‘the Maghreb’s bin Laden’) ‘was “turned” by the Algerian security forces in January 2003’.

Corroborating Keenan’s findings, a Pentagon adviser told US investigative journalist Seymour Hersh that the Algerian operation was part of a new Pentagon covert operations programme, originally proposed in August 2002 by the Defense Science Board as the ‘Proactive, Pre-emptive Operations Group’. The covert programme would aim to ‘stimulate reactions’ among al-Qaeda terrorists by duping them into undertaking operations through US military penetration of terrorist groups and recruitment of locals to conduct ‘combat operations, or even terrorist activities’. The capture of Ammar Saifi was a pilot for the new programme.

Western interest is easily explained. Algeria has the fifth-largest reserves of natural gas in the world, and is the second-largest gas exporter. It ranks fourteenth for oil reserves, with official estimates at 9.2 billion barrels. Approximately 90 per cent of Algeria's crude oil exports go to Western Europe and Algeria's major trading partners are Italy, France, Germany, Spain and the US.

Energy hegemony is a key priority. On the pretext of fighting al-Qaeda in North Africa, the US has pushed through a regional counter-terrorism architecture that has evolved into the \$500 million Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative, in which Algeria plays a pivotal role. The initiative coincides with the inauguration of a \$6 billion World Bank project, the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline.

### **Israel and Hamas – an ambiguous affair**

Israel has played a very similar game to the US and Britain in its ambiguous relationship to the Palestinian organization, Hamas. US Government and intelligence sources confirm that Israel provided direct and indirect financial aid to Hamas in the late 1970s as a counterbalance to the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). According to Israeli military affairs experts Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, at the time of the first *intifada* the Palestinian Fatah organization 'suspected the Israelis of a plot first to let Hamas gather strength and then to unleash it against the PLO, turning the uprising into a civil war... many Israeli staff officers believed that the rise of fundamentalism in Gaza could be exploited to weaken the power of the PLO.'

Israeli support for Hamas reportedly continued even after the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords in 1993 – during the period of some of the worst suicide bombings. Even the late Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat said in 2001 that Hamas 'continued to benefit from permits and authorizations, while we have been limited, even [for permits] to build a tomato factory... Some collaborationists of Israel are involved in these [terrorist] attacks.'

'Pipelines and lots of Sharia law – we can live with that'

Indeed, there are indications that the Israeli assassination of Hamas leader Abu Hanoud in November 2001 was a ploy to provoke more terror bombings. Three months earlier, the *Israeli Insider* reported Ariel Sharon's plan for an all-out attack on the Palestinian Authority (PA) to destroy permanently its infrastructure,

noting that the plan would only ‘be launched immediately following the next high-casualty suicide bombing’ – which was later provoked by Israel’s extrajudicial killing of Hanoud. As Israeli military security analyst Alex Fishman noted in *Ha’aretz*:

‘Whoever gave a green light to this act of liquidation knew full well that he was thereby shattering in one blow the “gentleman’s agreement” between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority [under which] Hamas was to avoid in the near future suicide bombings inside the Green Line... This understanding was, however, shattered by the assassination the day before yesterday – and whoever decided upon the liquidation of Abu knew in advance that that would be the price.’

Elements of the Israeli far-right, including senior cabinet officials, recognized that the plan to destroy the PA would facilitate the rise of Hamas. In an Israeli Cabinet meeting in December 2001, one minister declared: ‘Between Hamas and Arafat, I prefer Hamas.’ He added that Arafat is a ‘terrorist in a diplomat’s suit, while Hamas can be hit unmercifully... there won’t be any international protests’.

### **Ties with terror**

Islamist terrorism cannot be understood without acknowledging the extent to which its networks are being used by Western military intelligence services, both to control strategic energy resources and to counter their geopolitical rivals. Even now, nearly a decade after 9/11, covert sponsorship of al-Qaeda networks continues. In recent dispatches for the *New Yorker*, investigative journalist Seymour Hersh cites US Government and intelligence officials’ confirmation that the CIA and the Pentagon have funnelled millions of dollars via Saudi Arabia to al-Qaeda affiliated Sunni-extremist groups, across the Middle East and Central Asia. The policy, which Hersh says began in 2003, has spilled over into regions like Iraq and Lebanon, fuelling Sunni-Shia sectarian conflict.

The programme is part of a drive to counter Iranian Shia influence in the region. In early 2008, a US Presidential Finding to Congress corroborated Hersh’s reporting, affirming CIA funding worth \$400 million to diverse anti-Shia extremist and terrorist groups. This was not contested by any Democratic members of the House. Now, President Obama has retained Bush’s Defense Secretary, Robert Gates, as his own. Yet Gates was the architect of the covert strategy against Iran. To date, Obama has given no indication that this strategy will change.

The history outlined here throws into doubt our entire understanding of the ‘war on terror’. How can we fight a war against an enemy that our own governments are covertly financing for short-sighted geopolitical interests?

If the ‘war on terror’ is to end, it won’t be won by fighting the next futile oil war. It will be won at home by holding the secretive structures of government to account and prosecuting officials for aiding and abetting terrorism – whether knowingly or by criminal negligence. Ultimately, only this will rein in the ‘security’ agencies that foster the ‘enemy’ we are supposed to be fighting.

**Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed** is Executive Director of the Institute for Policy Research and Development. His latest book is *The London Bombings: an Independent Inquiry* (Duckworth, 2006). A *longer version* of this article, with footnotes, is available on-line. Please follow this [link](#).

## Iranian President

Iranian President Ahmadinejad has recommended a joint sitting of Ulema from Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan to chalk out a combined strategy to combat terrorism in the region,

Iranian president said we should not kill each other as we are Muslims and believe in one God. ‘We should only think like a Muslim’, he said. Ahmadinejad said our Holy Prophet (PBUH) was neither a Sunni nor Shia but a Muslim. Killing each other strengthens the enemy and weakens us.

He said that people in Pakistan are not scared of terrorist attacks and blasts, in fact they are facing it with courage. The Iranian president said, ‘western powers do not want Pakistan to progress. Iranians are with the people of Pakistan and will not leave them alone’. He warned that presence of US in Afghanistan is dangerous for regional countries.

# **China a Military Threat?**

## **No Wonder China is Nervous as Obama Pivots**

F. William Engdahl

To read the mainstream Western media, one would conclude that China has become an economic giant now intent on flexing its military muscle and making massive arms build up to do so. China's designated new President, Xi Jinping, has just won both the top Communist party post from predecessor Hu Jintao as well as the head of the powerful Central Military Commission, giving Xi a full takeover of party and armed forces.

A recent BBC analysis, in an article titled "China extending military reach," is typical of Western media coverage of China's military program: "China's first aircraft carrier will begin sea trials later this year. Late last year, the first pictures were leaked of the prototype of Beijing's new "stealth" fighter. And US military experts believe that China has begun to deploy the world's first long-range ballistic missile capable of hitting a moving ship at sea."

In Japan, nationalist politicians like politically ambitious Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara and Toru Hashimoto, the mayor of Osaka, are gaining popularity with anti-China rhetoric and by claiming Japan must develop capacities to oppose Chinese military ascendancy. In May the authoritative New York Times ran an alarming story to the effect that China announced a "double-digit increase" in military spending. In the actual text of the article they report an 11% increase over the previous budget, far less than even the rate of inflation.

However, when we examine in detail the actual redeployment and military moves of US Armed Forces in the Asia region following President Obama's announcement of a new "Asia Pivot" refocus of US military capacities from Western Europe to the Asia region, it becomes clear China is re-acting, in order to attempt to deal with quite real threats to its future sovereignty rather than acting in an aggressive posture.

The mere fact that a standing President, Obama, during nationally televised Presidential debates labelled China as an “adversary” is indicative of the US military posture change. The depth and nature of the US pivot to China is crystal clear when one takes a closer look at the recent developments in an Asian US Missile Defense deployment, clearly aimed at China and no other.

China officially spent barely 10% of what the US does on its defense, some \$90 billion, or if certain defense-related arms import and other costs are included, perhaps \$111 billion a year. Even if the Chinese authorities do not publish complete data on such sensitive areas, its clear China spends a mere fraction of the USA and is starting from a military-technology base far behind the USA.

The US defense budget is not just by far the world’s largest. It dominates everyone else, completely independent of any perceived threat. In the nineteenth century, the British Royal Navy built the size of its fleet according to the fleets of Britain’s two most powerful potential enemies; America’s defense budget strategists declare it will be “doomsday” if the United States builds its navy to anything less than five times that of China and Russia combined.[

If we include the spending by Russia, China’s strongest ally within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, their combined total annual defense spending is barely \$142 billion. The world’s ten top defense spending nations in addition to the USA as largest, and China as second largest, include the UK, France, Japan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Germany, India and Brazil. In 2011 the military spending of the United States totalled a staggering 46% of total spending by the world’s 171 governments and territories, almost half the entire world.

Clearly, for all its rhetoric about peace-keeping missions and “democracy” promotion, the Pentagon is pursuing what its planners refer to as “Full Spectrum Dominance,” the total control of all global air, land, ocean, space, outer-space and now cyberspace. It is clearly determined to use its military might to secure global domination or hegemony. No other interpretation is possible.

China today, because of its dynamic economic growth and its determination to pursue sovereign Chinese national interests, merely because China exists, is becoming the Pentagon new “enemy image,” or adversary, now replacing the no longer useful “enemy image” of Islam used after September 2001 by the Bush-Cheney Administration to justify the Pentagon’s global power pursuit.

After almost two decades of neglect of its interests in East Asia, in 2011, the Obama Administration announced that the US would make “a strategic pivot” in its foreign policy to focus its military and political attention on the Asia-Pacific, particularly Southeast Asia, that is, China.

### **‘Obama Doctrine’ and Asian BMD**

To date the heart of the initial stages of the China Pivot involve building a massive anti-Ballistic Missile Defense ring around China to neutralize China’s nuclear strike potential. During the final months of 2011 the Obama Administration clearly defined a new public military threat doctrine for US military readiness in the wake of the US military failures in Iraq and Afghanistan. During a Presidential trip to the Far East, while in Australia, the US President unveiled what is being termed the Obama Doctrine.

The following sections from Obama’s speech in Australia are worth citing in detail:

With most of the world’s nuclear power and some half of humanity, Asia will largely define whether the century ahead will be marked by conflict or cooperation... As President, I have, therefore, made a deliberate and strategic decision — ...the United States will play a larger and long-term role in shaping this region and its future...I have directed my national security team to make our presence and mission in the Asia Pacific a top priority... We will preserve our unique ability to project power and deter threats to peace...The United States is a Pacific power, and we are here to stay. Indeed, we are already modernizing America’s defense posture across the Asia Pacific. ..We see our new posture here in Australia...I believe we can address shared challenges, such as proliferation and maritime security, including cooperation in the South China Sea.

On August 24, 2012the New York Wall Street Journal reported that the Obama Administration as part of its newly-announced policy of China Pivot will expand its missile-defense shield, Ballistic Missile Defense or BMD as it is known in the military, in the Asia-Pacific region.

The official reason given by the Pentagon for its new BMD deployment to the Asian theatre is to protect Japan, South Korea and other US allied countries in the

region against a North Korean nuclear missile attack. That argument doesn't stand close scrutiny.

In reality, according to numerous reports, Washington has decided to invest in a major Ballistic Missile Defense network using Japan, South Korea and Australia. The real target of the BMD system is not North Korea, but rather the Peoples' Republic of China, the only power in the region possessing even a potential nuclear threat with serious long-range delivery capabilities. It is part of the new Pentagon strategy of imposing full control over the future development of China.

The Washington BMD offensive has to be viewed as well in the light of the well-timed Japanese government decision to deliberately provoke tension with China over the disputed Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea, a region believed to be vastly rich in natural gas reserves.

### **Part III: Japan Missile Defense Key**

In September 2012, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta announced that the United States and Japan had reached a major agreement to deploy second major advanced missile-defense radar on Japanese territory. In his announcement Panetta declared, "The purpose of this is to enhance our ability to defend Japan. It's also designed to help forward-deployed US forces and it also will be effective in protecting the US homeland from the North Korean ballistic missile threat." A glance at the map shows the nuclear holes in Panetta's statement. Chinese missile sites are just across the Korean border, well in range of the US-Japan new BMD installation.

The Washington decision to place advanced BMD infrastructure in Japan was made long ago as part of a US strategy of global military dominance. The BMD cooperation with Japan began in earnest on December 19, 2003, when the Japanese government issued the cabinet decision "On Introduction of Ballistic Missile Defense System and Other Measures." Ever since, establishing a robust missile defense system has been a Japan national security priority.

Under the current Japanese government's interpretation of Article 9 of Japan's Constitution, Japan's participation in collective self-defense is prohibited, as is using missile defense capabilities to defend a third country—even an ally such as the United States. Shinzo Abe, head of the Liberal Democratic Party, almost certain to become Prime Minister after the December 16 Lower House elections, is

a strong advocate of BMD and of changing Article 9. That means we can expect a major shift to a more militant anti-China military posture from Tokyo.

According to US military press accounts, the most important feature of the new Japanese BMD project will be installation of powerful early-warning radar, 'X-band', made by Raytheon Co. It's "a large, phased-array fire control sensor, featuring precision discrimination and interceptor support," designed to counter threats from 'rogue states.' It will be installed on an unnamed southern Japanese island.

Japan's defense minister Satoshi Morimoto confirmed that Tokyo and Washington "have had various discussions over missile defences, including how to deploy the US's X-Band radar system." Japan already hosts one X-Band radar in the northern prefecture of Aomori, since 2006. It's heavily opposed by local residents who fear, not without good reason, that the presence of the radar makes them a target for potential enemy attacks.

### **BMD across Asia**

The US move to prioritize its BMD installation in Asia involves not only Japan. Washington is also helping India improve its new missile defense system. The Indians want to build a multi-layer missile defense network with US help. Publicly India's government cites Pakistan as the reason. Privately, it's China. India test-fired its Agni-V intermediate range ballistic missile earlier this year and the Indian press openly cited the system's ability to strike anywhere in China as the most important feature.

According to Steven Hildreth, a missile-defense expert with the Washington Congressional Research Service, the USA is "laying the foundations" for a region-wide missile defense system that would consist of US ballistic missile defences combined with those of regional powers, particularly Japan, South Korea and Australia. Although supposedly aimed at containing threats from North Korea, Hildreth also stated, "The reality is that we're also looking longer term at the elephant in the room, which is China." According to a report in the Wall Street Journal the X-band arc would allow the US to 'peer deeper' into China, in addition to North Korea.

As well, there are reports from unnamed US Defense Department officials that a third X-Band radar would be positioned in the Philippines, allowing the Pentagon to accurately track ballistic missiles launched from North Korea but also from large parts of China.

In addition to Japan, Washington has invited South Korea and Australia to join the Asian BMD program. The official Chinese English language daily, Global Times, pointed out, “Among the nuclear powers, China has the smallest number of nuclear weapons. It is also the only country to make a ‘no first use’ commitment. Installing a missile defense system in Asia disrespects China’s nuclear policy.”

The Global Times article notes further, “If Japan, South Korea and Australia join the system, a vicious arms race in Asia may follow. It is not what China wants to see, but it will have to deal with it if the arms race happens. The US is creating waves in Asia. The region may see more conflicts intensify in the future. China should make utmost efforts to prevent it, but prepare for the worst.”

### **Part V: BMD encourages Nuclear First Strike**

The US BMD strategy in Asia follows a decision by the Bush and Obama Administrations to first deploy BMD in a ring surrounding Russia with installations in Poland, the Czech Republic and Turkey, aimed at Russia’s Intercontinental Ballistic Missile arsenal. As prominent retired US military officers have warned, deploying Ballistic Missile Defense against a potential nuclear opponent, whether Russia or China or North Korea or Iran is madness in strict military strategy terms.

With even a primitive missile defense shield, the US could launch a first strike attack against Russian or Chinese missile silos and submarine fleets with less fear of effective retaliation; the few remaining Russian or Chinese nuclear missiles would be unable to launch a response sufficiently destructive.

During the Cold War, the ability of the Warsaw Pact and NATO to mutually annihilate one another had led to a nuclear stalemate dubbed by military strategists, MAD—Mutually Assured Destruction. It was scary but, in a bizarre sense, more stable than what would come with a unilateral US pursuit of nuclear primacy. MAD was based on the prospect of mutual nuclear annihilation with no

decisive advantage for either side; it led to a world in which nuclear war had been 'unthinkable.'

Now the US, with BMD in Europe against Russia and in Asia against China, is pursuing the possibility of nuclear war as 'thinkable.' That is really and truly 'mad.'

The first nation with a ballistic missile 'defense' shield (BMD) would de facto have 'first strike ability,' making BMD not defensive but offensive in the extreme. Lt. Colonel Robert Bowman, Director of the US Air Force Missile Defense Program during the Reagan era, recently called missile defense, "the missing link to a First Strike." BMD gives an incentive to make a first nuclear strike, something never before imaginable owing to the lack of certainty one's nation would not become nuclear radioactive rubble. In military terms, BMD is offensive, not defensive contrary to the name, and should properly be named Ballistic Missile Offense.

#### **Bowman further notes:**

Under Reagan and Bush I, it was called the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization (SDIO). Under President Clinton, it became the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO). Now Bush II made it the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) and has given it the freedom from oversight and audit previously enjoyed only by the black or top secret programs. If Congress doesn't act soon, this new independent agency may take their essentially unlimited budget and spend it outside of public and Congressional scrutiny on weapons that we won't know anything about until they're in space. In theory, then, the space warriors would rule the world, able to destroy any target on earth without warning. Will these new super weapons bring the American people security? Hardly.

Washington's major deployment of BMD across Asia is a major reason likely for the sudden decision to delay the 18th Party Congress until after the US elections to see whether China faced a President Romney or President Obama. What has materialized in terms of US military decisions in the few months since Obama first proclaimed his Asia Pivot and Obama Doctrine makes clear why China is increasingly nervous about Obama 'pivots.'

*F. William Engdahl is economist and geopolitical analyst.*

# The Politics of Selective Protest

Goldy M. George

*Narrating the experience of Dalit women in a village in Tamilnadu, Cynthia Stephen quotes a girl in these words: “there is no girl in our lane who has not been coerced or raped by the dominant caste men when they go to the fields to fetch water or for work”. Stephen’s question is valid “which upper-caste young woman, rural or urban, has ever had to brave repeated rape without to keep her family supplied with water?”*

India tremors under the shockwaves of extremely saddening incident of the cruel gang rape and brutal attack the 23-year-old physiotherapy student and her friend on December 16. The young lady is still in critical condition fighting for her life. It has certainly brought disgrace to the nation as a whole.

Apparently this incident has also instigated the women's organization to come on to the streets in large number for a larger struggle. The recent spontaneous mass rise of various women's and other democratic organizations in protest against the incident provides a ray of hopes in the mind of those who believe in justice and peace. This perhaps is a step ahead in Indian democracy when such mass outcry had been seen across the entire nation.

Three objectives of this process was vibrantly visible; one justice to the victims, two end such atrocious incidents against women and three the role of the state agencies in citizen's security. Notwithstanding, the manner the entire mob got mobilized and the way it has been placed in the media circuit raises a critical character of the Indian upper caste middle class psyche. How would it be if the victim was someone from rural, working class, Dalit or Adivasis community and the incident was much outrageous? This paper investigated this critical aspect with some of the recent incidents of similar nature.

## **Caste and Sexuality: Rape, Assault, Violence and Dishonour**

The same day of the physiotherapy student was attacked another minor Dalit girl was gang raped in Raipur, Chhattisgarh whose case is yet to be filed by the police. An eight-year-old Dalit girl was allegedly raped and murdered in Saharsa district

of Bihar. The body was found in a canal the next day. Laxmi Oraon an Adivasis girl from Assam has been running from pillar to post for justice for the past five years but all her pleas had fallen on deaf ears. She was 17 then, and has been traumatised after her naked pictures begging for help were splashed nationally across the newspapers and TV channels.

In January 2012, Rekha Chavan a Dalit woman was stripped, beaten by lathis and naked paraded by the Brahmins in Satara district of Maharashtra. In Bhopal on December 4, a 22-year-old pregnant Dalit woman was gang-raped by three persons in the old city and the police accepted the complaint two days later. On October 8, another pregnant Dalit woman was abducted and raped by two youths in Kaithal district of Haryana. In Haryana alone it was the 15th incident within a month period. Earlier on September 9 a minor Dalit girl was gang-raped by eight youths in Hisar district. In trembling shock her father commits suicide. Followed by another incident on September 21 in Jind district when three youths entered the house of another Dalit woman and raped her at gunpoint in the presence of her children. She is in her mid 30s and mother to three children.

In 2009 Anita Suryavanshi Dalit rights activist along with her husband was murdered in Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh. The body of Anita was found after 10-days in a decomposed and disfigured state. Even the forensic report was not able to establish the cause of death till today. None have been yet arrested in this twin-blind murder. In September this year a Dalit woman was assaulted, tortured and tonsured by locals after holding her responsible for the death of a youth under mysterious circumstances in Sambalpur district of Odisha. A 19-year-old Dalit student from Alwar of Rajasthan alleged that upper caste men sexually assaulted her for trying to attend her college. She struggled for a month to get an FIR registered and is still waiting for justice after a year.

### **Violence against Dalit Women – No anger, outcry or mobilization**

Such cases of sexual, physical, psychological and mental attack on Dalit-Adivasis women generally go unnoticed. It is a common happening in most of those villages. Either the dominant caste or the presence of the police force creates. There are thousands of such incidents happening every day in a country like India, which perhaps is not shocking to the majority of 140 Crore people. In many incidences it is also believe that a particular section in India like the Dalits or

Adivasis deserve such treatment from upper caste as well as the state agencies. It is well understandable that the mob-cultured-outcry is not possible in such cases.

However the most disheartening component is the convenient silence of the so-called progressive sections of Indian society. No cry, no outcry, no protests, no demonstrations or even not a few beyond certain circles have even heard of such incidences. This part of Indian society as well as progressive section is completely blank.

### **The Classical case of Soni Sodhi**

The most disappointing among all in recent time is the way the women's movements, progressive forums and NCW handled the case of Soni Sodhi. Soni Sodhi was arrested on October 4 2011 under the alleged charges of being a Maoist courier. After being continuously harassed and beleaguered for nearly a year, Sodhi had to run for her life leaving her home village in Dantewada. She was arrested in New Delhi on charges of transferring funds worth 1.5 million rupees from a corporate mining company Essar to the Maoist as "protection money". Following her case arrest she was deported to Chhattisgarh, held in police custody.

In a letter to the Supreme Court of India Sodhi cries aloud of her physical, sexual, mental and psychological torture. In her letter she mentions that a police official forced her out of her cell, stripped her and gave her electric shocks causing acute pain and internal injuries over her body, head and spine. Her letters to her mentor Himanshu Kumar gives much detailed account of how she was tortured, the worst among it was the insertion of stones into her body by SP Ankit Garg.

She was unable to walk while brought in the court on October 10, 2011. On October 29, 2011, the government medical college hospital in Kolkata examined her under Supreme Court orders, which reported back on November 14, 2011 that two stones had been inserted in her vagina and one in her rectum and she had annular tears in her spine. Sodhi still languishes in Raipur jail as a Maoist. Amnesty International has called her as a "prisoner of conscience". Meanwhile, the state government rewarded Ankit Garg with a gallantry award.

This brutal torture and inhuman woes didn't stop there. Sodhi's right to life and dignity have been violated by various jail and police authorities several times over – from foisting false cases against her, sexually torturing and humiliating her in the

police station, denying her medical attention, and most recently, humiliating her by publicly stripping her in prison in the name of conducting physical search. The so-called public outcry by the self-claimed *aam-aadmi* identity of the middle class did not only fail to address this question, rather it faked with the psyche of Adivasis women victims of sexual and societal violence.

### **De-politicisation of Women's Movements!**

The Indian women's movement to great extents has been depoliticized by the crude entry of her middleclass. In the post 90s one could observe a sea difference in the former. One of the key factors has been globalization, which grew the trends of large scale funding through NGOs and INGOs on women's issues. The erstwhile focus of rural or urban slum based Dalit, Adivasis, working class driven approach shifted to a classical middle class driven approach consisting of professional, skilled and expertise norms and rules.

This phase at one end roped in large number of professionally educated young people from relatively privileged backgrounds that were mostly hired to work on women's issues. Earlier women's groups generally comprising of the unprivileged ones or the victims took up such aspects, usually worked as volunteers. In the new scheme of things, the erstwhile rural Dalit-Adivasis Mahila Sanghatan volunteers do not find any space too. They are just misfits who are either not wanted anymore or required to be thoroughly trained by the new set of people. The ones who survive the odds and compromise to this are only a few; others are not part of it any more.

This is also the phase where a critical leadership emerged. The erstwhile Dalit-Adivasis women's leadership in mainstream movements began to limit to certain limited spheres. Whatever remained in the name of Dalit-Adivasis women's leadership was mostly from the city-based convent-educated ones with the go-get attitude. With them, there was no match of the rural women of similar communities. These few city-based Dalit-Adivasis women, who gained space in the mainstream movements, created a new class and at no level would they like to be identified with those in the villages.

This huge swing of ideological position led to a major shift in the tenor and character of the women's movement in its approach and attitude towards marginalized women, thereby reflecting a dearth of understanding of this caste-

gender-power dynamics. Thus in recent times all core agenda of the women's movements were more cantered around issues that hardly touched the poor, working class, Dalit-Adivasis women's day to day struggle to survive with human dignity. As a result all caste-based and ethnicity based rape, molestation, attempts to rape, assault, violence, discrimination and dishonour began to be unlooked by the mainstream organizations including women's organizations.

Narrating the experience of Dalit women in a village in Tamilnadu, Cynthia Stephen quotes a girl in these words: “there *is no girl in our lane that has not been coerced or raped by the dominant caste men when they go to the fields to fetch water or for work*”. Stephen's question is valid “which *upper-caste young woman, rural or urban, has ever had to brave repeated rape without to keep her family supplied with water?*”

The daily story of a Dalit woman, the torture of an Adivasis woman is multiple times intense than the case at hand. It is even looked down by redressal forums like National Commission for Women. This is what it has happened with most of these women. It is high time the mainstream women's movement accept caste as the lifeline of this country and address the issue, create space for people from such sections and address each and every, otherwise all the past legacies may vanish off, in no time.

## Target Pakistan

What we frequently miss in our analysis is that common amongst all terror networks of violence in Pakistan – and probably at the top of their list – is their anti-Pakistan agenda. They don't accept the constitution of Pakistan and the rights and responsibilities it imposes on citizens; they don't accept the writ of the state and the government and the legitimacy of the policies crafted by the state; and they don't accept the rights and responsibilities of Pakistan as a nation state under international law. The world needs to understand this and support Pakistan in its war on terror.

# **The New Great Game Has Arrived in Bangladesh: A Preamble**

Dr M. Abdul Mu'min Chowdhury

## **Violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state, Assam's Bodoland and Bangladesh's Chittagong**

What to make of the recent ethno-sectarian violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state, Assam's Bodoland and Bangladesh's Chittagong? In asking this innocuous question to a number of friends and acquaintances, more often than not I have met with a counter question: What can they possibly be other than heinous drives by the Buddhist chauvinists of Myanmar and the Hindu supremacists of Assam to uproot Muslims from their respective areas. The more partisan they were towards their own co-religionists, greater was this inclination. When I pointed out that in Chittagong the Buddhists appear to have been on the receiving end, mostly I have a blank stare either because they have not considered it at all or they did not expect a Muslim to raise it. A few blamed the sitting pro-Indian government for staging it. However, almost to a man they were entirely oblivious of any possible trans-national links among the violence. If some of them had such knowledge or inkling, they kept it to themselves.

To be frank with you, I have not been surprised. After all, such ethnic and/or sectarian violence are not uncommon throughout South and South-East Asia. From India to Indonesia one can have numerous examples of certain section of the majority community using violence to keep members of a minority community tame. These are, relatively speaking, momentary turbulences like the furious sizzling of a splash of water in a hot pan. Once peace is restored, life goes back to its old form as if nothing untoward has happened. What international purpose such short, sharp mayhems could serve?

Yes, ethnic and/or sectarian violence in South and South-East Asia are local frictions in almost all the cases; not in every case though! It is precisely because of the latter possibility here, there is a danger of misreading and mishandling these three exceptional and entwined set of trans-national violence in a proximate geographical arena.

Some of you might have already started musing with a wry smile: Why on earth this old wiseacre has come to think these are not run of the mill local sectarian violence? Yes, I will tell you why. But before I do that let's be clear about one thing. I am not saying that any of the three polities – Myanmar, India and Bangladesh -- did not have ethnic and/or sectarian fault-lines. Not only they have, the Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar in particular have a long and awful history of victimisation not just by their Rakhaine neighbours but also by the state itself, which stripped them of their citizenship and made them stateless in their own homeland. Besides, they have been subjected to 'push back' before. The point I am making is not about the legitimacy of any community's grievance against their neighbouring community and/or state. I am simply pointing out that when suited to their need extra-national powers may also take advantage of such festering wounds and I believe this is the case in all three violence in question. Look at the signs and you will start recognising this.

### **Look at the Signs**

Can't you see the American eagle is hovering over your head? Count how many US high officials and admirals have been to Dhaka, Chittagong and Cox's Bazaar since Hilary Clinton's visit at the beginning of May? Count how long it has taken for the top-most US diplomat herself to dash to Dhaka since her boss President Obama's official announcement in January of the new US foreign policy objective centred on the Asia-Pacific region?

### **Note Some News from Myanmar**

To help you further, let me now give you news of some new development in Myanmar in April, that is, a month before Clinton's Dhaka visit and which, as far as I know, no Bangladesh news media has picked up. Here I shall reproduce the relevant extracts from the Bangkok based pro-democracy Alternative-ASEAN's monthly Burma Bulletin's April issue:

### **Mon and Rakhine groups sign agreements**

**5 April:** Arakan State authorities and the Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) signed a five-point preliminary peace agreement after two days of talks in Akyab, Arakan

State. The two sides agreed on implementing a ceasefire, opening liaison offices in Kyauktaw, Arakan State, and Paletwa, Chin State, and pursue further negotiations.

**11 April:** Regime officials led by Rail Transportation Minister Aung Min and New Mon State Party (NMSP) representatives held talks in Moulmein, Mon State, as a follow-up to the ‘initial peace agreement’ signed on 25 February. [See *February 2012 Burma Bulletin*] The two sides discussed a nationwide ceasefire, socio-economic development in Mon State, and the release of Mon political prisoners.

### **Refugees, IDPs repatriated?**

Ongoing peace talks between the regime and various armed ethnic groups appeared to have been the catalyst for the initiation of refugee repatriation in Bangladesh and Thailand. In addition, the regime stated it wanted to resettle IDPs and refugees by June.

**9 April:** A UNHCR high-level delegation and Bangladeshi authorities responsible for refugee repatriation held meetings with refugees in the Nayapara and Kutupalong camps. A UNHCR representative said the UN wanted to inform the refugees about progress in Burma and would facilitate the refugees’ voluntary return to Burma.

**21 April:** Regime Rail Transportation Minister Aung Min said that Naypyidaw wanted to begin resettling IDPs and refugees before the start of the rainy season in June.

**24 April:** It was reported that Thai authorities had been conducting informal surveys regarding refugee repatriation preferences at several camps on the Thai-Burma border since mid-March.

**25 April:** UNHCR representative Johannes Ten Feld met with regime Border Affairs Minister Lt Gen Thein Htay in Naypyidaw to discuss how to enhance cooperation regarding the resettlement of IDPs.

Note the mark of amazement of the US funded INGO’s mouthpiece and then consider the amazing fact that the mayhem in Rakhaine state started before that deadline could even pass!

Surely, now you cannot avoid asking the awkward question. Once you become alert about the possibility of the geo-political and geo-strategic entanglement and with that possibility in mind you then start looking into the US game plans as well as the available facts about the blood-lettings in question, I am sure anyone of you with a modicum of intelligence, analytical skills and ability and commitment to fairness and truth will be able to recognise that all the three violence in question are flingers marking the official start of the US's all out efforts towards the containment of China. Do not allow your natural pro-Muslim sympathy or humanitarian compassion to make you overlook any possible US or pro-US political skulduggery. Besides, being selective with Islamic and human compassion and economical with truth, such blindness might cause greater harm than good to both the Muslim victims of the violence as well as your own Muslim nation-state. Such caution is all the more appropriate here in view of the fact that during the past few years the subterfuge of humanitarian concern has become an US weapon against the present or future states, which might not follow its, what is euphemistically called, 'leadership' and prefer not to gang-up with it either in sustaining the unsustainable Zionist state and arrogating the oil wealth of the Muslim Middle East or in its self-serving cold-war against China and its allies.

### **Take Note of the New Great Game**

Like many analysts I call the latter US bid the New Great Game. This I do because there had been a similar Great Game before. The knowledge of and insights from the previous one might help us in understanding many aspects of the present one, including the bleak prospect of its success. Incidentally, both the initiator and the target of the original Great Game -- UK and Russia -- are also there, right by the side of the US and China respectively. Despite China being the target, in all intent and purpose the New Great Game is also about clipping the sovereignty of the rest of the nation states of the world and the international order based on the inviolability of national sovereignty. Like the original Great Game, the New Great Game is also about 'commerce'; of the minerals and carbon energy rather than of the agricultural and manufacturing goods, though. Like humanitarian concern, free trade is a euphemism for US multinationals unhindered access to every nation's internal market regardless of its often debilitating consequences on their economic development, national security and political independence.

## **The Unique Challenge and Opportunity for Bangladesh**

And crucially for us, Bangladesh is in the ‘eye’ of this fast brewing geopolitical storm. We might have been a great oceanic trading people before. But as far as I know, up until now we have never been called upon to play a central role in shaping the future turn of world history. It is geo-politics and geo-strategy rather than our might or mien that has assigned this role upon us. Depending on how we play it out, it could be a make or break time for our nation as well.

We need a truly united national effort with clarity and decisiveness unimpaired by petty intellectual or partisan politics. We cannot afford to be lax simply because we cannot afford to fail. It is this ‘to be or not to be’ is the biggest question of our time.

### **Plan to Do**

To help appreciate the enormity of the challenge and opportunity that lay ahead of us as a nation, with a deep sense of urgency I plan to do three things:

- Explain what the New Great Game entails;
- Why Bangladesh is crucial in it; and
- How and why the US and its allies created the mayhems in Rakhaine, Assam and Chittagong.

Of course, such an understanding is of no practical use unless it helps in defining what we should be doing as a nation. Towards this end, I therefore plan to do five more things:

- Assess the strength and weakness of the principal antagonists of the New Great Game and its possible outcome;
- Consider what stand other important states within and beyond the region are likely to have;
- What challenges and options all these are likely to create for Bangladesh;

- What beneficial choices we may make for ourselves, our Rohingya Muslim co-religionists and the future international order;
- How we may navigate through it all and prepare and equip our people and state institutions in order to obtain and secure our objectives.

### **A Personal Note**

Before I take up the first of the eight tasks that I plan to undertake, I have an explaining to do. Those of you who have followed the seven-part essay that I wrote in the summer 'On Our Nation's Existential Crisis' will remember that one of my conclusions was that to get us out of the 'perpetual state crisis' and set us on in the pursuance of our objectives as an old proud Muslim nation we need to rethink and reset our state institutions with a view to protect our national sovereignty, bolster our national defence and security and facilitate our national building. Accordingly, I promised to give you an outline of what needed to be done.

Now to be frank with you, although I was aware of the fact that the New Great Game is on the card, I did not expect it to arrive so soon. I thought if we can reset our state institutions and equip our people we shall be in a better shape to deal with this New Great Game as well. Still, that remains to be done if we are to meet the challenges and avail the opportunities that lay before us now. And because of this the last task I plan to do now remains the same what I promised to write about then. In other words, while I still intend to, *Inshallah*, keep my words, given the unexpected turn in our geo-political and geo-strategic situation I am forced to apply for a bit of your indulgence.

# Why I Killed Gandhi

Nathuram Godse

*Gandhiji Assassin: Nathuram Godse's Final Address to the Court. Nathuram Godse was arrested immediately after he assassinated Gandhiji, based on a F. I. R. filed by Nandlal Mehta at the Tughlak Road Police station at Delhi. The trial, which was held in camera, began on 27th May 1948 and concluded on 10th February 1949. He was sentenced to death. An appeal to the Punjab High Court, then in session at Simla, did not find favourable and the sentence was upheld. The statement that you are about to read is the last made by Godse before the Court on the 5th of May 1949. Such was the power and eloquence of this statement that one of the judges, G. D. Khosla, later wrote, "I have, however, no doubt that had the audience of that day been constituted into a jury and entrusted with the task of deciding Godse's appeal, they would have brought a verdict of 'not Guilty' by an overwhelming majority"*

Born in a devotional Brahmin family, I instinctively came to revere Hindu religion, Hindu history, and Hindu culture. I had, therefore, been intensely proud of Hinduism as a whole. As I grew up I developed a tendency to free thinking unfettered by any superstitious allegiance to any isms, political or religious. That is why I worked actively for the eradication of untouchables and the caste system based on birth alone. I openly joined RSS wing of anti-caste movements and maintained that all Hindus were of equal status as to rights, social, and religious and should be considered high or low on merit alone and not through the accident of birth in a particular caste or profession.

I took part in organized anti-caste dinners in which thousands of Hindus, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisya, Chamars and Bhangis participated. We broke the caste rules and dined in the company of each other. I have read the speeches and writings of Ravana, Chanakya, Dadabhai Naoroji, Vivekanand, Gokhale, Tilak, along with the books of ancient and modern history of India and some prominent countries like England, France, America and Russia. Moreover I studied the tenets of Socialism and Marxism. But above all I studied very closely whatever Veer Savarkar and Gandhiji had written and spoken, as to my mind these two ideologies

have contributed more to the moulding of the thought and action of the Indian people during the last thirty years or so, than any other single factor has done.

All this reading and thinking led me to believe it was my first duty to serve Hinduism and Hindus both as a patriot and as a world citizen. To secure the freedom and to safeguard the just interests of some thirty Crores (300 million) of Hindus would automatically constitute the freedom and the well-being of all India, one fifth of human race. This conviction led me naturally to devote myself to the Hindu Sanghantist ideology and program, which alone, I came to believe, could win and preserve the national independence of Hindustan, my Motherland, and enable her to render true service to humanity as well.

Since the year 1920, that is, after the demise of Lokamanya Tilak, Gandhiji influence in the Congress first increased and then became supreme. His activities for public awakening were phenomenal in their intensity and were reinforced by the slogan of truth and non-violence which he paraded ostentatiously before the country. No sensible or enlightened person could object to those slogans. In fact there is nothing new or original in them. They are implicit in every constitutional public movement. But it is nothing but a mere dream if you imagine that the bulk of mankind is, or can ever become, capable of scrupulous adherence to these lofty principles in its normal life from day to day.

In fact, honour, duty, and love of one's own kith and kin and country might often compel us to disregard non-violence and to use force. I could never conceive that an armed resistance to an aggression is unjust. I would consider it a religious and moral duty to resist and, if possible, to overpower such an enemy by use of force. [In the Ramayana] Rama killed Ravana in a tumultuous fight and relieved Sita. [In the Mahabharata], Krishna killed Kansa to end his wickedness; and Arjuna had to fight and slay quite a number of his friends and relations including the revered Bhishma because the latter was on the side of the aggressor. It is my firm belief that in dubbing Rama, Krishna, and Arjuna as guilty of violence, the Mahatma betrayed a total ignorance of the springs of human action. In more recent history, it was the heroic fight put up by Chhatrapati Shivaji that first checked and eventually destroyed the Muslim tyranny in India. It was absolutely essentially for Shivaji to overpower and kill an aggressive Afzal Khan, failing which he would have lost his own life.

In condemning history's towering warriors like Shivaji, Rana Pratap and Guru Gobind Singh as misguided patriots, Gandhiji has merely exposed his self-conceit.

He was, paradoxical as it may appear a violent pacifist who brought untold calamities on the country in the name of truth and non-violence, while Rana Pratap, Shivaji, and the Guru will remain enshrined in the hearts of their countrymen for ever for the freedom they brought to them.

The accumulating provocation of thirty-two years, culminating in his last pro-Muslim fast, at last goaded me to the conclusion that the existence of Gandhi should be brought to an end immediately. Gandhi had done very well in South Africa to uphold the rights and well-being of the Indian community there. But when he finally returned to India he developed a subjective mentality under which he alone was to be the final judge of what was right or wrong. If the country wanted his leadership, it had to accept his infallibility; if it did not, he would stand aloof from the Congress and carry on his own way.

Against such an attitude there can be no halfway house. Either Congress had to surrender its will to his and had to be content with playing second fiddle to all his eccentricity, whimsicality, metaphysics and primitive vision, or it had to carry on without him. He alone was the Judge of everyone and everything; he was the master brain guiding the civil disobedience movement; no other could know the technique of that movement. He alone knew when to begin and when to withdraw it. The movement might succeed or fail, it might bring untold disaster, and political reverses but that could make no difference to the Mahatma's infallibility. 'A Satyagrahi can never fail' was his formula for declaring his own infallibility and nobody except himself knew what a Satyagrahi is. Thus, the Mahatma became the judge and jury in his own cause. These childish insanities and obstinacies, coupled with a most severe austerity of life, ceaseless work and lofty character made Gandhi formidable and irresistible.

Many people thought that his politics were irrational but they had either to withdraw from the Congress or place their intelligence at his feet to do with as he liked. In a position of such absolute irresponsibility Gandhi was guilty of blunder after blunder, failure after failure, disaster after disaster. Gandhi's pro-Muslim policy is blatantly in his perverse attitude on the question of the national language of India. It is quite obvious that Hindi has the most prior claim to be accepted as the premier language. In the beginning of his career in India, Gandhi gave a great impetus to Hindi but as he found that the Muslims did not like it, he became a champion of what is called Hindustani. Everybody in India knows that there is no language called Hindustani; it has no grammar; it has no vocabulary. It is a mere

dialect; it is spoken, but not written. It is a bastard tongue and cross-breed between Hindi and Urdu, and not even the Mahatma's sophistry could make it popular. But in his desire to please the Muslims he insisted that Hindustani alone should be the national language of India. His blind followers, of course, supported him and the so-called hybrid language began to be used. The charm and purity of the Hindi language was to be prostituted to please the Muslims. All his experiments were at the expense of the Hindus.

From August 1946 onwards the private armies of the Muslim League began a massacre of the Hindus. The then Viceroy, Lord Wavell, though distressed at what was happening, would not use his powers under the Government of India Act of 1935 to prevent the rape, murder and arson. The Hindu blood began to flow from Bengal to Karachi with some retaliation by the Hindus. The Interim Government formed in September was sabotaged by its Muslim League member's right from its inception, but the more they became disloyal and treasonable to the government, of which they were a part, the greater was Gandhi's infatuation for them. Lord Wavell had to resign as he could not bring about a settlement and he was succeeded by Lord Mountbatten. King Log was followed by King Stork. The Congress which had boasted of its nationalism and socialism secretly accepted Pakistan literally at the point of the bayonet and abjectly surrendered to Jinnah. India was vivisected and one-third of the Indian Territory became foreign land to us from August 15, 1947.

Lord Mount batten came to be described in Congress circles as **the** greatest Viceroy and Governor-General this country ever had. The official date for handing over power was fixed for June 30, 1948, but Mount batten with his ruthless surgery gave us a gift of vivisected India ten months in advance. This is what Gandhi had achieved after thirty years of undisputed dictatorship and this is what Congress party calls 'freedom' and 'peaceful transfer of power'. The Hindu-Muslim unity bubble was finally burst and a theocratic state was established with the consent of Nehru and his crowd and they have called 'freedom won by them with sacrifice' - whose sacrifice? When top leaders of Congress, with the consent of Gandhi, divided and tore the country - which we consider a deity of worship - my mind was filled with direful anger.

One of the conditions imposed by Gandhi for his breaking of the fast unto death related to the mosques in Delhi occupied by the Hindu refugees. But when Hindus in Pakistan were subjected to violent attacks he did not so much as utter a single

word to protest and censure the Pakistan Government or the Muslims concerned. Gandhi was shrewd enough to know that while undertaking a fast unto death, had he imposed for its break some condition on the Muslims in Pakistan, there would have been found hardly any Muslims who could have shown some grief if the fast had ended in his death. It was for this reason that he purposely avoided imposing any condition on the Muslims. He was fully aware of from the experience that Jinnah was not at all perturbed or influenced by his fast and the Muslim League hardly attached any value to the inner voice of Gandhi. *Gandhi is being referred to as the Father of the Nation. But if that is so, he had failed his paternal duty in as much as he has acted very treacherously to the nation by his consenting to the partitioning of it. I stoutly maintain that Gandhi has failed in his duty.*

He has proved to be the Father of Pakistan. ***His inner-voice, his spiritual power and his doctrine of non-violence of which so much is made of, all crumbled before Jinnah's iron will, and proved to be powerless.*** Briefly speaking, I thought to myself and foresaw I shall be totally ruined, and the only thing I could expect from the people would be nothing but hatred and that I shall have lost my entire honour, even more valuable than my life, if I were to kill Gandhiji. But at the same time I felt that the Indian politics in the absence of Gandhiji would surely be proved practical, able to retaliate, and would be powerful with armed forces. *No doubt, my own future would be totally ruined, but the nation would be saved from the inroads of Pakistan.* People may even call me and dub me as devoid of any sense or foolish, but the nation would be free to follow the course founded on the reason which I consider to be necessary for sound nation-building. After having fully considered the question, I took the final decision in the matter, but I did not speak about it to anyone whatsoever. I took courage in both my hands and I did fire the shots at Gandhiji on 30th January 1948, on the prayer-grounds of Birla House. *I do say that my shots were fired at the person whose policy and action had brought rack and ruin and destruction to millions of Hindus.* There was no legal machinery by which such an offender could be brought to book and for this reason I fired those fatal shots. I bear no ill will towards anyone individually but I do say that I had no respect for the present government owing to their policy which was unfairly favourable towards the Muslims. But at the same time I could clearly see that the policy was entirely due to the presence of Gandhi.

I have to say with great regret that Primes Minister Nehru quite forgets that his preaching's and deeds are at times at variances with each other when he talks about India as a secular state in season and out of season, because it is significant to note

that Nehru has played a leading role in the establishment of the theocratic state of Pakistan, and his job was made easier by Gandhi's persistent policy of appeasement towards the Muslims. I now stand before the court to accept the full share of my responsibility for what I have done and the judge would, of course, pass against me such orders of sentence as may be considered proper. But I would like to add that I do not desire any mercy to be shown to me, nor do I wish that anyone else should beg for mercy on my behalf. My confidence about the moral side of my action has not been shaken even by the criticism levelled against it on all sides. I have no doubt that honest writers of history will weigh my act and find the true value thereof some day in future

## **Massacre and Harassment in Kashmir**

In the modern era, various forms of state terrorism continue by the Israeli armed forces on the Palestinians. While with the backing of Burmese military regime and the covert assistance of Hindus, recent bloodshed of the minority Rohingya Muslim community at the hands of the Rakhine extremist Buddhists in Burma (Myanmar) presents another such example. Similarly, during the Bosnian War (1992-1995), Serb forces slaughtered more than 10,000 Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina and buried them in the unnamed mass graves. That genocide was repeated in Kosovo where several men and women were murdered.

While, these atrocities are still fresh in the minds of every Muslim, but with the official backing of the government, massacre and harassment of Muslims by the Indian military including paramilitary troops in the Indian-held Kashmir has become a permanent feature. *Sajjad Shaukat.*

# Role of RAW in Liberation of Bangladesh

B Raman

Covert action capability is an indispensable tool for any State having external adversaries. Its purpose is not just collection of intelligence, but the protection of national interests and the safeguarding of national security through deniable actions of a political, economic, Para-diplomatic or Para-military nature. A State resorts to covert action if it finds that its national interests cannot be protected or its national security cannot be safeguarded through conventional political, economic, diplomatic or military means or if it concludes that such conventional means are not feasible.

Any intelligence agency worth its salt will have a covert action capability ready for use, when necessary. The Governments of some countries openly admit the availability of such a capability in their intelligence agencies, but not the details of their operations, which have to be secret and deniable. Others don't admit even its existence.

In India too, the IB, under the foresighted leadership of the late B.N.Mullik, its second Director, had a limited covert action capability for possible use. The covert action division of the IB played a notable role in the then East Pakistan to counter the activities of the ISI in India's North-East.

The R&AW had inherited from the IB its intelligence collection and covert action capabilities relating to Pakistan and China. These were not up to the standards of the intelligence agencies of the Western countries and Israel.

In the 1960s, ISI started providing similar assistance and sanctuaries to the Mizos National Front (MNF) headed by Laldenga in the CHT. The ISI's set-up in East Pakistan also enabled the Naga and Mizo hostiles to establish contact with the Chinese intelligence. This paved the way for the training of the Naga and Mizo hostiles in training camps set up by the Chinese intelligence in the Yunnan province of China.

It was partly to put an end to the activities of the ISI in India's North-East from East Pakistan that Indira Gandhi decided to assist the Bengali-speaking people of East Pakistan in their efforts to separate from Pakistan and achieve an independent

State to be called Bangladesh. This was in the wake of the widespread disturbances in East Pakistan in the beginning of 1971 following the refusal of the military regime of Pakistan headed by Gen. Mohammad Yahya Khan to honour the results of the December, 1970, general elections in which the Awami League of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman won a majority in the Pakistani National Assembly.

When Mujib launched Mukti Bahini in March, 1971, the R&AW was two and a half years old. It was still in the process of finding its feet as a full-fledged external intelligence agency, with a hardcore of professional intelligence officers capable of operating under cover in foreign territory as well as across the border in the neighbouring countries.

The late Rameshwar Nath Kao, who headed the external intelligence division of the IB, was appointed by Indira Gandhi as the head of the R&AW when it was formed on September 21, 1968. In the first few months after its formation, he gave it two priority tasks—to strengthen its capability for the collection of intelligence about Pakistan and China and for covert action in East Pakistan.

***The 1971 war against Pakistan was a war won by India alone. India was the architect of an independent Bangladesh. India's role was more than being just a facilitator.*** The Indian Armed Forces under the leadership of Field-Marshal (then General) S.H.F.J. Manekshaw and the Border Security Force (BSF) headed by the late K.F.Rustomji overtly and the R&AW and the IB covertly ensured this. But, they would not have been able to succeed as well as they did without the political leadership provided by Indira Gandhi.

The R&AW's role was five-fold:

- Provision of intelligence to the policy-makers and the armed forces;
- To train the Bengali freedom fighters in clandestine training camps;
- To network with Bengali public servants from East Pakistan posted in West Pakistan and in Pakistan's diplomatic missions abroad and persuade them to co-operate with the freedom-fighters and to help in the freedom struggle by providing intelligence;
- to mount a special operation in the CHT against the sanctuaries and training camps of the Naga and Mizo hostiles
- To organize a psychological warfare (PSYWAR) campaign against the Pakistani rulers by disseminating reports about the massacres of the Bengalis in East Pakistan and the exodus of refugees.

*Indira Gandhi's dramatic decision to ban all Pakistani flights over India to East Pakistan in retaliation for the hijacking of an Indian Airlines flight paved the way*

*for the ultimate victory in East Pakistan.* When the Pakistani aircraft tried to fly round India over the sea by availing of re-fuelling facilities in Sri Lanka, Indira Gandhi pressurized the Government of Sri Lanka to stop providing the re-fuelling facilities. This greatly weakened the ability of the headquarters of the Pakistani Armed Forces in West Pakistan to send reinforcements to East Pakistan and to keep their garrisons in East Pakistan supplied.

The flow of intelligence to the policy-makers from the R&AW and the IB was continuous and voluminous. This was facilitated by the co-operation of many Bengali public servants of East Pakistan and by the poor communications security of the Pakistani Armed Forces. One of the first acts of Kao after the coming into being of the R&AW was to set up a Monitoring Division headed by a distinguished retired officer of the Army Signal Corps to collect technical intelligence (TECHINT) from Pakistan and China and a Cryptography Division, headed by a cryptography expert from the IB. While the performance of the Monitoring and Cryptography Divisions in respect of China was unsatisfactory, they did excellent work in intercepting electronic communications within West Pakistan as well as between West and East Pakistan and in repeatedly breaking the codes used by the Pakistani authorities for their communications.

1971 in East Pakistan was a dream situation for professional intelligence officers. Often, they did not have to go after intelligence. It came after them. There was such a total alienation of the people of East Pakistan that many were eager and willing to convey intelligence to their own leaders as well as to the Indian intelligence agencies. Co-operation with the Indian intelligence agencies was looked upon by them as their patriotic duty in order to facilitate the liberation of their country.

*The IB before 1968 and the R&AW thereafter had built up a network of relationships with many political leaders and Government officials of Pakistan.* They were helped in this networking by the sense of humiliation of the Bengali leaders and officials at the hands of their West Pakistani rulers. This networking enabled the R&AW and the leaders and officials of East Pakistan to quickly put in position the required infrastructure for a liberation struggle consisting of a parallel government with its own fighters trained by the Indian security forces and its own bureaucracy.

*The only sections of the local population, who were hostile to India and its agencies, were the Muslim migrants from Bihar.* These Bihari migrants were loyal to their West Pakistani rulers and co-operated with them in carrying out the brutal massacre of the Bengalis. However, since their number was small, the Bihari migrants could not come in the way of the liberation movement. Mukti Bahini was instructed and assisted by RAW to take care of these Bihari migrants.

1971 also saw the coming into being of the R&AW's Psychological Warfare (PSYWAR) Division, euphemistically called the Information Division. *Media professionals from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting as well as from the Army were given by Kao the task of ensuring that international spotlight was kept focused on the brutalities being committed by the Pakistan Army in East Pakistan and the resulting exodus of millions of refugees into India.*

They did excellent work, but if the international community became aware of the seriousness of the ground situation and of the compulsions on India to act, the real credit for it should go to Indira Gandhi. *She was a born Psy-warrior.* Through her travels across the world to draw attention to the situation in East Pakistan and the bordering States of India, she managed to create an atmosphere, which would not have been hostile to the ultimate Indian intervention—even if it was not supportive of it.

To counter the perceived Indian designs, the Chinese stepped up the supply of arms and ammunition to Pakistan.

The developing Washington-Beijing understanding was mainly directed against Moscow, but India too, which was perceived by both the US and China as the USSR's surrogate, came under their scan. There was an undeclared convergence of views between Washington DC and Beijing that Pakistan should be protected from India and that India should not be allowed to emerge as the dominating power of the South Asian region.

In view of our expertise in psychological-warfare, we succeeded in spreading widespread revulsion across the world over the brutalities of the Pakistan Army in East Pakistan, both Nixon and Mao realized that there was not much they could do to help Pakistan retain its control over East Pakistan. Even while mentally reconciling themselves to the inevitability of Pakistan losing its eastern wing, they were determined to thwart any designs of Indira Gandhi to break up West Pakistan after helping the Bengali people of East Pakistan in the liberation of their homeland. *They had convinced themselves that Indira Gandhi had such designs and that after Bangladesh, she would turn her attention to Balochistan on the Iranian border, where there were already signs of growing alienation of the people against what they perceived as the Punjabi domination of their homeland.*

There was a Sikh Home Rule Movement headed by one Charan Singh Panchi in the UK even before 1971, but it had practically no support from the Sikh Diasporas and was ignored by the international community and media. In 1971, one saw the beginning of a joint covert action operation by the US intelligence community and Pakistan's ISI to create difficulties for India in Punjab. US interest in this operation

continued for a little more than a decade and tapered off after the assassination of Indira Gandhi by two of her Sikh security guards on October 31, 1984.

Dr. Jagjit Singh Chauhan, a Sikh leader of Punjab with not much following, went to the UK, took over the leadership of the Sikh Home Rule movement and re-named it the Khalistan movement. The Yahya regime invited him to Pakistan, lionized him as the leader of the Sikh people and handed over him some Sikh holy relics kept in Pakistan. He took them with him to the UK and tried to use them in a bid to win a following in the Sikh Diaspora in the UK. At a press conference at London in September, 1971, he gave a call for the creation of an independent Khalistan.

.In addition to stepping up the supply of arms and ammunition to the Pakistani Armed Forces and expediting the construction of the Karakoram Highway, the Chinese also wanted to destabilize India's North-East by helping the Naga and Mizo hostiles in their insurgencies against the Government of India. However, their interest in the North-East was not the outcome of the events of 1971 in East Pakistan. It began in 1968.

While the intelligence agencies of the US and Pakistan co-operated with each other in creating difficulties for India and Indira Gandhi in Punjab, the ISI and the Chinese intelligence co-operated with each other in creating difficulties for them in India's North-East. The Pakistani aim in destabilizing the North-east was to keep the Indian security forces preoccupied with counter-insurgency duties in the North-East, in the hope of thereby reducing any Indian threat to their position in East Pakistan. The Chinese aim was, in addition to helping Pakistan retain control over its Eastern wing, to weaken the Indian hold in this area in order to safeguard their own position in Tibet and to facilitate the eventual achievement of their objective of integrating India's Arunachal Pradesh with Tibet.

Even as the Indian Army—ably assisted by the Air Force and the Navy—was moving towards Dhaka , *covert action units of the R&AW and the Directorate-General of Security (DGS), which also came under Kao, raided the CHT in order to put an end to the insurgency infrastructure of the Naga and the Mizo hostiles.* They found that the Nagas, anticipating the raid, had already shifted their infrastructure to the Burma Naga Hills area. The Mizos had not shifted, but they managed to escape capture by the units of the R&AW and the DGS and crossed over into the Chin Hills and the Arakan Division areas of Burma. Laldenga, the head of the MNF, proceeded to Rangoon from where he was taken to Karachi by the ISI. Apart from destroying the physical infrastructure of the hostiles, the only other useful outcome of the raid was the capture of all the documents kept in the MNF headquarters, which gave a lot of valuable intelligence about the contacts of the MNF with the ISI and the Chinese intelligence.

The Naga and the Mizo hostiles lost their safe sanctuaries, but their manpower remained intact. However, the loss of the sanctuaries and an important source of funds and arms and ammunition created doubts in the minds of their leadership about the continued viability of their insurgent movement. As will be discussed in a subsequent chapter, this ultimately led to peace in Mizoram and partial peace in Nagaland.

The 1971 war and our counter-insurgency operations against the Naga and the Mizo hostiles once again highlighted the importance of Northern Burma from the point of view of the security of India's North-East. To explain this, I have to go back to my entry into the intelligence community.

I continued to be in charge of the Burma branch for nearly five years — handling analysis as well as clandestine operations — and acquired such expertise that people used to refer to me as 'Burma Raman.'

They had clandestinely moved across the Putao region of the Kachin state of Burma without being detected by the IB. The Kachin State and the Burma Naga Hills were a no-man's land in those days, with practically no Burmese administrative or military presence outside the towns of Myitkyina and Putao.

Two questions often posed are: Indira Gandhi could have at least ordered the liberation of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK) and the Northern Areas (Gilgit and Baltistan), which India considers as an integral part of its territory under illegal Pakistani occupation. Why she did not do so?

This shared concern brought about a close working relationship between the R&AW and the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in North Burma. Thus, one saw the curious spectacle of the US intelligence colluding with the ISI in assisting the Khalistan movement in Indian Punjab, with the Chinese intelligence for preventing a break-up of West Pakistan by India and with the Indian intelligence for preventing a possible Chinese take-over of North Burma. This may appear strange and incomprehensible, but such things are normal in the intelligence profession.

As the war in East Pakistan was reaching its climax, Nixon, reportedly as advised by Kissinger, ordered the USS Enterprise, a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier of the US Navy, to move into the Bay of Bengal. It reached there on December 11, 1971. What was the purpose of the movement? The generally accepted assessment held that it was meant to convey a warning to India to stop the war after the liberation of Bangladesh and not to break up West Pakistan. Pressure from the policy-makers for more intelligence about the US intentions increased on the R&AW.

The R&AW felt handicapped in meeting the demands for intelligence about the movement of US ships and about the US intentions since it had very little capability for the collection of hard intelligence about countries other than India's neighbours and its capability for the collection of maritime intelligence was very weak. The follow-up action taken to remove these inadequacies will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

Contrary to the fears of Pakistan, the US and China, Indira Gandhi had no intention of breaking up West Pakistan. She knew it would be counter-productive and antagonize large sections of the international community, which appreciated the compulsions on India to act in East Pakistan. *Moreover, the only area of West Pakistan ripe for supportive action was Balochistan, but it did not have a contiguous border with India. Any Indian support could have been only by sea. This was not feasible. Moreover, any support to the Baloch nationalists would have sounded the alarm bells in Iran and antagonized the Shah of Iran.* For these reasons, the idea of a possible break-up of West Pakistan was not even contemplated by her. As the war ended, the R&AW and Kao were the toasts of the policy-makers.

Two questions often posed are: Indira Gandhi could have at least ordered the liberation of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK) and the Northern Areas (Gilgit and Baltistan), which India considers as an integral part of its territory under illegal Pakistani occupation. Why she did not do so?

India had taken 93,000 Pakistani personnel prisoners of war in East Pakistan. Why did she hand them over to Pakistan under the Simla Agreement of 1972, without insisting on a formal recognition in writing by Pakistan that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India?

Nobody knows the definitive answers to these questions. My assessment is that she wanted to be generous to Pakistan at the hour of its greatest humiliation due to the misdeeds of its army and to strengthen the political leadership of Pakistan and enable it to stand up to the Army.

If this was her expectation, it was belied. Within five years of the Simla Agreement, the Pakistan Army headed by Gen. Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq overthrew the elected Government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and had him executed after a sham trial. Misplaced generosity should have no place in our relations with Pakistan.

As the war ended, the R&AW and Kao were the toasts of the policy-makers. During 1971, Kao emerged as one of the most trusted advisers of Indira Gandhi. He enjoyed this trust till her assassination on October 31, 1984. During 1971, she

did not take any important decision regarding the crisis in East Pakistan and her conduct of the war without consulting him.

The Armed Forces had nothing but the highest praise for the performance of the R&AW in East Pakistan, but its performance on the Western front, where the Army did not do as well as in the East, came in for some criticism.

Kao and the officers, who contributed to the success of the R&AW in 1971, came to be known as the Kaoboys of the R&AW. No one knows for certain, who coined this title. Some say Indira Gandhi herself<sup>1</sup>!

*Despite this, everyone was agreed that 1971 was the R&AW's finest hour. There were dozens of officers of different ages and different ranks, who contributed to its brilliant performance under the leadership of Kao and K.Sankaran Nair, his No.2.*

Kao was 53 years old in 1971 and Nair 50. Nair was an Indian Police officer from the undivided Madras cadre and succeeded Kao as the head of the organization in 1977, but quit after a few months due to reported differences with Morarji Desai, the then Prime Minister. He was considered one of the outstanding operational officers produced by the Indian intelligence community since India became independent in 1947. He and Kao became legends in their time in the R&AW.

It is said that during a visit paid by Kao to the CIA headquarters in Washington DC, Bush gifted to him a small bronze statue of a cowboy. Kao always used to keep it on his table in his office. He had a large replica of this statue made by Sadiq, a sculptor from Kolkata, and gifted it to the R&AW.

*B Raman Director, Institute for Topical Studies, Chennai & former Additional Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat (RAW)*

# India's next major conflicts

Major General GD Bakshi

## Significance of the Gilgit–Gwadar Corridor

The ominously rising strategic salience of the Gilgit–Baltistan region was made sharply apparent by Selig Harrison's startling disclosure in 2010 that some 7,000–11,000 Chinese troops had entered the Gilgit–Baltistan area, ostensibly for flood control. The Chinese version claimed it was for repair of the Karakoram Highway (KKH). Indian military sources later reported that some 3,000–4,000 Chinese military engineering personnel were engaged in repair/widening of the KKH, construction of hydroelectric projects and building of tunnels (which could serve to hide missiles). A Chinese civil company (China Mobile) is also constructing cell towers for mobile networks in this region.

Pakistani plans to lease the Gilgit–Baltistan area to China for the next 50 years.

For the protection of this workforce, initial media reports had indicated that a Chinese infantry battalion was deployed at the Khunjerab Pass but was later withdrawn due to the international uproar in May 2010. Reportedly, some permanent Chinese logistical infrastructure is now coming up at Chilas that is indicative of a long-term stay. This is further reinforced by media reports in the Pakistani press of Pakistani plans to lease the Gilgit–Baltistan area to China for the next 50 years.

These are ominous developments, especially when one sees them in the context of the significant shift in China's stand over J&K, from a studied neutrality during the Kargil War to a markedly hostile stance that not just underlines J&K's disputed status (only in as much as it pertains to the positions held by India) but also marks its outright support for Pakistan's claims over Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and the Gilgit–Baltistan area. Its forays into this sensitive region are merely a follow-up to its shift in stance. Enough indications of this paradigm shift have been available earlier, especially in China's insistence on stapling visas for J&K resident passport holders and then, in a surprise move, its denial of visa to GOC-in-C Northern Command on the grounds that he was the commander of this disputed region.

Amazingly, the same yardstick has not been applied to India's eastern army commander, who looks after the disputed Arunachal—thereby implying a new level of Chinese hostility over the J&K issue. The physical move-in of the Chinese military personnel into the Gilgit–Baltistan area now adds an ominous dimension to these pinpricks. Like Baluchistan, this area is restive. The hapless Shias of this region have been the victims of repeated Sunni pogroms and massacres. A Balwaristan freedom movement flickers here. The most recent massacre of the Shias took place here in February and April this year and has led to large-scale rioting and arson. The climactic event was the snow-cum-mud avalanche in Siachen that wiped out the 6 NLI HQ and Adm. Base at Gyari. Some 140 Shia personnel were wiped out in this major avalanche. Despite help from U.S., Chinese and German rescue teams, not a single body of the Northern Light Infantry (NLI) troopers was recovered. Apart from personnel casualties, the avalanche wiped out the road link, several helipads and the entire Adm. Base. This has put the Pakistani troops deployed in the Central Glacier below our Soltoro Ridge positions in the areas of Ali Brangsa and Bilafond glaciers in dire straits. Even the helicopters of Pakistan's Strategic Plans division had to be pressed in for the relief and rescue efforts.

Pakistani spokesmen have claimed that Siachen has no strategic significance whatsoever. What then prevents them from staging a unilateral withdrawal?

Actually, what makes it worse for the Pakistan army is the fact that the NLI, which has borne the brunt of the casualties in Kargil and Siachen, has 49% Shias, 23% Ismailis and just 18% Sunnis. 55% of the Shias hail from the Gilgit area and 35% from Baltistan. The Shias have been facing relentless persecution. In 1989, General Parvez Musharraf had brought in the blood-thirsty Sunni Pathans to terrorise the Shias into submission. In the Kargil conflict, the Pakistan Army disowned the dead Shia troopers of the NLI and over 600 had to be buried by the Indians. The anti-Shia pogrom continues. On 28 February this year, 18 Shia pilgrims were pulled out of buses and massacred in the Pashtun Khwa province. On 3 April, 15–20 Shias were killed in Chilas and 50 were wounded. This led to riots where more Shias were killed. The avalanche on 7 April, therefore, came as a climactic finale that shook the Shia troops. The legend of Teram Shehar, a town which was wiped out in a terrible avalanche, lives on in the folklore of Baltistan. The Shia troops are uneasy and restive, and their Sunni commanders are deeply worried. That is why General Kayani was unnerved by the recent avalanche and the impact it has had on the unfortunate Shia troops of the NLI. That explains his smart moves to use the

Indian desire for peace to get the Indian army off the Soltoro Ridge, which it had secured at such heavy cost in blood and treasure.

Now that we have mastered the logistical and environmental problems, we can stay on, if need be, forever. If the Pakistani army has had it, they can withdraw, and Indians will not interfere with their retreat in any way. Pakistani spokesmen have claimed that Siachen has no strategic significance whatsoever. What then prevents them from staging a unilateral withdrawal? The problem is their over-cleverness and lack of sincerity and the quest to gain an upper hand in Afghanistan by encouraging peace noises on the eastern front. Unfortunately, this is a tactical gambit and not a sincere desire for peace.

### **The Malacca Bypass Strategy**

What explains the Chinese moves in to the northern areas and their sudden change of stance over J&K? This move, in fact, is dictated by the compulsions of China's energy security strategy. Some 50% of China's energy/oil demand is met by the Middle East and another 30% is sourced from Africa. This entire energy flow has to perforce pass through the naval choke point of the straits of Malacca, Lombok and Sunda. Any navy worth its name could seriously disrupt the Chinese energy supply lines via Malacca in a conflict. This is the Chinese energy security nightmare, and they are feverishly engaged in trying to create a bypass that will help them to overcome their Malacca choke point vulnerability.

Currently, the Chinese problem is the security concerns about this pipeline's long passage through Baluchistan and then Pakistan's jihadi mafia-infested territory.

In layman terms, the Malacca passage from Iran or Africa takes 16–25 days for the Chinese tankers to complete. Once the KKH, rail and energy pipeline corridor comes through, this could be done in just 48 hours from the port of Gwadar. This explains the tremendous significance of the emerging Gilgit–Gwadar corridor for China. China had completed the KKH as far back as 1978. The KKH, which traverses over the Khunjerab Pass, now extends up to the rising port city of Gwadar. Since 2006, work is on to widen the KKH. This will increase its operating capacity for heavy vehicular traffic some threefold. This six-lane highway is being complemented by a railroad. The Kashgar-Havelian rail link will be constructed by the Chinese Dong Feng Electric Company and will traverse a distance of 700 kilometres, from the Khunjerab Pass to link with the Pakistan rail network at

Havelian, near Rawalpindi. Kashgar is being made into a special economic zone (SEZ), and the Chinese plan to establish a consulate in Gilgit.

### **Gilgit Pipeline**

The third leg of this energy/trade corridor will be completed by the construction of an oil pipeline. As far back as in 2008, Chinese foreign minister Yang Jeichi had proposed that China should join the India–Pakistan–Iran (IPI) pipeline project. U.S. pressure did not let this aspiration materialise. The Chinese now have plans for a 2,000-kilometre pipeline that will follow the KKH railroad alignment. It could have a pipeline 1 metre in diameter with a flow rate of 8 metres per second and a pumping station every 120 kilometres. This would give it a capacity of 590,000 barrels per day (bpd) or an ability to carry virtually 9.8% of China's oil imports. This pipeline project from Gwadar to Xinjiang would cost around \$12 billion. Currently, the Chinese problem is the security concerns about this pipeline's long passage through Baluchistan and then Pakistan's jihadi mafia-infested territory.

Once this triple energy-cum-trade corridor with its high-capacity rail and road link and oil pipeline is completed, it will shorten the oil/trade transit from Gwadar to just 48 hours instead of the 16–25 days passage via Malacca Straits. In real terms, the Persian Gulf passage will be reduced from 6,000 nautical miles (nm) via Malacca straits to just 680 nm to Gwadar. The African passage via Malacca will be reduced from 10,000 nm to just 3,000 nm. The most vital aspect is that the crucial naval choke point of Malacca Straits will be bypassed altogether. This is a choke point that the U.S., Japanese or even Indian navy could easily throttle in the event of a major conflict.

So far, some \$248 million has been spent on Gwadar. Of this, some \$198 million has been spent by China.

How to reduce/obviate the Malacca choke point threat to China's energy flows has always been a primary concern for China. Her recent forays into the Gilgit–Baltistan region stem from this clearly articulated Malacca bypass strategy that is fast becoming a lynchpin of her overall grand strategic design in Asia. Unless we understand these larger Chinese concerns and compulsions, we will fail to read the designs behind the Chinese forays into the Gilgit–Baltistan region.

### **The Gwadar Terminal: Reaching the Critical Mass**

The entire Gilgit–Baltistan energy corridor from Xinjiang funnels over the Khunjerab Pass and terminates on the seaports of Gwadar, Pasni and Ormara. Of these outlets, the China–Pakistan axis is working feverishly to develop Gwadar as the hub of a new land-cum-sea-based silk route to Xinjiang and western China. This fishing village of Gwadar had a population of some 5,000 as far back as in 2001. Today, it is emerging as a bustling city with a population of 125,000. An international airport and steel and cement plants are planned. Crucial are a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal and a massive oil refinery that are primarily being planned to cater to the Chinese energy inflows.

Work on the Gwadar port had commenced in 2002 and was completed in 2007. The port was operationalised in 2009.

- It has a 12.6-metre dredged channel and three multipurpose berths that give it a wharfage of 6.2 metres.
- In Phase II, the Chinese will add nine additional deep-water berths.
- So far, some \$248 million has been spent on Gwadar. Of this, some \$198 million has been spent by China.
- Pakistan’s defence minister, Chaudhry Ahmed Mukhtar, recently invited China to establish a naval base in Gwadar. The Chinese were understandably coy about acknowledging this fact so brazenly.

### **Renting Territory for Strategic Gain**

The simple fact, however, is that Pakistan is desperate to rent its territory and port facilities to seek a new alliance and strategic embrace with the Asian giant China. Relations with the United States have reached a breaking point as the high-risk and duplicitous policy of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds is increasingly becoming untenable. Pakistan’s military–ISI complex has been desperately wooing Beijing with offers to rent its territory to gain an extra regional ally to counterbalance arch-rival India. Pakistan has been extremely successful at renting its territory to the United States for the Cold War and then for the Afghan War against the Soviets. It gamed enormous amounts of military and economic aid, which has enabled it not only to seek parity with India but also to keep India destabilised and off balance for the past three decades by unremitting asymmetric assaults—first in Punjab, then in J&K and now in almost all major cities of India. Pakistan is determined to replace the U.S. alliance by now renting its territory to

China. Gwadar has already been offered as a naval base, and Gilgit–Baltistan is about to be given on lease. This indicates the level of desperation in Islamabad.

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### **J&K: Theatre of the Next War**

What are the implications for India? With the tremendous strategic significance of the Gilgit–Gwadar transport-cum-energy corridor, the entire strategic calculus about J&K has undergone a paradigm shift of monumental proportions. China has ominously altered its stance on J&K and has moved in a big way into the northern areas. Chinese military engineers have entered the Gilgit–Baltistan region and are feverishly engaged in widening the KKH and surveying the rail alignment to Kashgar. With this major Chinese move into Gilgit, J&K may well be the focus of the next major war in South Asia. This is the theatre where the China–Pakistan nexus is preparing logistically to take on India in a two-front war whenever the opportunity presents itself. All Chinese talk of Arunachal Pradesh appears in hindsight to be a grand strategic deception plan. It is increasingly becoming evident that J&K is the place where China and Pakistan can launch massive coordinated attacks in a limited war designed to pry this state loose from India. This entire paradigm shift has to be factored into any discourse on internal and external security in J&K. All narratives that leave these major developments out of the strategic calculus are seriously flawed.

### **Interlocutors' Report: Recipe for a phased surrender of sovereignty?**

The recent submission of the interlocutors' report is now to be seen in this strategic backdrop. The interlocutors' mission was born out of the sheer panic in New Delhi that followed the stone-pelting intifada that was engineered by the ISI. The failure to anticipate this next logical progression in Pakistan's proxy war was regrettable. Emotions in the Kashmir valley tend to be intense. However, they are seldom deep or long lasting. The engineers of the intifada had correctly gauged the intense local anger at the tendency of the nervous CRPF troopers to be abrasive and somewhat rude in their roadside manners. This led to the flash of public anger. Failure to induct nonlethal weaponry led to needless casualties, which were used to fuel further stone pelting. It was an intense boil of public anger against bad roadside

manners of the CRPF and, in any case, was not sustainable. However, this was seized upon by the capitulationism lobby in New Delhi to force the Indian state into abject surrender. This showed a clear lack of any grasp of the ground situation in J&K.

The ground reality is that the Indian army has largely broken the back of the terrorist movement in J&K. From peak strength of 3,500–4,000 armed terrorists that Pakistan used to maintain in J&K each year (to keep the pot boiling at a precise temperature that would remain within Indian tolerance thresholds), the number of terrorists in the state has been reduced to just around 300. These 300 are mostly engaged in just trying to survive and have kept a very low profile. Having lost the terror battle, the ISI had then tried to generate a Palestinian-style intifada in the valley. Major sums of money were spent to mobilise stone pelters. "...we must not lose sight of the fact that 36 out of the 42 Pakistani terrorist training camps are very much active and churning out recruits."

However, after the initial hysteria, the security forces arrested Andrabi and other lynchpins organisers and money conduits for supporting the stone pelters. Use of dye sprays helped to identify principal ringleaders. Improvement in the roadside manners of the CRPF and the highly calming influence of Lieutenant General Ata Hasnain, the new GOC 15 Corps, rapidly helped to diffuse the situation. The interlocutors meanwhile were totally out of touch with the rapidly changing ground realities. Some of them had been the recipients of the seminar circuit largesse of Fai and his ISI cohorts. They produced a blueprint for surrender. They called for a return to the pre- 1953 status, reinstallation of a prime minister of J&K, appointment of a local governor, repeal of central legislations and, in fact, the putting in place of a secessionist architecture that after a decent interval would orchestrate a walk out of J&K from the Union of India. It would go out lock, stock and barrel, complete with its colonial adjuncts of a largely Hindu Jammu, a Buddhist Laddakh and a Shia Kargil.

In the light of the sharply escalating threat envelope of a combined Chinese–Pakistani threat to J&K, it would be suicidal for India to loosen the hold of the centre in any manner—unless the Indian state is truly determined to lose on the negotiating table what it has won at such great cost on the battlefield. Of a piece with its capitulationism agenda was the interlocutors' suggestion to do away with the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA). This act is not half as draconian as the patriot legislation of the United States or what some European countries

have adopted to defend themselves against the twenty-first-century threat of jihadist terrorism. Frankly, this act provided the legal cover for the army to save the Northeast and then J&K. Though the ground situation has improved dramatically, we must not lose sight of the fact that 36 out of the 42 Pakistani terrorist training camps are very much active and churning out recruits. After the conclusion of the jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan in 1989, the ISI had trained its guns on Kashmir. We must wait and watch patiently for the turn of events the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan will bring after 2014. Any indecent haste to dismantle our defences before that could result in a dangerous backslide we can ill afford.

### **The Peace-at-Any-Cost Argument**

There was a school of thought in the United States, primarily led by Bruce Reidel that felt that the only way to get Pakistan to act decisively against the Taliban–al-Qaeda combine was to arm-twist India into surrendering Kashmir. India's failure to stand up to this American pressure resulted in the orchestration of a capitulationism chorus in the Indian media and a somewhat sincere but rather misplaced attempt on the part of the Indian leadership to negotiate peace at any cost with Pakistan. The military–ISI complex retaliated with an IM offensive in the cities of India and then the major assault of 26/11 in Mumbai that left 166 Indians killed and some 700 wounded. After initially adopting tough postures seeking action against the terrorists, the Indian state seemed to cave in completely to foreign pressure and exhibited a pusillanimous stance that seemed to indicate the Indian state wanted to resume peace talks even if a few thousand more Indians were killed in the process by Pakistani terrorists. Indian public pressure forced the state to resile from such patently capitulationist postures.

The long-suffering Americans have apparently lost patience at long last and are seemingly all set to dump Pakistan.

Meanwhile, the Pakistanis two-timed their American allies. They swindled the Americans of some \$20 billion and had the temerity to keep bin Laden in an ISI safe house some 800 metres from the Pakistan Military Academy Kakul. Pakistan had the chutzpah to express outrage at the U.S. raid that killed bin Laden in Abbottabad. Pakistan showed its hand by cutting off the U.S.–NATO supply lines to Afghanistan. As always, the Pakistani generals had overreached themselves. This military establishment has traditionally suffered from very high levels of subjectivity. In Afghanistan, they had gambled that the Americans would be routed

and Pakistan would simply re-impose the Taliban after hanging Karzai from a lamp post a la Najibullah. The long-suffering Americans have apparently lost patience at long last and are seemingly all set to dump Pakistan. It was precisely at this pathetic juncture that Zardari made his peace overtures. The peace-at-any-cost lobby in Delhi concluded that this was their historic opportunity to do a “Munich” with Pakistan. It had seemingly been dumped even by the Americans and now, apparently, was the time to embrace this pariah and erratic state that had killed thousands of Indian citizens and would continue to do so in the future.

Hopefully, American pressure on India to do a pusillanimous peace deal with Pakistan will abate greatly after the recent bitterness in their relations with Pakistan. We only have to rein in the very misplaced zeal of our home-grown Munich lobby. India had rationalised that the peace overtures were from the civilian establishment in Pakistan and that we must strengthen the democratic elements against the military–ISI combine. The recent soft coup by the army via the judiciary in Islamabad shows that this view was rather naïve and subjective.

The right stance to adopt is a wait-and-watch stance to see which way the post-U.S.-withdrawal scenario in Afghanistan will pan out. It would not be prudent to dismantle our internal security structures in J&K that have succeeded in containing the situation quite well so far. Hence, it would be imprudent to remove the AFSPA, wholly or partially, and the interlocutors’ report needs to be consigned to the deepest dustbins of the archives. We should avoid for the time being any attempts to dilute the boundaries or permit any large-scale move across the LoC that could be exploited by the ISI.

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### **The Ideological Battle**

In the meantime, the onset of normalcy will initiate its own logic and peace dividend constituency in J&K. The Indian state must consolidate its hard-won gains by facilitating the spread of liberal, secular and humanist education. That was one of the prime purposes of Op Sadbhavana, under which the army built hundreds of quality schools and computer-literacy centres. Kashmir was once a paradise where the tolerant Sufi version of Islam flourished. Kashmir had its tradition of the Nuynda Rosh, or the Nund Rishi tradition of Sufi saints who were revered alike by

both the Hindus and the Muslims. It would be essential to revive these tolerant traditions and syncretic mores.

As part of their ideological battle, the Salafi–Wahabi ideology was sought to be spread in J&K by the jihadi elements sent in by Pakistan. The first casualty was the tradition of tolerance. This saw the exodus of the Kashmiri Pundits and the burning of Charar-e-Sharief, a shrine. The latest torching of Dastagir Sahib, a Sufi shrine, is part of that same diabolical ideological offensive to poison mindsets and harden identities along polarised and communal lines. Modernist education and a revival of the traditional Sufi culture of Kashmir would be essential to fight the battle at the ideological level. It would be essential to emphasise that the Lord of the Quran is not just the Lord of the Musalmeen but the Lord of the whole qainat (universe) per se. The very word “Islam” comes from “shalom,” which means peace—hardly the interpretation that the extremists have tried to impose upon it.

## Who Killed General Zia ul Haq

An article by Barbara Crossette — who was the South Asia Bureau chief of the New York Times from 1988 to 1991 — in the latest edition of World Policy Journal says a former US ambassador to India, John Gunther Dean, suspects that General Zia ul Haq was killed by the Israelis.

According to Ms Crossette’s account under the title ‘Reflections — Who Killed Zia?’, Mr Dean suspects that General Zia, his top commanders, the US ambassador to Pakistan, Arnold Raphael, and a US brigadier-general were killed by the Israeli secret agency Mossad because Tel Aviv was concerned about Pakistan’s nuclear ambitions following a statement by General Zia in 1987 that Pakistan was a “screwdriver’s turn away from the bomb”. *Barbara Crossette*

# Obama should take the road not taken in Afghanistan

*M K Bhadrakumar*

*The Union of Ten Nations of ECO is the future of the 'Heartland' that would determine who has commanding influence over the world. Now that the withdrawal of US and NATO troops from Afghanistan is drawing near with no deal made with the Taliban, there is nervousness in Delhi and Washington DC. This article by a former Indian diplomat outlines the options for various countries and finds that reversion to the Imperial era, when Afghanistan was a buffer state between the Soviet and British Empire, is the best –best for India. However, the present situation is very different. The Central Asian Republics are now sovereign states and it is Pakistan that separates India from Central Asia and beyond. McKinder's heartland is no longer inviting territory for a new 'great game'. Central Asian Republics have the location, the will and the resources for the heartland to play the role of a 'heart'. Pakistan, the country Indian writers trivialize or ignore, has a focal position. Pakistan is not only the largest nation in the region, it shares aspirations and interests with other countries of the area which are all Muslim. Islam spread to South Asia in the wake conquest by Turko-Aryans –Afghans and Turks – from Central Asia. Pakistanis are grateful to the countries of the 'heartland' for making them Muslim; they are proud they have been able to return the favour by doing their bit to free those lands from Soviet occupation.*

*The writer advises the US to give up using Afghanistan as a 'hub' to contain China, and leave it just about able to cope. It is a good and realistic advice.*

The visit of the United States Deputy Secretary of State William Burns to New Delhi should provide the Indian side an opportunity to have an in-depth discussion on Afghanistan. The point is President Barack Obama is expected to revisit the Afghan strategy soon after the election in the US.

Delhi needs to structure its talking points regarding Afghanistan with foresight and wisdom. There is an avalanche of despondency today visible in the recent US discourses regarding Afghanistan.

Most assessments are gloomy but of course the stunning weekend editorial by the New York Times outstrips them all — demanding the complete, unconditional, total withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan by end-2013, i.e., a year ahead of the anticipated drawdown through end-2014.

The NYT even recommends that the US should destroy its high-tech weapons rather than leave them behind in the Hindu Kush for Taliban and the al-Qaeda to appropriate them. Are things so hopelessly bad?

The noted Pakistani author Ahmed Rashid has a fine piece on this big question. His answer? “Not really, provided...” I go along with Rashid’s prognosis. Indeed, there is a striking parallel with the February 1989 situation when the Red Army withdrew. The Soviets, Americans and Pakistan’s Zia ul-Haq were all agreed that the PDPA regime would collapse without the support of the Red Army.

They were proven wrong. Najibullah’s fall, when it came, was precipitated by 3 factors: Soviets threw him to the wolves; Soviets began dealings behind his back with Ahmed Shah Massoud; and, Pakistan’s relentless attempts to overthrow the regime despite Najib’s numerous overtures to Islamabad seeking a *modus vivendi*.

Rashid is right: Washington should not pre-judge the Kabul government’s resilience. The heart of the matter is that Afghanistan has its own yardsticks and the resilience of the Afghan people should not be underestimated. It is a nation with acute survival instincts. The minimum that is expected of the US and its allies under the circumstances is to fulfill the aid pledges made for the post-2014 period.

It is a modest commitment, affordable and morally obligatory — \$16 billion in economic aid through 2015 and \$3.8 billion in military aid to 2017. In sum, give the Afghans the breathing space to get their act together without the NATO and the “international community” cutting them adrift.

Second, it is inevitable that at some point substantive talks with the Taliban become necessary. But don’t make it a clandestine intelligence operation, as the Soviets did, without the Kabul regime being in the loop. Here, the imperative need is to have good intentions, which always provides scope for transparency. The fact is there is today a wide recognition among the world community that the Taliban need to be part of the solution.

Thus, the challenge should be to give the Taliban the confidence to come forward. Alas, there has been a lot of doublespeak on this score, because ‘T’ continues to be a dirty word for the political class in the US, especially on The Hill. Surely, some sincere “CBMs” are needed on the part of the US.

Looking back, the Taliban — Haqqani or whoever is responsible — have scaled up the attacks on the NATO forces only because there is no other sphere of activity available for their political agenda to be articulated. Obama should not waste further time by delaying a serious engagement of the Taliban.

Where I disagree with Rashid is as regards his emphasis on the US shepherding the 2014 presidential election in Afghanistan. It didn’t work in 2009 and it won’t work now. In fact, it will only increase the suspicions about the US’ long term intentions.

At any rate, the political dispensation in Kabul in the post-2014 period is critically linked to the outcome of the US’ efforts to reconcile the Taliban. Without the reconciliation of the Taliban, any regime in Kabul will wear a “transitional” look. On the other hand, with the reconciliation of the Taliban, US’ intrusive role in Afghan politics and internal affairs will become not only superfluous but counter-productive.

In sum, Obama shouldn’t lose sleep over Hamid Karzai’s secretive approach toward the 2014 election. What matters at the end of the day is that HK is a leader of some standing and he is a proven coalition-builder. And, of course, it is his native country. Do not humiliate him. HK is also a proud chieftain of an important Pashtun tribe.

Rashid is spot on while suggesting that the US has a lot to do to repair the regional environment. Here, the priority for the US should be to open a line of communication towards Iran.

The Iraq quagmire, the approaching endgame in Syria — they show once again that while Tehran can be trusted to unfailingly do what it takes to safeguard its vital interests and core concerns, it is also capable of rising above pride and prejudice to contribute to regional stability.

In fact, Iran can be a valuable ally for the US in the stabilization of Afghanistan. The sooner Obama realizes the better. This is not going to be easy since so much of bad blood exists, but then, both the US and Iran are famously pragmatic when the crunch time comes.

The silver lining is that if Obama gets re-elected, he is for the first time a liberated politician who is free to pursue his Iran policy unfettered by the elements who doggedly pursued him and hindered him though the period since his path breaking 2009 speech at Cairo University promising a new beginning toward Iran.

Equally, Pakistan is doggedly refusing to give up its “strategic assets” in Afghanistan, but it is an entirely different matter as to whether it really believes in its capabilities to ensure a Taliban takeover in Afghanistan overcoming the heavy resistance by the majority of Afghan people that is almost inevitable.

Even if, for argument’s sake, such a takeover by the Taliban through military means happens, there comes the infinitely more dangerous prospect of a Taliban regime in Kabul across the Duran Line, brimming with a sense of triumphalism over having licked yet another superpower.

It is hard to believe that the Pakistani military leadership is unaware of the groundswell of anti-Pakistani feelings in the Afghan society; or, the acute limitations of Islamabad to bankroll and Afghan regime; and, of course, the grave implications of a de facto “Afghan-Pakistan confederation “for Pakistan’s own future as a nation state.

Indeed, it is hard to believe that the animus against India would cloud the minds of the Pakistani generals to such an extent that they throw overboard their innate caution and commitment to Pakistan’s long-term security and stability.

That is to say, the US should remain engaged with Pakistan. True, there has been double-crossing. But then, what else did the US expect in a matrix where Pakistan is left with no choice but to safeguard its vital interests? In the ultimate analysis, it is not for the US to determine what should be in Pakistan’s vital interests.

*The trust deficit cannot be underestimated, which accumulated through the period since the Raymond Davis affair. But there is no alternative for Obama but to*

*revisit the relationship with Pakistan, since, as Rashid rightly points out, Pakistan is uniquely placed to ensure a final settlement or to sabotage one.”*

Finally, Rashid overlooked a key element, which I have harped on for years. The US's Afghan strategy was fundamentally flawed since it has overloaded this war in the Hindu Kush with geopolitics. Afghanistan is far too fragile to have been even contemplated as a pawn on the chessboard of big power politics.

This preoccupation with geopolitics — specifically, the containment of Iran, Russia and China — made the US myopic to an extent not even to accept the repeated Russian offers to lend a hand although the precious lives of hundreds and thousands of its young men and women were in serious peril.

Aren't Pakistan, Iran, Russia and China stakeholders in Afghanistan's stability? Of course they are.

Arguably, they are even more involved as stakeholders than the US and its western allies ever could be. But look at the dark humor in the Russian writings on the US' defeat in Afghanistan. Why did things have to come to such a sorry pass?

*The choice is truly the US '.Obama should take the road not taken — the road leading to Afghanistan's genuine neutrality.*

## The Clash of Civilizations

The balance of power among civilizations is shifting: the West is declining; Asian civilizations are expanding their economic, military and political strength; Islam is exploding demographically with destabilizing consequences for the Muslim countries.

The West's universalist pretensions increasingly bring it into conflict with other civilizations, most seriously with Islam and China. *Samuel P Huntington*

## Should India worry about the Dragon in Nepal?

Vijaya Rajiva

*The author is trying to promote his own misguided agenda. He fails to tell us why Delhi provided shelter and conducted secret meetings with the Maoist leaders Prachanda and Baburam during the Maoist insurgency. Why did India sell rifles and machine guns to the Maoists? Without Indian support, these Maoists would never have succeeded against the Nepal army. Then after several years of supporting the Maoists, India then sells its weapons to the Nepal army in the dying years of the Nepali civil war at a premium so that they could have washed away the evidence of who they initially supported.*

*When the United States, United Kingdom and India refused to supply arms to the regime of King Gyanendra of Nepal, who had assumed direct rule to suppress the Maoist insurgency during the Nepalese civil war (1996–2006), China responded by dispatching arms to Nepal, in spite of the ideological affinity of the Maoists with China.(Editor)*

Bharat has to contend with two major enemies – the Christian-imperialist-West axis; Jihadi terrorism; and an inimical entity, China, whose great power ambitions pose a threat to her security. All three forces are asuric, and are not listed in any special order of priority. As a Hindutva-Vadin, the present writer is concerned with all three, though this article is concerned with the menace faced from the Dragon. In this connection, the writer has found the articles by defence analyst B. Raman, former secretary, Cabinet Secretariat, and currently associated with the Chennai Institute for Chinese Studies, particularly helpful.

The Nepal Maoists are currently split into various factions and are no longer the unified force they were during the insurrection, 1996-2006. B. Raman has examined various aspects of the Chinese presence in Nepal and how this impacts on India. The Chinese enjoyed a certain privileged relationship with the Nepalese kings who did a balancing and clever act between India and China. Until the Maoists came to power in the coalition government in 2006, after a ten year insurrection, China had distanced itself from the Maoists and even helped the king

to fight the insurrection. So did India, until it appeared that King Gyanendra was playing a double game. But now the Chinese are using the Nepalese Maoists to further their own aims in the region.

As the world knows, China is an unabashedly capitalist country. The noble aim of Karl Marx: from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs, was never practiced in Maoist China. Today, China is in league with the world's capitalist powers.

What is Beijing's agenda in Nepal where it now has a significant presence through the exercise of soft power - aid to Nepal, hydroelectric projects, exchange of students, subsidising trips to China etc?

*China has three goals in Nepal: to use the Nepalese Maoists to oppress and quell Tibetan revolts against Chinese domination; to downgrade India which stands in the way of its great power ambitions in south Asia and its domination of Tibet; and to build its own economic clout by exploiting the natural resources of Nepal.*

India must focus clearly on the first two questions. Tibet has always been a home of Buddhism outside India. While Buddhism in the Far East, in Vietnam and Japan, has been eclipsed by conversions to Christianity, Tibetans continue to follow their traditional religion, a mix of the native Bon and Buddhism from India. In that sense the Dalai Lama is a dharmic leader, and whatever the reasons for the Western powers' support of his cause, *Hindus of India have a religious/spiritual reason to oppose Beijing's policy in Tibet.* The selection by China of the Panchen Lama did not go well with the people and the Chinese leadership fears that if and when the Dalai Lama passes on there will be disturbances. Hence their use of Nepalese Maoists to keep the Tibetans in line.

Articles by Indic scholars make it abundantly clear that the Chinese are simultaneously pragmatic and ambitious in their relations with the world and especially their neighbour India. Raman has pointed out that while they may not repeat the adventurism of 1962 since they have a lot more to lose now than then, an aerial attack cannot be ruled out. Their pragmatism tells them not to waste time, money and resources in fresh battle with India, but their ambitions cannot always be held in check. A nuclear attack is also not on the cards. *However, they engage in what is called 'salami slicing', the slow incremental advance, as in Arunachal Pradesh. Their early and ongoing military and logistical support to Pakistan is not*

*altruistic, but to keep India off balance. Should war break out, India will have to fight on two fronts.*

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While the West is also fishing in troubled waters in Nepal, that is not yet an imminent threat to India. And issues such as the presence of genetically modified crops by Western corporations such as Monsanto are being taken up by the relevant NGOs (as well they should).

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Hence, while a cautious and limited economic engagement with the Dragon is well advised (such as business enterprises by noted giants like Tata) it should be

kept well under control. The recent scandal involving telecommunications is a case in point. China cannot be allowed to have input into India's telecommunications. Trade in goods and other services can be encouraged up to a point, but not to the extent that it is allowed to flood the market with cheap goods and drive Indian small and medium entrepreneurs out of business.

*In Nepal, India's soft power is slowly declining because of the steady beat of anti-India propaganda. Many Indian companies are finding it difficult because of the hostility being fanned against them. At the same time, China is vigorously promoting its own projects in Nepal, which are not only profitable to it, but demonstrate the use of soft power. Unlike in Tibet, this is working for them. The highway, the railway line etc. are also effective support for their military designs against India.*

In such a context, India must not only safeguard its territory using military defence and diplomacy, its enterprises and its economy, but also its Hindu ethos. This last call cannot be neglected because no civilisation folds up purely from external causes and attacks. *The strength of Bharatiya civilisation for several millennia has always been and will continue to be its enduring dharmic ethos as upheld by the ordinary citizen and the traditional acharyas and mathams.*

Elements in the middle class however, can be lured by the attractions of a false communistic propaganda. The effect of this propaganda is two-fold: the illusion that some millenarian style (revolutionary) action is the solution to the problems of society, hence the refusal to engage in a careful modest approach to social reform. The devilish actions of the Naxalite are well known; many of its leaders were middle class ideologues.

There is a story that Maoist Kishanji who used to train potential revolutionaries by hardening them to bloodshed by the routine slaughter of helpless animals and slogans such as power lies in the barrel of a gun. There is misleading propaganda that state power has to be seized and dismantled to achieve social goals. In India, there is mindless violence against individual policemen such as beheading. In Nepal, the numbers of civilians killed runs into thousands, and the retaliation by the Nepalese state is said to be equal. The direct link of the Nepalese Maoists to Indian insurgents is well known, so also China's clandestine support via this route.

These practices are borrowed directly from the Maoist dictionary from across the border. To the extent that Beijing keeps up its propaganda in Nepal and elsewhere, it acts as a magnet to immature and unsteady minds elsewhere. The fact that the Nepalese Maoists have given up all thoughts of world revolution is not the issue; they have. What has persisted, hovering over their psyches, are the diabolical philosophies that they learned from Maoism.

The asuric forces across the border must be resolutely rejected. Under no circumstance should they be glorified. Hindus should worry about the Dragon while setting their own house in order so that diabolical influences cannot make inroads. The question then is not only should Hindus worry about the Dragon in Nepal, but also in what sense they should so worry.

*The writer is a Political Philosopher who taught at a Canadian university*

## **Dr Qadri; A Maverick or a Reformer**

*Babar Sattar*

The PPP-led regime is probably the most corrupt and incompetent government we have had. It is also hardly contestable that a non-performing democracy is the biggest threat to democracy, which fuels undemocratic forces and enables men on horseback to hone and pursue personal ambition.

In a democracy where representative institutions ought to provide means for change, Dr Qadri is right to demand that the process of change should start by putting to higher scrutiny those who offer to represent us. Like it or not, in order to be sustainable the mode of change will have to be incremental and not revolutionary.

## **Kuldip Nayar: Shun your utopian dream of United India**

Mohammad Zainal Abedin, NY, USA

*Mr. Nayar if you are really serious to reunify India, I have a suggestion for you what will enable you to fulfil your dream. Would you agree to return to those Sultanate and Moghul eras when entire India was under Muslim rule and Hindus and Muslims resided together enjoying equal rights? You will voluntarily surrender your part of India to the Muslims? Delhi will be its capital and Muslims will rule whole India. This is the only way of reunifying Akhand Bharat. If you are ready we are also ready. If not, please stop this bogus propaganda of Akhand Bharat).\**

Some of the comments of Indian journalist Kuldip Nayar what he made on November 16 (2012) at the launching ceremony of his book ‘Beyond the Lines’ held at Bangla Academy of Dhaka seemed to me as undesirable, unexpected and utopian. By doing so he not only made him controversial, but also deliberately bid to brand the historically resolved issue of partitioning the subcontinent a controversial one. A number of Indians earlier also placed such unreasonable and utopian dream of reunifying the countries of the subcontinent to single entity — Akhand Bharat. Speaking at the ‘Daily Star’ sponsored book launching function he tabled the idea in a detoured way advocating the formation of South Asian Union. He branded the partition of India as fallacious step and suggested the Hindus, Muslims, Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis to raise above their identity to create unified South Asia like that of European Union.

Mr. Nayar you don’t have a face to present such a proposal. You placed this from your mindset of extreme Hinduism. You were the people who instigated the Muslims to opt for a separate homeland. To frustrate Muslim interest you sided with your lord — British government to prolong their rule in India. You played the vital role to crush all the anti-East India Company crusades right from the resistance of Titumir to Sepoy mutiny. You were the surrogates of the British and beneficiaries of British rule and the Muslims had to fight two-pronged adversaries — the British and the local tentacles Hindu beneficiaries.

You didn't even ready to recognize the zeal of independence of the Muslims to end the British occupation in India. 'Anushilan Samity' is the glaring example of such heinous communalism. You will not get the name of even a single Muslim member in the then Anushilan Samity though the Muslims were the majority in numbers in Bengal. Your so-called Hindu patriots declined to recruit the Muslim youths in the 'Anushilan Samity'. Our Sayeed Wali Ullah (litterateur) and Muzzafar Ahmad (Marxist leader), who at that time were studying in Noakhali Zilla School, went to Surya Sen to express their willingness to join Anushilan Samity to fight against the British rule. Surya Sen categorically informed them that the Muslims had no avenue to enter the group. However, he said, one would have to swear in front of the image of goddess Kali to be recruited in the group. Both the Muslim youths disappointedly left Surya Sen. Surya Sen and all others in Anushilan Samity proved that the Hindus and Muslims are separate nations with separate belief and goal. It is to be recalled that the goal of Anushilan Samity was to create purely a Hindu dominated India to be ruled according to Hindu culture. Now you can comprehend whose communal behaviour first germinated the seeds of disunion and communalism between the two religious communities of the subcontinent.

Can you recall who outwardly under the guise of preserving the territorial integrity of Bengal, but practically out of communalism, started agitation against the partition of Bengal in 1905 when the British government in order to improve the socio-economic position of neglected and backward Muslims floated a new province comprising East Bengal and Assam making Dhaka as its capital? Who started non-cooperation movement against the British government demanding the annulment of new province and fuelled communal riot in Bengal against the poor Muslims who were not even aware what the partition of Bengal was?

Most of the Hindus, even the elite ones, seldom accept the Muslims as their neighbours having equal share in every sphere of life, as they treat them as their subservient, better to say slaves. Yet the then Muslim leader Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah to keep India's unity intact placed 14-point proposal where Muslims would get logical rights and privileges in Hindu-dominated British-free India. But Congress paid no heed to Jinnah's 14-point. It was Hindu communalism and their denial of equitable rights to the Muslims in British-free unified India compelled Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah to come to this conclusion that the lone solution to end the hatred, malice, exploitation, negligence of the Hindus against the Muslims was the creation of a separate homeland for Muslims

partitioning the subcontinent. Still the Muslim leaders Okayed the Cabinet Mission Plan to save India from disintegration.

The Cabinet Mission proposed to retain the unity of India by dividing it into three autonomous units. Both Congress and Muslim League initially welcomed the plan. But astonishing all Congress, due to the obstinacy of Nehru, all on a sudden retreated from its original commitment. As a result the British government had no other option but to divide India. Nehru and his accomplices retreated from the agreed plan as according to them it would benefit the Muslims as they would remain majority in two units: Unit B and C. These historical facts brand whom as communal. Are they Muslims or Hindus? So one doesn't feel comport hearing the suggestion of the communal Hindus to forget the religious identity of the Muslims who are liberal. And Mr. Nayar your contaminated proposal also originated from your Hindu communal sentiment, as it was the dream of your late communal leaders, like Nehru, who temporarily agreed partition of India.

Mr. Nayar, in 1905 you were desperate and dedicated to preserve the unity of Bengal. Who opposed its unity in 1947 when Hossain Shaid Shawardy, Abul Hashem, Sharat Bose, Kiran Shankar Roy, etc., declared to preserve the unity of Bengal by creating a sovereign independent Bengal outside India and Pakistan? Your Nehru attached a precondition that if India would have to be divided Bengal and Punjab must also be divided so that the portions of Bengal and Punjab that would go to Pakistan could re-merge to India soon after?

Your covert and overt activities against Bangladesh and your latest suggestion justified that you assisted us in 1971 to implement that dream of Nehru to merge East Bengal, now Bangladesh, to India. Your plan was to weaken and crush Muslim power of the region and grab us in course of time, to turn Bangladesh to a flag-oriented vassal state, if you couldn't swallow it instantly. We frustrated that design. Now you resurrected the same design in a detoured manner. We are sure that it is not your personal agenda. It is an expression of your Hindutva psyche.

Going through the above mentioned suggestion of Kuldip Nayar I recollected the story of seeing the elephant by seven blind men. Mr. Nayar took us, as if, we are blind. You advised us saying, "We will create a unified South Asia like that of European Union rising above our identity of Hindu, Muslim, Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi."

Let us see first of all how much you have come out of extreme Hindutva mindset. You verbally speak of secularism, but in practice you turned India to an extreme Hindu State. Your behaviour with Indian Muslims, Kashmiris, Sikhs, Buddhists, even with the Dalits-Harijans, above all with the Bangladeshis, since 1971 unequivocally revealed that there are no so much bigoted and extreme communalists around the world as worst as you. Your cruelty of communality magnified thousand times more after 1947 than that of pre-47 British era. If you were really secular, the Architect of the Indian Constitution Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, a Dalit, would have never converted to Buddhism? He even urged all other Dalits to shun Hinduism. Your communality, anti-Muslim hatred, and the mentality of keeping the Muslims under your feet prompted and compelled the Muslims of the then East Bengal to join Pakistan instead of merging to India.

We became the owner of an independent Bangladesh in 1971 as our forefathers took the judicious decision of joining Pakistan in 1947. We would have lost our existence if in 1947 we would have merged to India instead of joining Pakistan. Under that situation Sheikh Mujib would never have emerged. We wouldn't have got an independent country named Bangladesh. We would not have got our own prime minister, president, national parliament, Supreme Court. There wouldn't have so many MPs, ministers, bureaucrats, doctors, engineers, industrialists, poets and litterateurs, journalists, barristers and what not. So many universities, colleges, schools, Madrassas, medical colleges, engineering universities, or thousand types of other organizations, so many mills and factories, wouldn't have established in this region what is now known as Bangladesh. English Daily Star wouldn't have surfaced to publish your book or journalist like Mahfuz Anam or Matiur Rahman might not have emerged. Most of us would have become your farm-workers, home-servants, maidservants, day-labourers, boatmen, tailors, mason, carpenters, guards, at best primary school teachers what the Muslims of West Bengal and elsewhere in India now are.

In Bangladesh now many families in rural areas, not to speak of urban ones, have colour TV sets, computers, refrigerators, and mobile phones, even buildings and private cars. Metalled, roads, electricity and gas lines, dish-networks, internet connections spread in the remote rural areas. Nothing of these sorts could be achieved if our forefathers would have merged to India in 1947. Above all, millions of persons like Zainal Abedin wouldn't have emerged to condemn and thwart your overt and covert designs. The position of our next generations will reverse to the pre-47 era after 65 years if we today join so-called 'Akhand Bharat'

(Undivided India). All of our achievements will be lost and frustrated and perished to dust.

In this context I opt to quote psychological grief and agonies of a leader of Sarbajonin Jatiya Puja Udjapan Committee what he expressed at a meeting held at Dhakershari Mondhir on August 20, 2004. He moaned saying, we no longer get Muslim servants or maid servants in the houses of the Hindus. Muslims no longer prefer to work in our houses. This unfortunate situation was created after 1947. (Daily Inqilab, August 21, 2004).

Mr. Nayar the above quoted statement and its goal are self-explanatory that exposed the real mindset of the Hindus. In order to reverse the Muslims to the slave-like status of per-partitioned era and remove the feeling of grief of your Bangladeshi representatives, you resurrected or brought forward the theory of South Asian Union, whose ultimate goal is to create an 'Akhand Bharat'.

The root-cause is that you cannot tolerate or accept our success, prosperity and above all, independence. Your anti-Muslim communal hatred and psyche cannot tolerate our independent identity and happy and prosperous life. According to you why should the descendents of the unlettered rustic Muslim farm-workers and boatmen of East Bengal would have an independent homeland and lead a decent life. To end this you repeatedly imposed and still are imposing tragedies, tempests and miseries one after another on us, so that we cannot stand on our own legs. You are sure if you behave with us like a good neighbour we could supersede Malaysia or Singapore, not to speak of your India.

On the other hand, you apprehend if we are allowed to attain prosperity the deprived, exploited, neglected people of your provinces adjoining Bangladesh, which were never a part of Indian territory, will be inspired and roared for independence out of India. To deter their independence you wage clandestine war against us. Your prime goal is to swallow Bangladesh to reverse us to the status of porters and labourers. And with that end in view you raised the dead issue of 'Akhand Bharat'.

You can never be a friend of the Muslims. You will never be able to get rid of your pound of anti-Muslim communalism, as using the anti-Muslim sentiment you keep the Hindu nationalistic spirit alive to keep India united. Indians were psychologically divided far earlier. For this reason you let loose your army against

your people and chose anti-Muslim bias as an effective panacea to avert further subdivision and fragmentation of India. You will become busy to discover enemy amongst you once anti-Muslim sentiment withers away. Subdivision and fragmentation of India is the lone solution to the malice of your scores of castes and sub-castes, dialects and languages, regional and religious rivalry and strife. For all these reasons, it is a childish utopian dream to reunite the dead 'Akhand Bharat.

You claimed that you documented historical facts in your autobiography. If you were impartial you would have documented those reasons without bias and partiality that led to the partition of the subcontinent. Write how you killed and still are killing and depriving and deceiving the Indian Muslims for the last 65 years. How many riots have you staged, how many madrassas, mosques and grave yards of the Muslims have you occupied? How many Muslims have been you kept behind the bars in fake charges? Can the Muslims use loudspeakers to call the devotees to the mosques prior to their prayers? Aren't the Muslims 3rd or 4th grade citizens of India? What is their representation in government jobs? Have you documented all these information in your autobiography? I know you will never to that. You are secular in words, not indeed. You are fanatic communal Hindu, but camouflage your notoriety to deceive the Muslims.

Why don't you confess that the Muslims are still persecuted, oppressed, wounded even killed daily in India? You were presenting the utopian theory of resurrecting the dead Akhand Bharat before your allies in Dhaka just when anti-Muslim riots were in progress in Assam and Hyderabad (occupied by you). You didn't mention in your autobiography, what your flatterers in Dhaka branded as so-called encyclopaedia, the demolition of Babri Mosque followed by anti-Muslim riot, military operation on the Sikh shrine, or persecution on the Buddhists or Christians. You didn't mention those as your design is to hide those cruel misdeeds. Bring to light your black chapters what are preserved in your evil heart. You will never do that.

Let us forget the problems of the Indian Muslims. What is the position of that part of Bengal what is known as West Bengal where 75% of the total population is Hindu? West Bengal was the most prosperous and industrialized State among all others when the British left the subcontinent. Why it is now in a deplorable destitution? Why your late Rajiv Gandhi branded Kolkata as dead city? Who now control West Bengal? Who are the owners of the main keys of West Bengal, are they Bengalese or non-Bengalese? Who are the owners of the mills and factories,

business organizations and even most of the residential houses there? Why Bengali language withers away from West Bengal. What is the principal language in Kolkata City - Bengali or Hindi? Do the Bengali films get accommodation in cinema halls of Kolkata? Why do the Bengalese migrate to other states in search of job? The reason is that West Bengal is now a colony of New Delhi in the truest term of the term. It is not an independent and sovereign country like Bangladesh.

You should not forget it that we are no longer your slave or unlettered like those of the British-dominated Muslims. We are now qualified enough to face you with equal intellectuality and sagacity. Don't imagine that by purchasing some politicians, journalists, intellectuals, cultural activists, you have won over Bangladesh. These parasites are not the ultimate deciders of Bangladesh.

Don't lure us with the glow of Akhand Bharat. Nagas would not have continued their resistance for 65 years if India was an abode of paradise. The Kashmiri kids wouldn't have attacked the Indian soldiers. The Sikhs wouldn't have declared independent Khalistan. Despite launching genocide your (Indian) army failed to crush the resistance of the people of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Kashmir, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram,, Nagaland, Punjab, Tripura, etc. Wait to see the roar of the Tamils. You are to wait to see how these regions one after another are slipped away from India. On the basis of what you put forwarded the theory of Akhand Bharat when your India is itself disintegrating. Instead of advocating for reunification of dead India, you simply wait to count to how many pieces India is going to be divided.

It will be a folly if you consider us like those of the Bengalese of West Bengal, who lost their identity. We broke Muslim Pakistan not to become the slaves of the Hindu India. Bangladeshis comprehend your cruelty. They carefully watch how you behave with the Indian Muslims, Dalit-Harijan Hindus, Kashmiris, Sikhs and the people of Assam, Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh. You know how cruel you are. All these factors will lead to the disintegration of India. No prudent and intelligent person can dream the unification of dead Akhand Bharat.

You instanced the European Union. 27 European countries formed an alliance as there is no country named India around them. None of them deprives any country of the water of the international river Danube that touches the territories of 10 counties including Romania (29.0% of basin area), Hungary (11.6%), Serbia

(10.2%), Austria (10.0%), Germany (7.0%), Slovakia (5.9%), Bulgaria (5.9%), Croatia (4.4%), Ukraine (3.8%) and Moldova (1.6%). No European country daily kills the people of her neighbouring country, no country erects barbed wire fence along the border of the neighbouring country and hangs the corpse on the barbed-wire fence killing neighbours. No country smuggles arms and explosives, penetrates terrorists to their neighbouring country or creates agents to attack or arson mills and factories to paralyze the economy or blockade water of the international rivers or creates artificial flood by opening gates of dams and barrages during the rainy season to cause agriculture and destroy communication infrastructures and blocks water during the dry season when water becomes essential for agriculture. No country used its intelligence agencies to assassinate the presidents of its neighbouring country.

You don't have the face of citing the instance of European Union. Your reference to European Union originated from your communal mindset to engage us under your fold. You don't prefer the unity of the South Asian countries; rather you design to dominate them. You opposed the unity of South Asian countries when Shahid Ziaur Rahman appealed to form a forum of the South Asian countries. In his honest proposal you discovered anti-India bias, better to say you branded it as anti-expansionist alliance. For this reason, despite popular support of all other countries, South Asian alliance couldn't be floated so long Zia remained alive. After the assassination Ziaur Rahman due to your conspiracy you agreed to form an ineffective SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) according to your blueprint to implement your hegemonic agenda. You crippled SAARC by attaching a precondition that any decision of SAARC must be unanimous. Due to this precondition SAARC cannot adopt any decision beyond your blueprint. As a result, SAARC failed to reach its cherished vision and spirit and became an event of annual picnic of feasts and haunt of gossiping and idle talkers of the South Asian leaders, above all, a trap of recruiting agents. Ascending on SAARC now you not only spread the market of your commodities in the South Asian countries, but also bid to station your troops.

Bangladeshis will no longer trust you. Using some purchased slaves or spreading the hegemonic network of intrigues or through military invasion Bangladesh may be temporarily occupied but in the long run a larger Muslim country will re-emerge with a larger territory centring Bangladesh. So don't play with fire. Let you remain happy, we have neither greed for nor malice to your happiness. We simply desire and deserve equal and good neighbourly treatment from you. If you refrain from

committing nefarious devilry and notoriety against us Bangladesh will make so much progress in 10 years that your people will throng in Bangladesh to change their fortune. To change our luck we need not to chain us with your slavery. Let us simply live in peace.

You suggested help remove the deadlock that obstructs mutual cooperation in South Asian region. Who germinated the seeds of mistrusts and non-cooperation? Is it you or any other else? You are the exponent of all types of evil deeds that engulfed the subcontinent. The devil of arms race, nursing terrorists, disintegrating others' country, twisting other countries, occupying others' territory, ascribed on you.

Let you set the example of cooperation. Demolish all the dams and barrages including Farakka, halt the construction of new dam and river interlinking project, remove the barbed-wire fence from the border, stop killing the Bangladeshis in the border area, shun the idea of having corridor through Bangladesh and develop transit facilities connecting all the SAARC countries. We believe in coordinated transit system combining all the SAARC member-countries, not in corridor through Bangladesh.

It is your responsibility to set the example of cooperation, because you follow the policy of non-cooperation in every field. Please calculate the extent of non-cooperation that you have committed. Observe your own face on the mirror. There prevails the ugly cruelty of communalism on the other side of your theory of cooperation and unity. We have detected your character and goal. It is better for you the sooner you leave the utopia of 'Akhand Bharat'.

Mr. Nayar if you are really serious to reunify India, I have a suggestion for you what will enable you to fulfil your dream. Would you agree to return to those Sultanate and Moghul eras when entire India was under Muslim rule and Hindus and Muslims resided together enjoying equal rights? You will voluntarily surrender your part of India to the Muslims? Delhi will be its capital and Muslims will rule whole India. This is the only way of reunifying Akhand Bharat. If you are ready we are also ready. If not, please stop this bogus propaganda of Akhand Bharat).\*

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## Can we solve Siachen without solving the Jammu and Kashmir dispute?

Shivam Vij

*Myra MacDonald is a London-based journalist with Reuters and a long-time observer of South Asia. She tracks the turning points in Pakistan politics at the Pakistan: Now or Never. MacDonald is best known for her book on the Siachen conflict, Heights of Madness: One Woman's Journey in Pursuit of a Secret War. Published in 2007, the research for the book took her to both sides of the conflict, on helicopter and on ground. She was bureau chief of Reuters in India in 2000-2003. She then took leave-of-absence to research the Siachen conflict, becoming one of the very few people to visit the war zone on both the Indian and Pakistani sides. She has given presentations on Siachen to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and to the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. Amidst alarmist rumours that track-two parleys between India and Pakistan are urging India to 'give up Siachen', MacDonald tells **Shivam Vij** in an e-mail interview why resolving Siachen without resolving the Jammu and Kashmir dispute may not be easy.*

**Q1) The idea of demilitarising Siachen is being seen by some in India as a demand to hand Siachen over to Pakistan, or at the very least, to 'lose' the territory for which Indian soldiers have made great sacrifices. Do you agree with such an interpretation of demilitarising the glacier? Do you think India has real strategic advantage with its occupation of the glacier?**

The first thing to understand is that the conflict has not been fought over the glacier itself but for control of the passes on the Soltoro ridge which overlooks Siachen and separates it from Baltistan. Pakistan has no troops on the glacier itself, and India controls most of the higher positions. There is no strategic advantage in controlling these passes and never has been – the idea sometimes floated that the Pakistan Army could use these to link up with China and threaten India makes no sense when you see how difficult the terrain is. That said, it is understandable that the Indian Army, having fought so hard for control of the higher positions in the region, would not want to give these up without some kind of guarantee from Pakistan that it would not occupy posts which India had vacated.

**Q2) Siachen was an un-militarised, uninhabited glacier until 1984. In both Indian and Pakistani narratives it is the other side that is responsible for the April 1984 skirmish that began the Siachen conflict. While Pakistanis say India was the aggressor, Indians says it had to occupy Siachen because Pakistan was conducting mountaineering expeditions there. What is the truth? Can the responsibility of having started the Siachen conflict be fixed on one side?**

Both sides bear some responsibility for the events that led to the outbreak of war in Siachen in April 1984, but on balance India has a greater share of the blame for setting those events in motion. The origins of the conflict go back to before 1978, when Pakistan authorised foreign mountaineering expeditions to the Siachen glacier. This was not unreasonable – access to the glacier historically was far easier from the Baltistan side, across the Bilafond-la, the main pass through the Soltoro. At some point, foreign maps began wrongly to mark Siachen as Pakistani territory, and this was used as an excuse by India to send a military mountaineering expedition to explore the glacier. As India continued to send military mountaineering expeditions each summer to the glacier, Pakistan in turn became alarmed, sending its own men to investigate, and in the atmosphere of distrust in South Asia, mountaineering expeditions morphed into military patrols. Reading the protest notes sent at the time, it is clear that Pakistan genuinely believed India was intruding on its territory – it is also clear that with dialogue, the problem could have been resolved. Instead, India decided to send troops in the summer of 1984 to occupy the passes; Pakistan, worried about Indian intentions, prepared its own plan to move in; and India – by bringing forward its operation to April managed to get there first.

**Q3) 135 Pakistani soldiers and civilian staff died in an avalanche in Gyari sector near Siachen earlier this year, but heavy costs in terms of life and limb have also been paid by the Indian Army in Siachen. Why then do you think the Pakistanis rather than the Indians are keener for a quick resolution to Siachen?**

Before the avalanche at Gyari, there was no practical reason for Pakistan being keener than India for a quick resolution to Siachen. Since India occupies the higher positions, it has longer supply routes and is more dependent on helicopters for supplies – it is therefore costlier for India to keep the war going and tougher on its troops.

The reasons for Pakistan wanting the conflict solved are political – or even emotional – rather than practical. Pakistan has always seen the Indian occupation of Siachen in 1984 as an act of aggression in breach of the Simla agreement which states that no attempt should be made to change the Line of Control (LoC) by force. The LoC had been demarcated only as far as map grid reference point NJ9842, from where it was to continue “thence north to the glaciers”. Pakistan believes the LoC should continue to join up with the Karakoram Pass, giving it control of most of Siachen; India says it should follow the natural watershed – the Soltoro ridge, giving it control of the glacier. While it is possible to argue both claims, it is certainly fair to say that by occupying the passes, India did try to change the direction of the LoC by force – thus making it the guilty party in breaching the Simla accords. This is important in the context of the mindset of the Pakistan Army, which is keen to assert that it is not wrong in seeing India as a threat. The fact that India moved into Siachen first is also frequently cited by Pakistanis as justification for its subsequent military operation across the Line of Control in Kargil in 1999 – for which they were internationally, and they say, unfairly, criticised.

**Q4) The Indian Army insists that demilitarising Siachen must be preceded by recording existing troop positions but the Pakistani point of view is that that would amount to legitimising Indian control of a disputed territory. For a short-term demilitarisation without prejudice to the eventual settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, do you think the Indian position is a reasonable one?**

India has shifted over the years towards a maximalist position of insisting Pakistan recognise its control over Siachen and the passes before any withdrawal. Recently, I have seen some articles extending this further – arguing that since India claims all of the former kingdom of Jammu and Kashmir, including Baltistan, it had every right to occupy Siachen. Was Pakistan to accept this? It would be, in its eyes, acknowledging India’s right to change the Line of Control by force and exonerating from an act of aggression. For comparison, it is worth looking at draft agreements floated as far back as 1989, under which both sides would agree a withdrawal and the Indian positions marked only in an annex to the main accord – a diplomatic finesse which would allow both countries to claim victory. The Indian position is understandable in as much as it does not want to give up hard-won gains; but is not geared towards finding a compromise that would allow Pakistan to withdraw with a modicum of dignity.

**Q5) Although ceasefire was declared in Siachen only in 2003, New Delhi and Islamabad came close to an agreement in 1992 to make Siachen a ‘zone of disengagement’. But India, and two years later Pakistan, went back from the proposed solution. India hardened its position on Siachen in 1998 and especially after the Kargil war of 1999. Do you think the 1992 draft can still guide a settlement? The Kargil incursion by Pakistan sought to cut off Siachen from India and thus hardened the Indian Army’s stance over Siachen. In consequence, would any solution of the Siachen conflict be beholden to the larger J&K dispute?**

After Kargil, it seems impossible to agree a withdrawal without a framework agreement on the larger J&K dispute. There are practical reasons for this – over the years the Siachen battlefield has sprawled outwards, so much so that posts eventually linked up with those in the Kargil sector of the Line of Control. Any agreement to demilitarise Siachen would now require a similar willingness to demilitarise the LoC. The 2008 attack on Mumbai has also further reduced Indian readiness to make any territorial concessions. However, some small steps could be taken as a show of goodwill. The most obvious would be for India and Pakistan to run joint scientific expeditions in Siachen to establish how much the environment has been damaged by the war and by climate change. The Gyari disaster should be a warning to both sides that their troops are more vulnerable to an unpredictable increase in avalanches. Joint expeditions would at least get India and Pakistan working together and, perhaps more importantly, provide an important signal that both countries still consider the Siachen region as “disputed”. Otherwise we are in danger of slipping in Siachen into the same deadlock that prevails over J&K as a whole, which Pakistan says is disputed territory and India says is not disputed. (First published in Rediff.)