

# LISA JOURNAL

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## **LISA**

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## EDITORIAL

### **‘Angel of Mercy’ leaves this world**

Abdul Sattar Edhi, a revered figure died in Karachi on 9 July 2016. Humanity in general and Pakistan in particular lost its ‘Angel of Mercy’. Edhi’s name had become synonymous with charitable causes and who achieved an almost saintly status in Pakistan.

He was quoted as saying ‘social progress had not matched the world’s material and technological advances. *People have become educated but have yet to become human.*’

A famously ascetic figure always clad in simple clothes. He had no desire for worldly belongings and cared only about serving humanity noting that his final wish was to be buried in the clothes he wore when he died and for any of his usable organs to be donated.

Starting with a small medical aid service in 1951 Mr Edhi grew his organization into one of world’s largest and most respected philanthropic services.

Widely admired for his stubborn integrity he only accepted private donations refusing government offers of support and commitment to helping Pakistan’s destitute and forgotten. Edhi was often referred to as Pakistan’s Mother Teresa.

He saw charity as a central tenet of Islam and lived humbly with his wife Bilquis in the same building as his organization’s offices. But unlike Mother Teresa, Edhi had to operate in the face of death threats and other obstacles. He defied the threats and continued his work which was of purely humanitarian nature. May this noble soul rest in eternal peace.

### **Kashmir**

Condemning the naked aggression, barbarism and continuous firing by Police and government forces on the people protesting against the extra judicial killing of Burhan Muzaffar Wani, a revered by the youth and his two associates resulting in 33 civilian killings during the past three days, All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) Chairman, Mirwaiz Dr. Moulvi Muhammad Umar Farooq paid glowing tributes to these martyrs. Burhan Wani had become a household

name over the past five years, a young boy at 15, he had picked up arms due to the Indian troops cruelty towards his brother, and since then had become a prominent and respected leader within the separatist leaders' ranks.

Indian forces in Jammu Kashmir have let loose a reign of terror and the way they were trampling all human rights should serve as an eye opener for all international human rights organizations and friends of humanity.

On the other hand, the public uprising had once again proved that Kashmir issue was not an administrative issue but one of their wishes and aspirations to be free of India's stranglehold and occupation as enshrined in the UN Resolutions. As death clouds circle Kashmir once again, the voices for freedom grow louder in Indian Held Kashmir (IHK). Despite imposition of indefinite curfew hundreds of protesters came out in several neighbourhoods in southern Kashmir, chanting "Go India! Go back" and "We want freedom". With Pakistani flags in hand they shouted Pakistan Zindabad (Long live Pakistan)

Muzaffar Wani extra-judicial killing will only serve to consolidate his legacy and larger than life persona, and will cause many of his devoted followers to join the Kashmir militancy aimed at asking UN and world community to carry out plebiscite as enshrined in UN Resolutions.

### **Carnage in Bangladesh**

Faced with a number of murderous attacks on individuals that included secular bloggers, Hindus, Buddhist and Christians, at least some of them claimed by IS or Al Qaeda, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajid categorically stated that neither the IS or Al Qaeda had a foothold in Bangladesh and that the perpetrators were locals in terms of both breeding and instigation.

That is not an incongruous argument, given the fact that Bangladesh has seen fundamentalist and nationalistic violence since it became an independent country after a bloody civil war in 1971. Substantial part of the able bodied Bengalis were involved with violence and bloodshed in 1971 and thereafter. The parallels that have been drawn between the current terrorising of the intelligentsia and the efforts to effectively eliminate it 45 years ago are in fact far from ridiculous.

Many analysts are of the view that belated recent trials of Jamaat-i-Islami old, ailing and frail, followed in some cases by executions, are a crucial motivating

factor in the murderous campaign against those seen as particular foes of the fundamentalist creed. Political opponents have been put on controversial trials, nearly half a century after their purported deeds were perpetrated. Many international observers have expressed dissatisfaction at the conduct of the trials. Universal standard of law of evidence were not followed during these trial. Through special legislation the courts holding these trials of so called war crimes were not required to follow the basic tenets of laws of evidence in blatant violation of basic human rights. In brief, whether or not justice was done, it wasn't seen to be done.

That plays into the narrative that the Awami League government is more concerned about scoring political points — the Jamaat being an ally of the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) led by former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia — than about pursuing historical justice.

### **Drone strike by US violates Pakistan Sovereignty**

Drone strike on May 21, 2016 killing Taliban Ameer Akhtar Mansour who was pro-peace has ruined the ongoing reconciliation process undertaken by QCG consisting of representatives from USA, China, Pakistan and Afghanistan. It has also nosedived Pak-US relations.

Pakistan government has termed the drone attack a clear violation of Pakistan's sovereignty and expressed its serious concerns. The US Ambassador in Islamabad was invited by Gen Raheel in his office in GHQ and had a straight talk with him. China after 17 days finally broke its silence by giving a statement calling upon the 'international community' to respect Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It commended Pakistan's contribution to the war against terrorism and stressed that the Afghan reconciliation process within the framework of the QCG should not be jeopardised. It was a rebuke to Washington over the drone killing of the Taliban chief.

Former Indian Ambassador M K Bhadrakumar article titled "US unleashes the dogs of war in Afghanistan" published in this Journal says, "The US is co-opting India as a full partner in the rebalance strategy, which of course would pit India against both China and Pakistan. The US counts on India to join the effort to disrupt the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and frustrate the strategy by China and Russia to create a Eurasian economic bloc".

Pakistan is caught up in a paradoxical situation. The US as well as the government in Kabul have been coaxing Pakistan to convince the Afghan Taliban to come to the negotiating table and help in restoring peace in war torn Afghanistan. At the same time, they do not want Pakistan to maintain contacts with Taliban and are urging it to fight them. Last year, with great efforts Pakistan managed to arrange a meeting at Murree on July 7, 2015 which was attended by Taliban leaders including Mullah Akhtar Mansour. The next meeting was scheduled at the same place on July 31 and some breakthrough was expected. The roguish airing of the news of death of Mullah Omar by USA, Afghan government and India on July 30 scuttled the scheduled talks. Now Mullah Akhtar Mansour who was willing to negotiate a settlement has been droned that too in Pakistan.

## **Afghanistan**

The Americans went into Afghanistan supposedly to capture OBL. So what are they doing there today with OBL dead and gone? It seems that the goal post keeps changing with the warmongering neocons. Not to mention Iraq.

It has been obvious for a very long time that interventionist policies have consequences, most of them bad. Still, we persist in the mistaken belief that by invading other countries we can enforce some semblance of world order.

The Taliban has a new leader, and his message is clear. According to the *Hindustan Times*, Haibatullah Akhundzada said on Saturday in his first speech since being appointed leader after his predecessor Akhtar Mansour was killed during an American drone strike in Pakistan in May, that the U.S. needs to end its occupation of Afghanistan. “Admit the realities instead of useless use of force and muscle... and put an end to the occupation,” he said on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr, the Muslim celebration marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. “Our message to the American invaders and her allies is this: The Afghan Muslim people neither fear... your force nor your stratagem. They consider martyrdom in confrontation with you as a cherished goal of their life,” he continued. In the same speech, he appealed to neighbouring countries to stand together with the Taliban and assist in the fight against the U.S., stating their presence would “harm our mutual interest” and “destabilize the whole region.”

# US unleashes the dogs of war in Afghanistan

M K Bhadrakumar

A statement by the Chinese Foreign Ministry on Thursday pointedly called on the ‘international community’ to respect Pakistan’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. It commended Pakistan’s contribution to the war against terrorism and stressed that the Afghan reconciliation process within the framework of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group should not be jeopardized. (MFA)

The statement can be seen as a rebuke to Washington over the drone killing of the Taliban chief. It took 17 days for Beijing to break its silence.

Stressing that the way government forces were executing their ‘Shoot to Kill’ policy, killing 19 civilians and injuring over 200, the Mirwaiz in a statement said it was clear and evident that India had declared a war against Kashmir. The Indian occupational forces of over 700,000 military troops and killing of innocent Kashmiris is the worst example of state terrorism, said the APHC Chairman, who is under house arrest for the past several days.

The statement came even as a delegation of senior US officials was heading for Islamabad – Richard Olson, US special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Peter Lavoy, Senior Advisor and Director for South Asian Affairs in the National Security Council, and Gen. John Nicholson, commander of the US forces in Afghanistan.

*The Pakistani accounts convey the impression that the US officials heard from their leadership in Islamabad and Rawalpindi during meetings today strong denunciation of the US drone strikes on Pakistani territory and trenchant criticism about the tilt in the American policies toward India. (A full-spectrum Pakistani reaction also sails into view over Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s recent visit to the US.) Clearly, US-Pakistan relations are nose-diving. (A report in the Pakistani newspaper Express Tribune, here, gives the sense of it.)*

The Chinese statement would have kept in view the high necessity to voice solidarity with Pakistan at the present juncture. Importantly, Beijing would have factored in the geopolitical backdrop. The point is, the reverberations of the US' rebalance are being felt in Central and southwest Asia, finally.

*The US is co-opting India as a full partner in the rebalance strategy, which of course would pit India against both China and Pakistan. The US counts on India to join the effort to disrupt the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and frustrate the strategy by China and Russia to create a Eurasian economic bloc.*

The war in Afghanistan becomes the perfect alibi to beef up the US military presence in the region, the game plan being to intimidate Pakistan and to break its axis with China. This US policy thrust matches India's interests, too.

Thus, President Barack Obama is not only abandoning his earlier troop withdrawal plan in Afghanistan but as latest reports suggest, he is even inclined to allow the American troops to undertake combat missions against the Taliban. (Washington Post)

In geopolitical terms, Obama's move aims at regaining the upper hand in the Afghan endgame. Interestingly, it coincides with the induction of India and Pakistan as full members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a regional development that Washington views with disquiet. (TASS)

Logically, at some point in a near future, US will demand a direct Indian military role in Afghanistan (which would also offset the waning interest in the war among the NATO countries.) Conceivably, India may be already positioning itself for undertaking such a role in Afghanistan as the US' key partner.

No doubt, the Chahbahar Port and the communication links via Iran become vital for India to access Afghanistan and play an effective role in the US' regional strategy.

More importantly, the Logistics Agreement with the US will come extremely handy if the Indian forces get involved in a military role in Afghanistan. The US has military bases in Afghanistan, which can provide back-up for any



Indian military expedition. In reciprocal terms, Indian military bases also become accessible to the US forces, which, on the one hand, would reduce Pentagon's dependence on Pakistan for logistics support, while on the other hand, give more leverage to Washington to put pressure on Pakistan through intense drone attacks and so on.

If India gets involved militarily in Afghanistan, it will be killing two birds with a single shot, insofar as, one, it can hope to roll back China's expanding influence in Afghanistan, and, two, a military role in Afghanistan will help India to exert the maximum pressure on Pakistan. In strategic terms, indeed, Afghanistan is a high plateau that looks down on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

The US-Indian estimation seems to be that through a policy of systematically decapitating the Taliban, it will be possible to splinter the movement and weaken the insurgency to a point that the Afghan government, supported by Washington and New Delhi, incrementally gains the upper hand and will be in a position to dictate the terms of a settlement.

*The Indian security establishment has always been rooted in the belief that it is possible to exterminate the Taliban through force via a comprehensive strategy of intimidating Pakistan and making the price of continued interference in Afghanistan too high for Islamabad, while on the other hand, waging an effective counter-insurgency war.*

In Gen. Nicholson, a gung-ho general, India's security czars may find a kindred soul. The authorization given by Obama for the drone strike in Baluchistan conveys a warning that the US will not hesitate to take the war into the Pakistani territory — and it had Nicholson's stamp on it. This is precisely the sort of tough approach towards Pakistan that India always wanted Obama to adopt.

Clearly, Nicholson is pulling his weight in Washington, and he is backed by powerful people in the US establishment, as is apparent from the open letter published on June 3 in the National Interest magazine, addressed to the White House by a group of 13 retired American generals and ambassadors, including such well-known names as Gen Stanley McChrystal and Gen David Petraeus.

These gentlemen wrote: - 'Unless emergency conditions require consideration of a modest increase, we would strongly favor a freeze at the level of roughly ten thousand U.S. troops through January 20. This approach would also allow your successor to assess the situation for herself or himself and make further adjustments accordingly'.

What lies ahead? In a nutshell, the dogs of war are being unleashed in the Hindu Kush, and, ironically, this will be the last major policy decision on Afghanistan taken by Obama, a Nobel who had actually vowed once at the outset of his presidency that he'd bury this war once and for all.

To be sure, Pakistan won't blink, since this also happens to be an existential issue. Equally, China cannot but view with disquiet the emergent US-Indian axis in regional politics and working as a template of the US rebalance in Asia. Beijing will understand that the shift in the US policy in Afghanistan – and towards Pakistan – and the newfound alliance with India is in reality aimed at encircling and preparing for war against China.

Clearly, political tensions are rising throughout Asia, and the South Asian region's political order that largely managed to escape the ravages of the Cold War may not be lucky this time. The danger is real that the major regional powers may be drifting toward a general war.

*Ambassador MK Bhadrakumar served as a career diplomat in the Indian Foreign Service for three decades. He served as ambassador to Uzbekistan and Turkey. Apart from two postings in the former Soviet Union, his assignments abroad included South Korea, Sri Lanka, West Germany, Kuwait, Pakistan and Afghanistan.*

# **The Terror of Modi: An Interview with Arun Ferreira**

Andrew Stewart

Two years back in 2014, Narendra Modi became the 15th Prime Minister of India. Within the past year, the Western media has hailed his government and he has been a prominent figure in the international pages of the *New York Times*, garnering accolades for streamlining the bureaucracy and helping to grow the economy. Just a few weeks ago he was encouraging Vladimir Putin to take up yoga, now he's strengthening ties with America and the West, it would appear that he is a genuine wunderkind and the sky is the limit for the Modi government.

But beneath the glitz and glam is a deeply disturbing individual at the center of a reactionary and theocratically-minded social movement that makes the worst of our Evangelical Christian Tea Partiers seem secularized. Modi in fact has been described by a clinical psychologist as a textbook case of fascism and capable of mass murder. He was denied a visa and prevented from entering the United States in 2005 by the Bush administration due to his support of a 2002 riot in the state of Gujarat that left up to 2,000 members of the Muslim community dead.

Modi hails from an ideological movement called The Sangh Parivar, translated as Family of Associations, a right wing nationalist movement called Hindutva. There is the para-military Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, RSS, founded in 1925 with blatant links to European fascism. Vishva Hindu Parishad, VHP, the religious wing, promotes a brand of Hindu fundamentalism that is tremendously bigoted and especially targets the Muslim minority of India as a species worse than vermin and has promoted hatred of Christians also. And then there is the Bharatiya Janata Party, a major opposition party in the country that has succeeded in taking power and deepening the ethnic and cultural divides that have already led to mass carnage during the 1948 partition, the various wars and border skirmishes with Pakistan, and the tragedies involving Bangladesh and Kashmir.

And the reason you should be concerned is because a large amount of funding of these folks comes from the Indian Diaspora. When Modi was denied a visa, it was because he was planning to address a huge gathering of followers at New York's Madison Square Garden that would certainly have included an appeal to the checkbooks. To be clear, I am quite conscientious of Orientalism as a type of racism and bigotry towards Indians and members of the Hindu faith. But what we are dealing with here is far from the popular imagery of peace-loving yogis trying to balance their karma.

I had the opportunity to interview Arun Ferreira, he is an Indian political activist and human rights advocate who has previously been jailed and tortured by the police under trumped-up terrorism charges.

*Narendra Modi's election was seen as a notable event in the Western media, what explains his stature?*

It is true Narendra Modi's election is seen as a notable event in the Western Media. It has added glamour to it because just after 2002 i.e. after the anti-Muslim pogrom in Gujarat under the leadership of Modi, the US had denied Modi a visa on grounds of Human Rights violations. This election is seen by the western media as a makeover of Narendra Modi. However, there is no change of heart by the Modi led administration. As it was back in 2002, Modi was and is still willing to engineer genocides or repressive practices for the sake of so-called development— a development serving the interests of big capital and impoverishing the poor. This is in essence what is so often called the Gujarat model of 'development'. It is this 'development' model that brought him in favour with the big industrialist and financial class translating it into a Modi electoral win throughout the country. The western financial powers led by the US had brought in economic reforms and liberalization in the early 1990s. But having been stalled, they needed someone like Modi to take the process further ahead.

*It seems, to an outside observer, that he is ramping up the religiosity of the Indian national dialogue and asserting a sort of stance not unlike the American religious conservatives have done in the last 35 years since the election of Ronald Reagan. Is this a fair description?*

Narendra Modi's political party the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had never in the past shied from using religiosity for electoral gains or fascist designs. The BJP, ever since its inception had considerable backing of its mother organization the Rastriya Syamsevak Sangh (RSS) which was established in the 1920's inspired by Adolf Hitler and Mussolini. In fact, early in his political career Narendra Modi was a sambhaag pracharak (regional organizer) for the RSS. The vision of pan Aryan supremacy is also shared by the BJP and other RSS affiliates and considered as Akhand Bharat i.e. an expansionist national entity to encompass the entire Indian sub-continent. Hence Modi's religiosity is more of the Hitlerite genre.

*Where did Modi come from, was this an out-of-the-blue thing or was there a long-simmering Hindu nationalist demographic setting this up?*

I have mentioned in my earlier reply a brief history of Modi and the BJP. More details are easily available in the public domain and neither has tried to hide it. At most both the BJP and Modi have tried to camouflage it under the garb of 'nationalism' or 'true secularism'. India has a highly heterogeneous demographic setup and Hindu nationalism has historically been more of an upper caste- upper class experiment to unite the various classes, castes and tribes against the foreign enemy. Hence it played a relatively progressive role in the anti- colonial struggle against the British. In modern times it has a regressive essence and is mainly used to launch attacks against Dalits (the most oppressed castes), Muslims, Christians or cultural and national minorities. Hence progressive sections in India termed this pseudo-nationalism as Hindutva Fascism.

*What has happened to minority rights since Modi was elected?*

With the Modi government in power, it has provided for an umbrella like cover for all the reactionary forces. There has been an increase in attacks on Muslims and Christians. In some places riots are engineered, in others targeted attacks are done on progressive activists such as Govind Pansare, etc. Though the Modi government has denied any explicit role in these attacks, the fact remains that there is an increase in aggressive Hindutva and anti-minority propaganda by leading members of the BJP or Sangh Parivar (the affiliated organizations of the

RSS). While innocent Muslims are detained and falsely arrested in the name of countering terror, the key conspirators in all the anti-Muslim pogroms are scot free.

*What sort of policies is Modi putting in place that are a counter to the progression Indian society had been making?*

As I have mentioned earlier, the Modi government was brought in to hasten the process of globalization and liberalization in India. He seems to be determined to pursue this goal. For example, he has thrice promulgated the Land Acquisition Ordinance which seeks to smoothen the process of the transfer of agricultural land to big Capital, although the parliament refuses to enact it amidst stiff opposition from the poor.

*What is the status of the Congress Party and what sort of opposition do they present?*

Congress party has been almost eliminated as a major opposition in the parliament. Their numbers are an all-time low in the history of post-British India. Having no different model for developing India, they differ with the BJP or Modi administration merely on trivial issues or on the speed at which economic reforms are to be taken ahead. Also on both Internal and External security concerns they almost share the Modi administration's vision. If at all there is a difference, the Modi one is a shade more aggressive. Hence, at present their opposition is mainly opportunistic and filled with symbolism.

*How has Modi dealt with the Naxalite [a Maoist insurgency that has made significant impact on behalf of farmers and poor people]?*

Vis-à-vis the Naxalite, the Modi administration has continued the previous government's Clear-Hold-Build counter insurgency strategy. Through 'Operation Greenhunt' the previous government launched a massive military offensive against the Naxalite. The State had conducted extra-judicial killings and cultivated Contra-style militias like *Salwa Judum* to eliminate the Naxalite. Though such methods had faced severe criticism by civil society and the judiciary, the new Modi government continues to advocate the same, albeit in

new avatars. In fact, like the earlier government, the Modi is also preparing to use the Army against the Naxalite movement.

*Do you see a great deal of violence still to come?*

With the Modi government having had the history of great electoral wins after each communal pogrom, it is but natural that it will continue to use this strategy further. On the other hand, peoples' movements are continually faced with indiscriminate arrests, imprisonments and targeted murders. Yes, I do see a great deal of violence still to come. Right from his days in Gujarat, Modi has been known to bring in globalization by such methods.

*India has recently opened itself to Western defense contractors, do you see this as an attempt for quick cash or is there a geopolitical issue at hand here in regards to China and Russia?*

I definitely see it as a geopolitical issue. In matters of Foreign affairs, Modi has been keen to appease the US administration and present India as a reliable Western ally in South East Asia and as a counter balance to the growing influence of China. Compared to the earlier Congress led government, the present one has been more aggressive. The recent defence contracts with the US have to be seen in this light.

A version of this interview has also appears on [RIFuture.org](http://RIFuture.org).

# Pakistan's nuclear diplomacy

Munir Akram

Given the growing conventional arms imbalance with India, Pakistan's security is now critically dependent on nuclear deterrence. In the long, difficult struggle to develop this capability, in the face of determined Western opposition, Pakistan's scientists, its political leaders, and several of its soldiers, played vital roles. No less important was the part played by Pakistan's diplomats.

It was the foresight of diplomats like Agha Shahi and Iqbal Akhund which held back Pakistan's leaders from accepting the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Pakistan warned the world even before the NPT was adopted that India would use the non-safeguarded facilities and fuel provided by Canada and the US to build N-weapons.

After India's 1974 explosion, Pakistan's proposal to create a South Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone put India on the diplomatic defensive and politically retarded its N-weapons plans.

Through active diplomacy, Pakistan secured the agreement for the French sale of a nuclear reprocessing plant. This was disrupted by the US; but not before Pakistan had acquired the plant designs and technological knowhow.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Pakistan was engaged in a diplomatic battle to avoid Western demands for restrictions on nuclear enrichment at Kahuta and termination of its nascent missile development

An agreement was concluded for peaceful nuclear cooperation with China before it acceded to NPT (as an N-weapon state). It included a clause that has enabled ('grandfathered') China's supply of nuclear reactors to Pakistan.

In 1994, Pakistan rejected a US 'offer' to release of 72 F16 aircraft Pakistan had purchased, and Washington had blocked unilaterally, in exchange for a 'temporary' freeze on nuclear enrichment. Stopping the Kahuta centrifuges would have destroyed half of them.



In May 1998, on the Foreign Office's advice, Pakistan turned down US offers of billions in aid not to reciprocate India's nuclear tests. Not to do so would have raised doubts about Pakistan's nuclear capabilities and destabilised deterrence.

Following the 1998 tests, Pakistan ensured the UN Security Council Resolution 1172 recognised that India had tested first, maintained parity in the restraints asked of the two countries and included a call for resolution of the Kashmir dispute. In the parallel dialogue which the US initiated with Pakistan and India, Pakistan insisted on an identical agenda covering nuclear and missile restraint as well as the Kashmir dispute.

In the wake of the A.Q. Khan proliferation affair, Pakistan avoided penalties and succeeded in defanging provisions in the US-sponsored UNSC Resolution 1540 aimed specifically at Pakistan.

However, this 'affair', and Pakistan's unequal alliance with US in the 'war on terror', provided the US with the excuse and diplomatic leverage it needed to 'de-hyphenate' Pakistan and India and offer the latter an 'exception' for civilian nuclear cooperation as a means of securing its strategic support against China.

At a critical point in 2008, when the Indo-US 'Safeguards' Agreement came up for approval to the IAEA board Pakistan's representatives were instructed by a new Islamabad leadership, beholden to Washington, not to force a vote. If Pakistan had asked for a vote in the board, several NPT members would have been obliged to oppose or abstain. Thereafter, they would have been unable to support the clearance of the Indo-US 'exception' in the subsequent meeting of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG), denying it the consensus required for approval.

The consequences of this diplomatic default have been strategically significant. It broke the political 'parity' between Pakistan and India's nuclear status. More importantly, the external nuclear fuel and nuclear reactors acquired by India under the 'exception', will enable it to utilise all its indigenous fissile material stocks for weapons production.

Since this reversal, while Pakistan has intensified its fissile material production and blocked the so-called Fissile Materials ‘Cut-Off’ Treaty, its nuclear diplomacy has been mostly reactive and defensive.

To ‘prove’ its non-proliferation credentials, Pakistan has engaged in nuclear consultations with the US and adopted various export guidelines and nuclear ‘safety and security’ measures, often with US ‘help’. No doubt, the US has gained closer insights into Pakistan’s programmes and plans. Worse, Islamabad has embarked on the fool’s errand of seeking a US nuclear ‘exception’ similar to India’s.

Even in the unlikely event this is granted, Pakistan will not be sold nuclear reactors by the US or its allies. Nor can Pakistan afford them. But the plea for this ‘exception’ has opened Pakistan to new demands from Washington: to halt fissile material production and development and deployment of tactical and long-range missiles and sign the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty without waiting for India. In exchange, the US would consider making a positive recommendation of Pakistan’s case. It is folly to go further down this path.

Pakistan’s diplomacy must break out of its defensive mode and utilise all the leverage it can muster to reverse the discriminatory restrictions; impede India’s strategic build-up and preserve the credibility of Pakistan’s nuclear deterrence.

To this end, here are some of the actions Pakistan could initiate: one, an active diplomatic campaign at the UN, in major capitals and media, to expose the false premises for the discriminatory restrictions against Pakistan and the West’s double and triple standards on disarmament and non-proliferation.

Two, proposals to India for reciprocal arms control and strategic restraint, such as non-use of force; low force zones; non-deployment of destabilising weapons. At the very least, this would put India on the diplomatic defensive and help to resist US pressure on Pakistan to accept unilateral restraints.

Three, offers of peaceful nuclear cooperation, under IAEA safeguards, to Saudi Arabia, Iran and other Muslim and developing countries. This may motivate NSG to invite Pakistan to join the group.

Four, proposals, initiated with China and other developing countries, for genuine disarmament, including treaties to halt the current multi-billion-dollar

upgrade and miniaturisation of US and Russian nuclear weapons and bans on the development and deployment of laser, anti-satellite and other space weapons.

To enable Pakistan to revive active nuclear diplomacy, the disarmament department in the Foreign Office must be strengthened and staffed with the best and brightest diplomats. This would be a cost-effective investment in preserving the credibility of Pakistan's nuclear deterrence.

*The writer is a former Pakistan ambassador to the UN.*

# Prosecution Pakistan Army officers in Bangladesh

Yasmeen Aftab Ali

*Failure of Pakistan Government to launch international protest against killing and hanging of those who fought for the sovereignty of united Pakistan (West Pakistan and East Pakistan) is perhaps due to weak and poor leadership and absence of a full time foreign minister.*

*The creation of Bangladesh was a result of a civil war where India openly came in with the Army to support the Awami League of Sheikh Hasina's father Sheikh Mujib ur Rahman. If those who fought for united Pakistan can be tried and hanged by Bangladesh, then all those who fought and supported the breakaway can also be tried by Pakistan for high treason and sedition. Sheikh Hasina would be a prime candidate. Bangladesh must stop being used as a proxy of India to reinvent old wounds. This madness must stop here. It is time to reconcile, bury the hatchets and move on*

That Mukti Bahini played a pivotal role in the dismemberment of Pakistan is a recorded fact and reflected in the statement of Deputy Speaker of Bangladesh Parliament Shawket Ali, "I would give hundred per cent credit to India for the liberation of Bangladesh." (*Bangladeshi Newspaper 'The Independent' December 17, 2011*)

*Archer Blood*, writes, "Indian soil was made available for training camps, hospitals and supply depots for the *Mukti Bahini* or "Liberation Force" of the Bengali resistance movement. The *Mukti Bahini* came to enjoy that great asset of a guerrilla army, a safe haven to which it could retire for rest food, medical supplies and weapons, safe from the pursuit of its conventionally operating and legally restricted foe. India was in fact waging a proxy war against Pakistan." (*Book: The Cruel Birth of Bangladesh – Memoirs of an American Diplomat*" published by *The University Press Limited, Dhaka* in 2002: pg. 304)

*Martin Woollcott* in a brilliant book review of "Dead Reckoning" by *Sarmila Bose* says, "Yet when she underlines how stretched the Pakistani forces were,

how unready they were for the role of suppression that was thrust on them, and how perplexed they were in the face of a Bengali hostility that seemed to them so disproportionate, what she writes rings very true. The killings by Bengalis of non-Bengali minorities, of Bengalis who stuck with the idea of a united Pakistan, and even of some Hindu Bengalis – all of whose deaths were attributed at the time to the Pakistani army – needs to be reckoned in any fair balance.” (The Guardian July 1, 2011) *Bose* a senior research fellow at Oxford University – and a former BBC presenter – “says the Pakistani army has been “demonized” by the pro-liberation side and accused of “monstrous actions regardless of the evidence”, while Bengali people have been depicted as “victims”. Her book says the Bengali nationalist rebellion in what was then East Pakistan “turned into xenophobic violence against non-Bengalis” especially against West Pakistanis and mainly Urdu-speaking people who migrated to East Pakistan from India at the time of partition who were known as Biharis.” (*BBC News* June 16, 2011)

The facts are also well detailed in a book *Blood and Tears* (Published 1974) by historian *Qutubuddin Aziz*. It details 170 eyewitness accounts of atrocities on non-Bengalis and pro Pakistan Bengalis by Awami League militants and other rebels in 55 towns of then East Pakistan between March-April 1971 with photographs.

British Historian *L. F. Rushbrook Williams* writes, “Whenever the troops (of the Pakistan Army) when into action, a minimum of force was used; they did not interfere with peaceful concessions or political meetings, but only with mobs engaged in looting and arson. But the fact is that there were far too few of them to maintain order effectively in an enormous city like Dacca and with the virtual breakdown of the machinery of civil government because of the campaign of non-cooperation-a campaign rigorously enforced by intimidation of every kind-the situation both in the capital and in many places throughout East Pakistan became chaotic. It was widely believed that nothing could break the hold of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and Awami League over the county, and that the Army, scattered as it was in small groups except for larger bodies stationed clear of the Indian frontier, would be helpless in face of the Awami League’s determination to achieve full control.” (*Book: The East Pakistan Tragedy* published by Drake Publishers Inc. NY in 1972, pg.: 54)

Reportedly, close to two hundred Mukti Bahini terrorists were incriminated in heinous crimes. This does not include another hundred give or take, Mukti Bahini terrorists for fighting against the State and sedition. A list of those incriminated detail horrible nature of crimes against innocent civilians.

I could write a thesis on the research based data of the onslaught of atrocities on non-Bengalis. However, it is time to fast forward to present and to focus on some questions resulting from it. Sheikh Hasina Wajid, daughter of late Sheikh Mujeeb, has declared trying in absentia, officers of Pakistan Army for war crimes of 1971. An International Crimes Tribunal of Bangladesh by 2012, indicted nine members of Jamaat' e Islami and two from Bangladesh Nationalist Party. Has the ICT followed transparency in trial? Not so records *Al Jazeera*, "Human Rights Watch and the International Bar Association are just two of a number of bodies that have formally criticized the ICT for being incompatible with international standards on matters of transparency and fairness, and for not following due process." (October 29, 2014)

*Bergman, David* writes, "In January 2013, Brad Adams of HRW was deeply concerned regarding one Bali, who appeared as a witness in Delwar Hossain Sayeedi case. The defence wanted to give evidence reference to the case in November 2012. Bali was restrained by some police officers at the courthouse that day and some eye witnesses recorded his being whisked away in a police van. HRW has pointed out the government made no effort to find him while the attorney general rejected the accusation of abduction. Later in May 2013, Sayeedi and Bali were found to be in an Indian prison. He accused the state of abducting him and threatening to kill both him and Sayeedi. (*New Age*, "Witnesses allege State Abduction", May 16, 2013)

*Richard Sisson and Leo E Rose* writing in 1990 in their book "War and Secession: Pakistan, India and the Creation of Bangladesh" stated that it remained impossible to obtain reliable estimates of how many 'liberation fighters' were killed in combat, how many Bihari (non-Bengali) Muslims and supporters of Pakistan were killed by Bengali Muslims, and how many people were killed by Pakistani, Indian or AL guerillas units (Mukhti Bahini) fire and bombing during the war. In this case, the only credible source would have been the population census conducted before 1971 and after the war which Bangladesh did not do.

Hasina Shaikh's government is therefore to be applauded to have determined the atrocities committed per person per Army Officer to the complete exclusion of those committed by Mukti Bahini. Opinion in Pakistan drawing rooms revolve around Bangladesh being used as a proxy for India aimed at raking coals and creating a front that not only opposes Pakistan but also aiming to besmirch her Army at a time when it is involved in a long drawn out battle against terrorism within her borders. Not to forget the turmoil created by Panama Leaks involving the highest civilian office that has created a serious credibility issue for the incumbent Prime Minister.

Bangladesh has worked closely with India since its inception. Though Bangladesh can be forgiven for acting as it does for being no friend of Pakistan-my question is; why has the Pakistani government failed to launch a protest with the Bangladesh government? Can this be viewed as Pakistan civil leadership's traditional acrimony? Can this be accepted as an excuse not to stand up for your countrymen?

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# India's Monroe Doctrine

Ikram Sehgal

*Aware of the Pakistani leadership's inherent weakness subordinating the national interest to their greed and self-interest, the Americans have never really listened to what Chinese PM Chou En Lai told Kissinger in 1971 July during his ground-breaking historic trip to China, "do not forget the bridge (sic Pakistan) you have used, you may have to use it again".*

Positioned at a geo-politically sensitive crossroads, Pakistan has since the 50s served off and on as a "cornerstone of US policy" in the Middle and Near East, joining the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954. With Iraq opting out in 1958, the US-sponsored "Baghdad Pact" (1955) became the now-defunct (1979) Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) comprising non-Arab Muslim countries Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. The economic equivalent of CENTO, the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) turned into the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), eventually growing to eight countries. ECO's growth was retarded by the sanctions against Iran.

Once the US need for us ended after the Soviet evacuation from Afghanistan in 1989, our relations went downhill when a number of reasons from the early 80s were revived, (1) our suspect nuclear ambitions (2) a haven for drugs manufacturing and smuggling thereof and (3) suspected ISI support for terrorist activity (we narrowly escaped being branded a terrorist state in 1992). Beginning the 90s decade we were an ally, this relationship had undergone a 180-degree turnaround by the time we detonated the nuclear explosion at Chagai on May 28, 1999, sanctions thereafter were mandatory. The revival of the "cornerstone" status again after 9/11 was not surprising; we were needed as the platform for the US war in Afghanistan. The short telephone call from US Secretary of State, General Colin Powell, to General (Pervez) Musharraf got the US our "services" fairly cheap!

The motivated "tilt" towards Pakistan every other decade notwithstanding, there is no such ambiguity about the US now being firmly behind India. Throughout the cold war India vociferously supported the Soviet Union, receiving military hardware exceeding that to any of its Warsaw Pact allies,



many times more than US military aid to Pakistan. India vehemently opposed the 80s Afghan war against the Soviets in Afghanistan.

Ambassador Chester Bowles's Memo describes his conversations encouraging a rather reluctant Indian PM Jawaharlal Nehru during his visit to New Delhi on August 8 and 9, 1961 to flex India's military muscle beyond its immediate neighbourhood to "contain communist China". To quote US Ambassador to India, Chester Bowles letter to President Lyndon B Johnson on April 14, 1965, "our present military alliance with Pakistan has become irrelevant to the present situation in Asia, this policy was created in a different era to meet totally different conditions. India by virtue of its size, resources, potential and economic potential and geographic location is of great importance to US national interest. India's domestic and foreign objectives coincide more closely with our (i.e. US) interests than do these of any other major emerging nation "for meeting the threat from Communist China", unquote. Chester Bowles was a key formulator of the so-called "Asian Monroe Doctrine" to extend India's domination over the Indian Ocean, its neighbouring states and South East Asia. Despite the US mostly air-lifting to Calcutta arms and equipment according to the Indian "wish list" for four "mountain" divisions during India's short China War in 1962 (*even the Americans balked at the Indians asking for submarines to fight the Chinese in the Himalayas*), India remained firmly aligned behind the Soviet Union in all world forums much beyond the final collapse of the USSR in 1991.

India's "marriage" with the US would have been consummated had it not been for 9/11. Forced to turn again to Pakistan, the Indian "bride" was left jilted at the altar by the US. In US diplomatic parlance "India is an actor to the US pivot to Asia-Pacific", it is the "containing of China" plan in blunter language, promoted in earnest by Obama since 2008, getting added traction after Narendra Modi came to power in 2014. Were there any doubts left in Pakistani minds about fulfilling Chester Bowles' dream of supporting India as an American ally and regional super-power after the American President's Chief Guest appearance at the Republic Day "Armed Forces Parade" in New Delhi? This has now been finally "formalized" by Obama. The US support for India joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) while refusing Pakistan shows that the regional exceptionality when dealing with nuclear Pakistan is not a restraining factor for the US anymore.

To quote my article “The Not-So-Ugly Americans” dated Nov 16, 2006, “Those who demonize Americans (in keeping with the personification in Graham Greene’s “The Ugly American”) for the ills of the entire world tend to forget that US government policies do not accurately reflect either the character and/or wishes of the American public. The most generous people in the world, even today American aid and outright grants dwarfs that of all the other countries. This disconnect between the average US citizen and international geo-politics is not because the ordinary American does not care, he simply knows very little of the world-at-large, an ignorance tailor-made for vested interest to exploit (*like Presidential Candidate Trump is doing now*).

In the topsy-turvy game of geo-political somersaults, it is expedient for national objectives to coincide in supersession of lesser concerns diametrically opposite in perception. Long-term US realpolitik objectives notwithstanding, we should pursue a more mature friendship with the US, by not “making inveterate friends or inveterate foes among nations”, to quote George Washington the first US President in his farewell address to the nation more than 200 years ago. Viewing each other’s national perceptions and aspirations with dispassion and accommodation, it is important to separate fact from fiction, in the words of John Burroughs, “to treat your facts with imagination is one thing, but to imagine your facts is another”. While it makes no sense to leave the world mainstream and turn to those who can afford the luxury of acting extremist, we could soon run out of choices.

Aware of the Pakistani leadership’s inherent weakness subordinating the national interest to their greed and self-interest, the Americans have never really listened to what Chinese PM Chou En Lai told Kissinger in 1971 July during his ground-breaking historic trip to China, “do not forget the bridge (sic Pakistan) you have used, you may have to use it again”. If the US does not heed the Chinese Proverb, “do not use a hatchet to remove a fly from your friend’s forehead”, Pakistan may become a “bridge too far” the next time around.

*The writer is a defense and security analyst.*

# Carnage in Istanbul, Dhaka and Baghdad

Dr Chandra Muzaffar

The month of Ramadan witnessed unspeakable carnage in three Muslim cities in three different countries. On 28 June 2016, 41 people, both locals and foreigners were killed in shootings and suicide bombings at the Istanbul Ataturk Airport. On 2nd July, 20 people taken hostage by militants in an up market restaurant in Dhaka, Bangladesh were shot and murdered. On the 3rd of July in Baghdad, 165 were massacred in massive bomb blasts.

The killers in all three episodes were Muslims, specifically Sunni Muslims. The majority of the 226 victims were also Muslims. In all three instances, ISIS or Daesh was alleged to be the perpetrator. In the case of Istanbul, the Turkish government made this allegation in the immediate aftermath of the bombings. In the case of Dhaka, Daesh claimed responsibility though the Bangladeshi government has maintained that the savagery was committed by a home grown militant outfit known as the Jamatul Mujahedeen Bangladesh. In the case of Baghdad, Daesh was quick to claim “credit.” It made it a point to emphasize that its target were Shias.

A number of Muslim governments have condemned the Istanbul-Dhaka-Baghdad (IDB) carnage. Both Sunni and Shia religious elites have also denounced in strong language the IDB atrocities. They have demanded that the masterminds behind these perpetrators of terror be severely punished.

Most analysts are agreed that the spurt in Daesh terrorism during Ramadan is to demonstrate to Muslims and the world at large that it is still a formidable force, in spite of major setbacks on the battlefield in recent months. It was defeated in the strategic city of Fallujah, close to Baghdad, just a few days before it embarked upon its 2nd July act of terror. Daesh has been pushed out of other areas in Iraq as well. The Syrian army, with Russian air support re-captured the ancient world renowned heritage city of Palmyra at the end of March this year. The Syrian government has also regained control over large swathes of land that Daesh and other terrorist groups had captured in the last two years. Because Daesh and its allies and rivals in terror are in decline, governments in West

Asia and North Africa (WANA) and other powers should step up their efforts to defeat and destroy the scourge they represent. They should enhance their cooperation and work resolutely towards a single goal. It is important to emphasize this because governments within and without WANA have been known to facilitate the flow of funds, firearms and fighters to Daesh while professing opposition to terrorism. It is this hypocrisy on their part which has helped Daesh to grow so rapidly. Even if some of these governments and the clandestine channels they have created are no longer colluding with Daesh, they remain linked directly or obliquely to other terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda and its affiliate, the Jabhat al-Nusra.

Why are they doing this? The reason is obvious. They are pursuing their own individual or collective political or economic agendas. These agendas maybe related to natural resources in WANA or its strategic routes or the security and ideological concerns of certain actors in the region. Often they correspond to the hegemonic ambitions of a superpower that has sought to dominate and control WANA for the last 50 years at least.

It is these ambitions sometimes complicated by the goals of national and regional actors that have resulted in occupation, intervention and the politics of regime change. Occupation and regime change have given rise to mayhem and chaos that has in turn spawned terrorist outfits and activities. Iraq is an outstanding example of this. The humiliation and the anger generated by occupation — whether it is Palestine or Iraq or Afghanistan — often shared by tens of thousands of others who are not its direct victims explains to a great extent the contemporary terrorist and why he acts the way he does.

This is why combating terrorism on the battlefield important as it is, can never be the real solution. One must have the honesty and the integrity to address the underlying causes. It requires those who prescribe remedies for terrorism from the lofty heights of global politics to hold a mirror to their own souls. They must be willing to admit that their unrestrained drive for hegemonic power and for control over wealth may be the root problem. Or, as the 19th century Russian thinker, Alexander Herzen, put it in another context, “The doctor is the disease.” *Dr. Chandra Muzaffar is the President of the International Movement for a Just World (JUST), Malaysia.*

## Book Review

# Who Killed Karkare? The Real Face of Terrorism in India

*Author: SM Mushrif*

*Price: Rs 300/ USD 25*

*Pages: 319*

*Publisher: Pharos Media ([www.pharosmedia.com](http://www.pharosmedia.com)), New Delhi*

A new book curiously titled *Who Killed Karkare?* says a nationwide network of Hindutva terror that has its tentacles spread up to Nepal and Israel is out to destroy the India most Indians have known for ages and to remould it into some kind of Afghanistan under the Taliban.

The writer, a former IG Police of Maharashtra, SM Mushrif, has reconstructed a fearsome picture out of former Maharashtra ATS chief Hemant Karkare's charge sheet against alleged Hindutva terrorists like Lt. Col. Purohit, Sadhvi Pragyasingh Thakur and others.

The charge sheet pointed towards a mind-boggling nationwide conspiracy with international support to destabilise the constitutional order and the secular democratic Indian state that upholds it, to be replaced by a Hindutva state run according to a new Constitution. *For that the conspirators were prepared for a massive bloodbath, using bomb attacks on religious places to trigger a Muslim holocaust.*

Mushrif, who has over three decades of diligent policing behind him and whose feats include exposing the Telgi scam, has made an elaborate case out of nearly a dozen blasts over a large area of the country conducted by Hindutva terror groups of different stripes. His case: *a section of India's intelligence services, a miniscule group in the armed forces and a section of different state police*

*forces have been compromised and infiltrated by these elements, a development that bodes ill for the future of the country.*

In Hemant Karkare's net (of investigations, of course) many big and small fishes of VHP, RSS, Bajrang Dal and Sanatan Sanstha (which has been found to be involved in Diwali-eve blasts in Goa last week) had been trapped. Serving and retired army officers, academics, serving and retired officials of India's premier intelligence service were ensnared in Karkare's fishing net. The menacing power of the latter groups, inspired by sustained anti-Muslim hate campaigns of the last six decades, gave the plot a sinister and highly destructive character.

Among the plans unearthed by Karkare was a blueprint for the assassination of 70 prominent Indians who could be a hindrance to the project of Hindutva. Interestingly, most of the persons marked for elimination would, naturally, be Hindus because it is they who primarily run the dispensation. The conspirators were also unhappy with organisations whose Hindutva they suspected to be less virulent than desired.

Mushrif, who very well knows the power of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) to make or mar lives and careers, says he is prepared to face the consequences of hostility of this power hub. He musters "evidence" to show that the *IB has regularly been interfering with regular police investigations to let Hindutva terrorists slip out of the net and replace them with random Muslim youth. To fudge the issues further obliging police officers in the states would not mind exterminating a few Muslim youths to be branded posthumously as "terrorists".*

There are quite a few number of such cases where *such extra-judicial killing of Muslim youth has turned out to be false police encounters. All this is done to cover tracks of Hindutva terror. Mushrif says a "Brahminist" network that has its origins in Maharashtra, and is closely knit across political parties, government services, including IB, and other vital sectors of life is behind the terror that seeks to destroy the secular, democratic state.* He hastens to clarify that very few Brahminists are Brahmins. Many are from other high Hindu castes, some from middle and lower castes.

Most Brahmins are fair-minded and would not like to associate themselves with hate ideologies. Hemant Karkare, too, was a Brahmin, Mushrif says. So is Mushrif's son-in-law.

It is pertinent to note that “Brahmanism” and “Brahminical order” first appeared in Dalit protest vocabulary in the Dalit uprising movement in Maharashtra towards the turn of the 20th century. Mushrif, who appropriates part of this vocabulary for the present discourse, says that *Maharashtra still remains the centre of this ideology that, among other things, has the dubious distinction of killing the Father of the Nation.*

The power establishment that really runs the affairs of this country (Mushrif says it is not Sonia Gandhi, Manmohan Singh or Rahul Gandhi) does not want to expose the Hindutva terrorists. *One example is the blasts in Samjhauta Express, which the IB said was carried out by Pakistan's ISI. Mushrif quotes a report in The Times of India that said, “the Centre had blamed the ISI on the basis of the IB's findings.” However, during a narco-analysis test under Karkare, Lt. Col. Purohit had admitted having supplied the RDX used in the blast. The IB, which draws its power from its proximity to the Prime Minister (its director briefs the PM every morning for half an hour), did not want Karkare's investigation that blew the cover off the IB's shenanigans, to continue.*

Once Karkare was removed from the scene, the IB moved in to fill his position with KP Raghuvanshi, a pliant police officer with extremely low credibility among Muslims for his record of letting off known Hindutva terrorists and implicating innocent Muslim youth even in bomb attack cases on mosques.

There are quite a few interesting vignettes here, like Raghuvanshi and Col. Purohit's association with Abhinav Bharat in Maharashtra, whose hand was evident in a series of blasts across the country. It has old connections with men like Veer Damodar Savarkar (whose relative Himani Savarkar leads the Abhinav Bharat movement), Dr Munje, who led the Hindu Mahasabha, and other Hindutva luminaries. *It is at the Bhonsala Military Academy run by these groups that Purohit trained police officers, including Raghuvanshi.* Mushrif asks a pertinent question: *Will Raghuvanshi pursue the investigation against Purohit, his guru?* A plausible answer is, perhaps no. Already charges have

been dropped by a special court under MCOCA against 11 accused, including Purohit, on the grounds of insufficient evidence produced in the court by the prosecution.

This was just the beginning of the undoing of Karkare's painstaking investigation. Mushrif says slowly the system is working to undo all of Karkare's work and let off the terrorists who over the years destroyed scores of lives and wreaked irreparable economic damage. The ATS team under Karkare had pointed out VHP leader Praveen Togadia's role in the blasts. The ATS under Raghuvanshi dropped the investigation against him saying (please hold your laughter) they do not know who Togadia is!

A number of investigations have been thus sabotaged by the powers that be and the tracks of the Hindutva terrorists duly covered. The 319-page book is crammed with such information.

But what about who killed Karkare? Mushrif says two teams were at work on 26/11 – one which did the maximum damage, and was from outside. The smaller team took advantage of the confusion of the moment and acted only on the relatively small CST-CAMA-Rangbhavan stretch that killed Karkare. It was a desi unit that wanted Karkare and his men out of the way.



## **Brahmins Attack Kancha Ilaiah, A Dalit Writer, Activist and Philosopher**

P Victor Vijay Kumar

It was a cloudy afternoon. Wind was blowing over the shadows of fig trees. He asked me to see him at 1.30, when hunger was blazing along with the summer. The simmering heat in the University campus in the cloudy afternoon was not seen but felt like how implicit casteism cannot be sensed in modernized society. I knocked the door and entered his cabin and saw him having his lunch. He smiled and greeted and said in Telugu “randi randi...nenu diabetes...kaabatti tvaraga annam tinaalsi untundi “(Please come.... I have diabetes...and so need to take lunch in time). Kancha Ilaiah is the author of “Why I am not a Hindu “Buffalo Nationalism” “Untouchable God.” etc. and a leading activist for Dalit and human rights. A Professor, by profession, in Maulana Azad National Urdu University, is a voracious writer encompassing issues mainly around Hindutva and casteism. He was the one who spearheaded ‘Dalitvadam’ in early 1990s in the Marxist-Leninist circles and human right organisations for the cause of Dalit representation and leadership. He has been waging a vehement fight against Hindutva philosophy in all the fora at India and international level. The entire intellectual and progressive sections of Andhra and Telangana States were taken aback when he was fiercely coming under attack by Brahmin organizations for his remarks on Brahminism and Hindutva.

I cordially greeted him too and after a brief personal enquiry, I asked him “What happened, sir? “. He, while making the lumps of rice and dal, explained “I attended a meeting organized by CITU in Vijayawada and I was talking to them, in the course of speech, on evolution of working class in India and was broaching that Brahmins were never part of production and they, as a community, never participated in labour. This was slightly extended by the media next day hitting headlines that “Brahmins are lazy and slumber class “. Some Brahmin organisations came to my cabin and squabbled with me demanding apology. I never uttered apology but tried to explain them how they must understand my statement. They never heeded to my version and thereafter, I have been receiving threatening and menacing calls on my phone for the past

few days. I was also told that Brahmins are reacting through organization formed with the spirit of Parusuram (Brahmin warrior) “. I nodded my head in congruence. He stopped for a while and enquired, “Is it? “. I said in affirmation “yes sir, I have been watching all online attack going on against you. And through hearsay, I was told about some Brahmin Terrorist Organization, which is campaigning for teaching a lesson to you “. He was listening to me in the same unfaltering mood. “I am just trying to search in my hand set. And, I would forward to your mail all the stuff”

**Ilaiah:** See, I am nearing 65 now. I really want to take on the Brahminism head on. Enough is enough. Jesus was 33 when he died but he could accomplish a change what he wanted. Mohammad died at 63 and changed the eastern world’s thinking. Ambedkar was 65 when he died. I don’t really care for all this and whatever is happening and the polarization I am seeing is for good. It has to come out in open and public.

**Me:** Sir, you have been in this unflinching fight against Brahminism for a long time and has been centre of wrath for Brahmin sections all along. Have you ever observed these Brahmin sections coming openly and reaching in person to intimidate you?

**Ilaiah:** No, it never happened earlier. See, When Congress and Y S Raja Shekhar Reddy was ruling, the Hindutva could not get the adequate support, as it aspired for, though it was spreading its tentacles. After Modi Government took over, these people have got the moral boost to resort to such acts. Of course, I don’t really mind about this. End of the day, we need to expose their attitude.

**Me:** I am in complete agreement with you, sir. The thick-skinned attitude of this Govt. is very apparent as is seen in case Rohith Vemula issue and FTII issue and other issues as well. I want to ask you – you are so focused on Brahmins. Though I have an answer for myself, still I want to know your perspective, are there no good Brahmins? (I smiled)

**Ilaiah:** Look, that not a question at all. I am not talking about a Brahmin at an individual level. That’s not the criterion. We are talking about this Brahminism as a social issue. Idol worship and consequent social inequalities are resulting in untouchability. This mentions about attitude of Brahmins, as a community, as a

matter of collective attitude and approach. I have my colleagues and friends as Brahmins who know their mind very well. They keep visiting me and we have get together on friendly occasions. But, that's not the point. A Brahmin is a good Brahmin only when he realizes that Dalits and BCs have larger share in the labour and production and they deserve an equitable share in the fruits of production in all respects...be it... education, employment, entrepreneurship or leadership whatever. They must give a due regard to this in all their attitude and heartfully admit this fact. They must acknowledge that people who are in working class living in poor conditions is just not warranted. You may still care less if someone is living in poor conditions because he is not participating in production. Without raising their unconditional voice on this, simply claiming that they have worked in some Marxist organisation or worked on some writings or some struggle does not mean anything.

**Me:** Why I have asked you this is the present attack on you has also given rise to many liberal Brahmins raising their voice as your opinion is too extreme and needs to be cut down, as their goodness in few of them needs recognition.

**Haiah:** Yes...that the best thing that I can expect in my life. It makes out advancement clear. Let them separate themselves in this argument. See, Brahminism has caused serious injury to the Indian social system. Unless we break temple system and grow beyond vernacular languages to the level of English, the Brahminism cannot be toned down. I told in the same meeting that Chandrababu Naidu constructing state capital in the name of Amaravathi and I had found it to be nothing about Buddhist symbolization and purely like a capital of Rama. What is this? Why do they want to use Buddha's name for this? I have demanded that they must make world's largest large shrine of Buddha in Amaravathi, else there is no meaning for the same. Buddha is an international figure. We will appreciate Chandrababu for naming the capital in the memory of Buddha. This shrine would attract international attention. Places like Tirupathi are meant for local superstitious people. Such kind of Buddha Vihar is going to pose a threat to place like Tirupathi and a world class Buddha Vihar put Chandrababu Naidu too on the world famous figures. This is how we must, in a planned way, destroy Brahminism. The legitimacy they earned over the years shall have to be shun out.

**Me:** How do you correlate all these attacks happening on Dalits by non-Brahmin upper castes with that of influence of Brahmins.

**Ilaiah:** You see the basic problem is Hindutva, this structure and idol worship. Once you change religion, you must be largely getting insulated. We must break this first. There are elite sections all over the world in all the countries. We need to look at the issue – where is the fundamental equality?

**Me:** How linguistic war can help? Dalit sections growing to English, as a language of communication?

**Ilaiah:** See, Dalits and all backward castes need to get internationalized. They need not confine themselves to these limited boundaries. They must look beyond this. English would definitely will come handy to them. All these Brahmins are into English while they want others to speak in Sanskrit or other local languages. I have been fighting in all the fora that Telangana Govt. must promote English medium schools. I think they are gradually considering it. I have been promoting English medium school in my village with about 600 students and developing a chain of schools. I take only SC, ST and BC students. Last year, an ST student topped while lowest score being above 80%, which is quite decent.

**Me:** Sir, as you see, the cultural system in India is coming under great attack after the new Govt formed at the Centre. The students, Professors and intellectuals like you are under continuous attack. Rohith Vemula case has become a classic case of deeply rooted isolation of low caste sections in the education system. Don't you think we can have a better demand like establishment of exclusive Dalit-Adivasi Universities without being confined to Rohith Act kind of stuff, which is a marginal improvement over existing rules and regulations.

**Ilaiah:** Yea... that's fine. As and when Dalits keep growing into elite sections and people like you can raise funds and do the same. We have Urdu universities and we can have these too. As I said, I have been taking only non-forward caste sections only as students in the school I am promoting.

**Me:** Sir, I have seen you as the one who batted for Dalit vadam and refinement in the Marxist organisations too. Don't you see – Dalit vadam could not catch up to the next level and has been entangled where it has got originated?

**Ilaiah:** Yea...could be. We must recognize its fantastic contribution to the human rights movement. You see...Rohith Vemula is a product of Dalit vadam. See. the Dalit vadam would take some more time to pick up to the next level.

**Me:** Sir, I have taken much of your time. Nice of you for sharing with me several things. We shall stand by you. I shall see you tomorrow at the public meeting.

**Ilaiah:** I have put enough material against Brahmins in English. Should they kill me only to spoil themselves?

It is always invigorating to talk to him. A man who hated caste system to the core and steering the cause in his own style and fashion with grit. He has been voicing several high level concerns which are controversial statements for main stream media. There has been a threatening climate surrounding him. Brahmins and their lobby are resorting to all possible vulgar steps to cut down his voice in all undemocratic ways possible. He holds a clear high level over view of casteism in India and the roots of Brahminical conscience prevailing here. Numerous writers of Andhra and Telangana vehemently condemned the attacks on him containing his freedom of expression.

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# India's Maoist/Naxalite Movement

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## **Introduction**

On 25 May 1967, in one village called Prasadujot in the Naxalbari bloc in the West Bengal state of India, a group of peasants led by two left-wing activists Kanu Sanyal (1929- 2010) and Jangal Santhal (? -1981) who were supported by a communist ideologue Charu Mazumdar (1918-1972) tried to forcibly seize the land from some landlords who controlled the land to which the peasants had the legal entitlement.

This resulted in a violent confrontation between the agitating peasants and the police supporting the landlords. This seemingly isolated revolt in a far flung village eventually gave birth to a movement that attracted the attention of the world, and some anglicised journalist/commentator gave it the name 'Naxalite' that has stuck to it and has even been adopted by the supporters of the movement. The word 'Naxalite' is used in India both to describe the movement as well as to characterise an individual or an organisation which is associated with the movement e.g. 'a Naxalite guerrilla', 'a Naxalite activist' 'a pro-Naxalite civil rights group' or 'a Naxalite sympathiser'.

The fall out for Indian politics after nearly 50 years from that seemingly isolated revolt may be judged by an astute remark made in 2006 by Manmohan Singh while he was the Prime Minister of India (2004-2014). *He said that the Naxalite movement was the single biggest internal security threat to India.* This paper attempts a description and analysis of the background to the emergence of this movement; the significance of that May 1967 revolt, the immediate implications of that revolt for the left and bourgeois politics in India, and very briefly the long term implications of the rise of the Naxalite movement.

*Let me state this in the very beginning that I was personally involved in this movement as a student activist/ supporter of the movement but without having been a participant in any act of violence in spite of the attempt by the 'party' leadership to get me involved in that. However, due to my activism even if it was confined to the study and dissemination of the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao Tse-tung, I was arrested in 1971, tortured and narrowly escaped being killed.*

The movement's first phase came to an end in 1972 but it has resurfaced in a different form quite powerfully in the last decade.

It does not fit strictly the criterion of pre-68 movement but it has close relationship with the over-all political culture of India and the world around 1968, and the events of 1968.

### **The roots of the Naxalite movement**

The roots of the Naxalite movement lie in India's communist movement. India's communist movement was born shortly after the Bolshevik Revolution. After the degeneration of the Bolshevik Revolution and the rise of Stalinism in Russia, a very small current in the movement was sympathetic to the Left opposition led by Trotsky. The bulk of India's communist party went with Stalin not because of any specific admiration for Stalin or his policies but out of loyalty to the Soviet Union, considered then as the mother country of communism.

The Soviet Union's role in defeating Nazi Germany did endear Stalin not only to the communist party members and sympathisers but also to the broader sections of Indian society that viewed Hitler and Nazi ideology unfavourably. This broader societal attitude towards Stalin's role in the defeat of Nazi Germany reinforced India's communist movement's admiration for Stalin and allegiance to Soviet Union under him. The Communist Party of India (CPI) participated in the anticolonial struggle against British rule in India but also directed its criticism at the 'bourgeois' leadership of the main Indian nationalist party- the Indian National Congress (INC) - led by Gandhi and Nehru. There were several other currents in Indian people's struggle against British colonial rule which were influenced in varying degrees by the ideals of communism. The most well-known was the group led by Indian revolutionary Bhagat Singh

who played a leading role in organising terrorist attacks at the symbols of the colonial establishment in India.

If Gandhi-led movement adopted a path of non-violent resistance and struggle against the colonial rule, Bhagat Singh epitomised the goal of violent overthrow of the colonial rule (Singh 2007 and 2015). This competition between peaceful and armed struggle paths to India's independence was to leave a permanent legacy in India's communist movement too. Soon after India became independent in 1947, India's communist party was ridden with factional conflict between two tendencies-one advocating participation in India's parliamentary democratic institutions set up under the framework of the constitution of the new republic, and the other advocating a path of armed insurrection.

This conflict became accentuated by the success of the Chinese revolution under Mao's leadership. The faction deriving inspiration from the Chinese success and advocating the path of armed insurrection gained leadership temporarily and launched an armed uprising in the Telangana region of South India. This uprising was brutally crushed militarily by the Indian government led by Nehru, the first prime minister of India. The armed insurrection attempt having failed, the constitutionalist tendency gained upper hand in the leadership of the CPI. As a result, the CPI started participating actively in central parliamentary and state assembly elections. The CPI became the main opposition party in India's central parliament and remained so for almost the entire decade of the 1950s. The most glorious success of the CPI was to win majority in the elections to the state assembly of the south Indian state of Kerala in 1957 and the formation of the democratically elected communist government there for the first time in India (Nossiter 1982) and second time in the world after the tiny republic of San Marino which had the world's first democratically elected communist government from 1945 and 1957 (Desai 2006: 142, Mayne 1999:59).

The success of the democratic constitutional path did not end the ideological contestation between the two tendencies in the CPI. The Sino-Soviet conflict sharpened this ideological contestation between the peaceful path supported by the Soviet Union and the armed struggle path supported by China. The Sino-Indian border conflict in 1962 brought the two contenting lines into a sharp and polarised opposite positions. The CPI formally supported the Indian national government of Nehru and accused China of launching an armed attack on India.



This decision of the CPI was opposed by a substantial, though not majority, section of the top party leadership which included some leading lights of India's communist movement. This section expressed solidarity with China and criticised the Nehru government for military aggression against the socialist China. This pro-China section characterised and denounced the political position of the pro-Indian nationalist leadership of the CPI as 'revisionist'.

The word 'revisionist' was meant to suggest that the pro-Indian nationalism leadership of the CPI had abandoned the revolutionary path and had become collaborationist with the Indian state. The pro-China section of the leadership was arrested by the Nehru government and put behind bars. The opposing tendencies in the party became so acutely polarised that the pro-China section eventually left the CPI in 1964 and formed a new communist party that was named Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI (M), written more generally as CPM). The formation of the CPM coincided with a significant phase in Indian politics namely the start of the decline of the Indian National Congress that had dominated the anti-colonial struggle and had controlled power at the federal centre and in the states in the post-colonial era. Nehru who represented the dominance of the INC in both the phases died in 1964, and soon after his death in the 1967 elections in several states, the party was defeated by anti-Congress united fronts of left, right and the centre. For the communist movement, it opened new opportunities of capturing and sharing power in several states. The CPM, which while emerging out of the constitutionalist and 'revisionist' CPI had projected itself as a militant communist party keeping open the option of armed struggle path, jumped at the opportunity of using constitutionally guaranteed power through elections with the intention partly of 'wrecking the constitution from within' as a leading CPM leader and strategist EMS Namboodiripad had once put it.

However, this strategy of using the parliamentary path disillusioned the more militant cadre who had left the CPI and had joined the CPM in the hope of launching militant class struggles and, if necessary, through armed actions against the class enemies. This conflict between the parliamentary path and the armed struggle path brought the two paths in confrontation with each other on that fateful day in May 1967 when the peasants led by Kanu Sanyal and Jangal Santhal forcibly occupied land of the landlords and forced them to flee. The West Bengal united front government in which the CPM was a major partner sent the state police to repress the rebellious peasants. The police firing led to

the death of 11 peasants that included 8 women and 2 children. *The Naxalite movement was born that day and the peasants killed that day became the martyrs of the movement. The CPM was further split-one section in support of the 'revolutionary peasants' and the dominant section supporting the party against 'left-wing adventurism' of the Naxalbari activists. Beijing Radio and the People's Daily from China hailed the Naxalbari rebellion by calling it 'a spring thunder in India'.*

### **Communist Party of India**

The formation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist- Leninist) (CPI (ML)) was formally declared at an impressive rally in Calcutta on April 22, 1969 (Lenin's birthday). The CPI (ML) declared open allegiance to China and Mao Tse-Tung thought and announced that its aim was an overthrow of the Indian state through an armed uprising of the Indian peasantry that will liberate the rural areas from class enemies. The liberated zones will be used to create a red army that will eventually surround the cities and over take them leading to the overthrow the India state. The CPI (ML) proclaiming itself as the revolutionary party, that will lead the revolutionary march of the red army from the rural to the urban areas, denounced the CPM as 'neo-revisionist' implying that the CPM merely spoke about the revolution but in practice was following a reformist parliamentary path which it had once denounced while splitting away from the 'revisionist' CPI.

The significance of the 1967 revolt By the words 'the significance of the 1967 revolt', I mean to suggest several things which are inter-connected and perhaps even overlapping to some extent: what did this revolt represent in terms of the political culture of the time locally, nationally and globally; what were the key burning issues in India's post-colonial history at that point of time that were highlighted by that revolt?; what were the connections of that revolt with the 1968 radical upsurge in countries of advanced capitalism?; what was the relationship of that revolt to developments in the global communist movement?; what are the challenging theoretical issues raised for Marxist theory by that revolt?

This list of questions by way of trying to understand that revolt is not, in any way, exhaustive. This is merely a way of starting to make a sense of that revolt. As far as the question of political culture of the time locally, nationally and

globally is concerned, the previous section has indicated some. At the local level or state level in West Bengal, it represented a tension in the growing militancy and strength of the communist movement in the state and the restraint being imposed on that militancy by the pressure of governance in the state where the communist parties were part of the governance. At a national level, it represented the declining importance of the Congress party in some regions of India while the party retained control at the federal-central level. At a global level, it represented the contestation between the Chinese Communist Party and the CPSU for control of the global communist movement being mirrored at this local/regional and national level. In terms of the key burning issues in India's post-colonial history at that point of time that were highlighted by that revolt, the most obvious seemed to be the decline of the Congress party and the emergence of the tensions in Centre State relations as a result of that. Equally important was the unresolved agrarian question of land ownership and control. Overall, it represented that the dreams and hopes that might have been raised by India becoming independent of direct colonial control, could no longer be sustained after about two decades of India's independence.

The period of hope and optimism of the 1950s and perhaps early 1960s was giving way to a period of disenchantment, discontentment and revolt against the established order. This change in the national mood was beginning to be seen in the themes of Indian cinema too. The revolt was certainly connected with the global radicalisation of politics around 1968. This link was perhaps not obvious in the beginning when the land question seemed to be the most obvious face of the movement but the subsequent spread of the movement among the educated youth throughout the country signalled that connection very clearly especially in cities such as Kolkata (in West Bengal) and to a lesser extent in Delhi and Chandigarh (where I was a student then). The revolt was most clearly linked with the schism in the world communist movement in the form of contestation between CPC and CPSU for control over the world communist movement.

This contestation took various forms but one form it was taking most prominently in India was the split between the parliamentary path and the armed struggle path. What was most interesting was that this split was not on generational basis as might have been expected namely that the younger members opt for armed struggle and the older ones opting for parliamentary path. For example, the most prominent Naxalite leader in Punjab Baba Bujha Singh was in his 80s and he was not the only one in the mature age group

(Singh 2010) while later on the influence of the movement was mainly among students and younger school teachers. Concerning the challenging theoretical issues for Marxist theory raised by the revolt, the most demanding was the importance of peasantry in the struggle for overthrowing capitalism (or feudalism or semi-feudalism) in less developed capitalist economies in the Third World.

The Monthly Review school of thought certainly theorised peasantry as a revolutionary class in line with the Maoist theory while New Left Review (just to take an example) represented a critique of such 'Third Worldism'. Also important was the question of armed struggle or revolution versus parliamentary path and reforms. The immediate implications of the 1967 revolt for the left and bourgeois politics in India There were three armed communist rebellions in India, all revolving around control over land ownership and produce from the land, before the rise of the Naxalite movement. One was in the Telangana region of the erstwhile southern state of Hyderabad which coincided with India's independence from British colonial rule in 1947; v the second one was in Tebhaga region in West Bengal in 1948, vi and the third one was a Lal Communist Party (Red Communist Party) led revolt in the erstwhile PEPSU region of the present state of Punjab in 1948 (Josh 1979, Singh 1994). All the three rebellions were militarily crushed by the Indian state leading to large scale human rights violations in all the three regions.

The Naxalite movement in 1967 represented a re-connection with that armed struggle heritage with some participants of the earlier struggles becoming prominent participants in the new struggle (e.g. Baba Bujha Singh in Punjab). Apart from the similarity of the Naxalite movement with the 1940s/50s struggles in terms of primacy to armed struggle, there was one critical difference too. All the three 1940s/1950s struggles were localised in nature and not linked with movements in other parts of India though these localised struggles were influenced by external ideological directions from Soviet Union.

### **The Rise of Naxalite Movement**

*The Naxalite movement, in contrast, though started as a spontaneous local conflict but became very quickly an all India phenomenon spreading to Andhra Pradesh and Kerala in the South, Bihar and UP in the Hindi heartland, and Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and, to some extent, Delhi in the North. The Naxalite movement was also crushed through very severe police repression.*

The scale of human rights violations was much higher and geographically more widespread than during the 1940s/50 except perhaps in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh where in the 1940s/1950s, there were mass executions especially of the Muslim peasants that have remained under reported (Anderson 2013, Singh 2014). *The large scale violations of human rights violations during the suppression of the Naxalite movement that included summary executions in police custody (called 'encounter killings'), brutal torture sometimes leading to death including the death in police custody of Charu Mazumdar (Debroy 2010) and Baba Bujha Singh (Sidhu 2013), long periods of imprisonment gave birth to organisations of civil liberties and human rights that were initially focussed on the release of political prisoners. The experience of crushing the Naxalite movement have led to greater militarisation of the Indian state and using that accumulated knowledge and practices to crush other anti-Indian state rebellions in Kashmir, Punjab and the North East, and also the reinvented Naxalite movement in recent period especially in the states of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand in central India.*

The greater militarisation of the Indian state has gone along simultaneously with the incorporation of the mainstream constitutionalist communist parties into the political culture of Indian establishment. *Indian communist parties have become increasingly vocal supporters of Indian nationalism resembling the nationalism of the two major parties in India the Indian National Congress championing secular/semi secular Indian nationalism and the Bharatiya Janata Party articulating the vision of Hindu nationalism.* This has led to the constitutionalist communist parties being accepted as respectable in the Indian state's official culture.

The rise of the Naxalite movement and also its suppression and re-emergence has had many cultural offshoots in the form of poetry, plays, fiction and films. The movement also gave birth to a new generation of left-wing academics and journalists. The long term implications of the rise of the Naxalite movement The long term implications of the rise of Naxalite movement are twofold: one, the incorporation of India's constitutionalist communist parties into India's ruling establishment and two, the emergence of a sustainable communist tendency in India wedded to the path of armed struggle. With the sustainability of the armed struggle communist tendency, a situation has emerged where there is co-existence in a strictly limited sense between this communist tendency now called the Communist Party of India (Maoists) and the Indian state.

This coexistence has assumed a specific character- the movement led by the CPI (Maoists) is contained within the most underdeveloped regions of India that are resource rich. The India state has de facto accepted that area consisting of several districts in central India as Naxalite area of influence. The specific coexistence works in this way that the CPI (Maoist) movement cannot expand beyond this contained area and the Indian state is not able to crush the movement in that area without incurring significant security force losses and massive human rights violations. This coexistence is, of course, temporary and ridden with tensions and perpetual conflict. *It cannot be totally ruled out that Indian capitalist class supported by the international corporations and the Indian big business may pressurise the Indian state to launch sustained armed attack on CPI(Maoists) to wrest back the control of those regions of central India that are currently under CPI(Maoist) control.* If possible, the international and national capital would want to have unhindered access to these regions for extraction of region's natural resources for expansion of global and Indian capitalism. *If the Indian state does succumb to this pressure and is able to muster sufficient national consensus to launch armed intrusion into these regions, it will lead to a scale of human rights violations that India has not seen so far.*

*Such a strategy on the part of the Indian state will further strengthen the militarisation of the Indian state.* Such a scenario may be considered unthinkable now but history tells us that unthinkable do happen. On one aspect, the CPI (Maoist) perspective and strategy is different not only from the constitutionalist communist parties but also from the entire gamut of centrist and right wing parties. The CPI (Maoist) does not subscribe to the idea of India as one nation and recognises the multiple nationalities in India and the right of these nations to self-determination. If the political economy of India's capitalist development leads to intensification of conflicts between multiple regional nationalist aspirations and the Centre representing one unified Indian nationalism, whether secular or Hindu, this may lead to the possibilities of alliance between communist and regional formations against the Centre, an alliance the Centre may not be able to crush. That historical possibility for re-imagining India's future still persists.

## **Conclusion**

The Naxalite movement was the culmination of the conflict between two tendencies in the Indian communist movement. In its first phase, its support

base was mainly among the peasants and tribal communities, and in the second phase, its main support base shifted to urban students and youth. In its second phase, it represented some of the radicalism and the iconoclasms of the wider global student and youth movement of 1968. Its long term legacy in India has been in four main areas: one, it has given birth to a sustainable communist tendency following the extra parliamentary path of armed struggle; two, it has given birth to a human rights/democratic rights/civil liberties movement in India; third, it has produced at least two generations of academics and journalists inspired by the movement in the direction of Marxism, and fourth, its impact has been seen in quite significant in varieties of literary and artistic productions.

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# Objectives behind drone strike in Baluchistan

Asif Haroon Raja

Pakistan is caught up in a paradoxical situation. The US as well as the unity government in Kabul have been pressing Pakistan to convince the Afghan Taliban to come to the negotiating table and help in restoring peace in war torn Afghanistan. At the same time, they do not want Pakistan to maintain contacts with Taliban and are urging it to fight them. Last year, with great efforts Pakistan managed to arrange a meeting at Murree on July 7, 2015 which was attended by Taliban leaders including Mullah Akhtar Mansour. The next meeting was scheduled at the same place on July 31 and some breakthrough was expected. The roguish airing of the news of death of Mullah Omar by USA, Afghan government and India on July 30 scuttled the scheduled talks.

The trio was averse to Pakistan facilitated talks and wanted peace on its terms. Derailment of peace talks was aimed at dividing and weakening Taliban movement and then talking to the reconcilable from a position of strength. A peace deal of choice with reconcilable Taliban was to be arrived at and irreconcilable Taliban were to be side-lined and droned. Once this ill-conceived plan backfired, and barring a small faction under Mullah Mohammad Rasoul, the rest remained loyal to Mullah Mansour, Pakistan was once again deceptively cajoled to renew the peace process under the umbrella of Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG). At the same time, Pakistan was coerced to not only force the Taliban to talk but also to fight with the irreconcilable Taliban. Puzzlingly, the US has no objection to the contacts made with the Taliban by Afghan regime, India, Iran, Qatar or any other country but has different rules for Pakistan.

It became extremely difficult for Pakistan to once again bring the Taliban leadership to the negotiating table since the Taliban were achieving victories in the battlefield and field commanders were averse to peace talks. They had laid down certain pre-conditions which Kabul and Washington were not prepared to fulfil. Pakistan's advice that fight and talk policy will not work fell on deaf ears.



Ultimately, Pakistan's efforts began to bear fruit. The Taliban became a bit flexible and showed signs of giving peace a chance despite the fact that Afghan government had adopted a hostile posture against them and was not even prepared to give due recognition to their political office at Doha. Taliban attack in Kabul in April 2016 killing over 60 persons and injuring a large number changed the mood of the ones sitting in Kabul.

Drone strike on May 21, 2016 killing Taliban Ameer Akhtar Mansour who was pro-peace has ruined the ongoing reconciliation process undertaken by QCG consisting of representatives from USA, China, Pakistan and Afghanistan. It has also nosedived Pak-US relations.

Prior to the drone strike, a change in the US behaviour was discernible. It was pressuring Pakistan to cap its tactical nuclear capability which Pakistan had devised to offset the danger of India's Pakistan specific Cold Start Doctrine, release American Spy Dr. Shakil Afridi and send him to Washington, pick up arms against Haqqani Network (HN) and Quetta Shura allegedly based in Baluchistan, and force them to come to the negotiating table. It started to twist the arm of Pakistan when it didn't get the desired response.

The eight F-16 jets release was blocked by the US Congress saying that Pakistan will have to make full payment of \$ 699 million. Release of the scheduled \$300 million Close Support Fund (CSF) was also stopped. After making the relations tense, the US then abruptly violated Pakistan's sovereignty by droning Mullah Mansour which wrecked the prospects of reconciliation. To make matters worse, Washington stated that both the PM and the COAS were informed well in advance about the intended strike and their consent was obtained. This was sheer travesty of truth since the two were informed 7 hours after the incident and it was announced with confidence that Mullah Mansour had been killed. This lie was maliciously circulated to tarnish the image of Nawaz Sharif and Gen Raheel Sharif.

The drone strike in Baluchistan was a well calculated act to achieve certain objectives. These were as under:

- Blame Pakistan for harbouring Taliban leaders and helping them to destabilise Afghanistan.
- Reinforce the allegation that Quetta Shura is in existence in Baluchistan duly patronized by Pakistan.
- Reinforce the Indo-US-Afghan accusations that Pakistan is a hub of terrorism.
- Justify the US hard line approach adopted against Pakistan and pave way for further tightening the screws of Pakistan.
- Justify drone war in Baluchistan province and continue droning irreconcilable Taliban leaders.
- Once again make Baluchistan restive that has begun to stabilize.
- Instability in the province would help in impeding CPEC, which is being developed at a fast pace and has become the major cause of worry for both USA and India.
- Provide fuel to a segment of foreign paid Pak media and disgruntled politicians to badger the government, which is under pressure on account of Panama Papers scandal and deadlock over Terms of Reference, and thus smoothen the ground for another round of agitation politics.
- Force Pakistan to pick up arms against Afghan Taliban and HN and thus further add to the problems of Pakistan.
- Defame Pakistan by alleging that it is in league with HN and is playing a double game and not helping in restoring peace in Afghanistan.
- Break the momentum of Taliban Spring Offensive, dishearten the Taliban and bolster the dwindling morale of Afghan unity government and ANSF.
- Weaken Taliban movement by once again creating leadership crisis and further accentuating their divides.
- Frighten Taliban leaders of their fate if they refused to reconcile with the peace plan formulated by Washington and Kabul.
- Further strain Pak-Afghan relations and deepen misgivings in Pak-Iran relations after the episode of Kalbushan Yadav in March this year when Rouhani was on a visit to Pakistan.
- Justify the US tilt towards India by projecting it as helpful and a natural ally

- Pave ground for making India member of MTC and Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).
- Above all, isolate Pakistan and create conditions for imposing punitive sanctions with a view to undermining its economy which has begun to show signs of recovery, and also to undercut nuclear program
- Create favourable conditions for India to exercise military option against weakened and isolated Pakistan.
- Justify further stay of Resolute Support Mission (RSM) of US-NATO in Afghanistan beyond December 2016 and to adopt a more proactive role against Taliban.
- Give a justifiable reason to intimidate Pakistan and to break its axis with China.

The offensive act became all the more fishy when it was gathered that the vehicle carrying Mullah Mansour was not as badly splintered and charred as it should have been and the driver Azam had received only 30% burns and hence could be easily identified. Most intriguingly, the passport and ID card of Mansour were found intact a few yards away from the site of occurrence and so was number plate of the vehicle. There were reasons to suspect that the 7 hours' time delay in reporting the matter was to allow time to someone else to place the identity documents and then cross back into Afghanistan. Possibility of bomb blast by Blackwater or BLA cannot be ruled out. And then who put the chip in the vehicle hired in Taftan? If Mansour had a Mashadi base camp in Zahidan since long and had frequented Iran 26 times besides his visits to Qatar and Dubai, why he could not be nabbed/killed elsewhere? Why no questions have been asked from Iran?

Drone strike against Mullah Mansour was the first in Baluchistan and it was authorized by Obama and recommended by RSM Commander Gen Nicholson. Obama's assertion that suchlike strikes against non-state actors and irreconcilable in Pakistan will continue whenever actionable intelligence comes forth is a clear cut warning that the US will not hesitate to take the war into the Pakistani territory. He had hurled a similar warning in 2009 after issuing dangerous Af-Pak policy in 2009 and had accelerated drone war in FATA. This is exactly what India has all along desired and has been advising Bush and Obama to adopt a hard-hitting approach towards Pakistan to achieve long

lasting results. This change implies victory of the hawks and spoilers who are anti-peace and desire chaos and war to keep their drugs, defence and mercantile industries running.

Pakistan government has termed the drone attack a clear violation of Pakistan's sovereignty and expressed its serious concerns. The US Ambassador in Islamabad was invited by Gen Raheel in his office in GHQ and had a straight talk with him. China after 17 days finally broke its silence by giving a statement calling upon the 'international community' to respect Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It commended Pakistan's contribution to the war against terrorism and stressed that the Afghan reconciliation process within the framework of the QCG should not be jeopardised. It was a rebuke to Washington over the drone killing of the Taliban chief.

The statement was timed with the visit of a delegation of senior US officials – Richard Olson, Peter Lavoy, and Gen. John Nicholson, Commander of the US forces in Afghanistan to Islamabad. The visiting delegation also heard strong denunciation of the drone strike in Baluchistan during their separate meetings with Gen Raheel and foreign Office advisers. They were also told of the decisive shift in the US policies towards India which has disturbed the military balance in the region. They were reminded of India's track record, its aggressive designs and constantly rising defence budget and acquisition of the civilian nuclear deal, supply of latest state-of-art weaponry and technology from the US, Israel, and the west, and now its efforts to become member of NSG. They were also shown proofs of RAW's involvement in Pakistan and arrest of Indian RAW officer Yadav and NDS officers and their confessional statements.

After a hard and arduous battle with the terrorists that were duly funded, armed and equipped by foreign agencies and achieving spectacular results, Pakistan was now seeing light at the end of the long tunnel. However, sudden change in tone and tenor of the US and its aggressive and discriminatory attitude against Pakistan are indicators that the war on terror has a long way to go and so is the case with the instability in Afghanistan. Since volatility in Afghanistan directly impacts Pakistan, as such it will not buy the changed policy of use of force against the Afghan Taliban as suggested by Washington and Kabul.

Likewise, China cannot but view with uneasiness the growing US-Indian-Afghan axis in regional politics now further reinforced with inclusion of Iran and working as a prototype of the US rebalance in Asia. Beijing understands that the shift in the US policy in Afghanistan – and towards Pakistan – and the strategic alliance with India is in reality aimed at encircling and preparing for war against China. This is evident from rising tension in South China Sea and the US haste to shift its strategic pivot from the West Asia to Asia-Pacific.

From the above it has become clear that Pakistan has never fitted into the security paradigm of the US. Whenever it befriended Pakistan it was only to achieve its short term objectives. While the US want Pakistan to treat Afghan Taliban as its enemy, it sees nothing wrong in its efforts to broker peace with them. In other words, the US will feel satisfied when all segments of Afghan society turn against Pakistan. The US want Pakistan to roll back its nuclear program, accept India as the policemen of the region and its hegemony and to forget about Kashmir. It wants Pakistan to help in strategic encirclement of China, roll back CPEC and concentrate on TAPI project. Since these demands run counter to Pakistan's national interests and cannot be possibly accepted, the US seems to have lost patience and has reached a stage of once again abandoning Pakistan and putting it under sanctions as it had done in 1989. Pakistan's policy makers should be mentally and physically prepared for such an eventuality and should make requisite changes in foreign policy to meet the future challenges squarely.

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# **Gulbarg Society Carnage: Who Cast the First Stone?**

Ram Puniyani

Communal violence is the big bane of Indian society. While on one hand the innocents are killed the guilty mostly get away without any punishment. The rate of prosecution of riot cases is very low. Even where punishments are meted out the big fish are let off while the foot soldiers get punished. Apart from these observations what is popularized and what has become part of the 'social common sense' is that 'it is Muslims who begin the riot and then they get killed'.

The Judgment in case of Gulbarg society violence, delivered on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2016 was only partly giving the justice to the victims and is mostly falling on this pattern outlined above. Of the accused only 24 were punished, 11 for life and others for some small sentences. The real forces behind the carnage were untouched and the Gujarat states' prosecution theory that violence was catalysed due to the private firing by Ehsan Jafri was accepted by the judge. Just to recall the Gulbarg society was ransacked and the butchering of residents took place on 28<sup>th</sup> February, the day after train in Godhra was burnt. Right from the morning the well-armed mob started accumulating around the society where Ahsan Jafri, the ex-Member of Parliament was staying. The mob was shouting slogans against minority community.

This episode is presented as a spontaneous anger in response to the Godhra train burning and the prosecution theory is that the mob became aggressive after Jafri fired on the mob. The question arises as to why the mob was mobilized in the first place. Can the people surrounded by such a mob feel calm? In response to Court accepting that carnage took place due to Jafri's firing; Jafri's son Tanveer says that this judgment is an insult to the life and work of his father, "What were the 24 police officers present doing for four hours, watching the show? The Judgment not only appears to have ignored the violent build up but appears to have been standing some of the evidence on its head. "

In the analysis of communal violence, the general observation is that the narrative of events is so constructed as to blame the victim. The 'victim as the culprit' is the pattern of propaganda. The pretext of violence is well constructed by communal forces. To begin with the whole violence was orchestrated on the pretext of Godhra train burning, the reasons of which itself is a matter of debate. The very theory which was popularized that train was burned from outside by the Muslims holds no water as trains cannot be burned from outside and same came to be proved in this case also. By the time the truth comes out the people are made to believe through various mechanisms about the assault to the minority and then mobilized for the violence. In one of the best studies on mechanism of communal violence, V.N. Rai, ex DGP of police UP, points out "In order to guard them against external criticism and to preserve their self-righteousness, violence is projected to be started by Muslims. It is as if a weaker person is pushed into the corner by a stronger, forcing him to raise his hand so that he may be suitably punished for his 'attack'. Before the punishment is meted out a suitable hue and cry can be made about the fact that because the person cornered is naturally wicked and violent, he is bound to attack first" (Combating Communal Conflicts Pg. 56-57).

The court also rejects the conspiracy theory and accepts that this was a spontaneous act by the angry crowd. How does one explain the well recorded calls from Ehsan Jafri to the police and Chief Minister for help? How does one explain the police did not respond to the call for protection when it was desperately sought by Ehsan Jafri? How does one explain the police and administration's inaction, when a possibility of police force coming and protecting the people did exist except through conspiracy theory? Those responsible for protecting the life of residents lapsed in their duty, starting from the then Chief Minister Narendra Modi, home minister Amit Shah and other officials and have been totally let off.

In a parallel case of Naroda Patiya, the presiding judge upheld the conspiracy theory and punishment of life term was handed down to two major leaders of BJP and associates, Mayaben Kodnani and Babu Bajrangi. Yagnik points out "This was a pre-planned conspiracy and it cannot be mitigated just by saying it was a reaction to [the] Godhra train burning incident." (The Wire, 2016) After delivering this judgment the learned judge has been getting threats of different

types. The question is how conspiracy theory can be rejected in Gulbarg when the dynamics of both the cases; Gulbarg and Naroda Patiya, has been similar.

The judgment brings to our notice, many other aspects of the state of justice delivery system in general and that related to communal violence in particular. The state has been lapsing in such matters as for as prevention, controlling and giving the justice is concerned. This has led to a situation where one finds that the rate of convictions in cases of violence is poor as observed in massive cases of violence like e.g. anti-Sikh (1984) post Babri Demolition (1992). Lately in Gujarat it has slightly improved. The factor in this direction has been due to the role Human Rights Commission, many judges and the dogged work of civil society groups, particularly that of Teesta Setalvad, who have pursued these cases relentlessly leading to the situation where part justice is coming in. Many elements claim that this reflects the fairness of things in Gujarat. On the contrary this justice has been procured despite the heavy social and institutional biases' prevalent in Gujarat, biases against the religious minorities.

Zakia Jafri, the widow of the slain Ahsan Jafri's, determination to get justice for the violence victims is remarkable again. It is in the same Gulberg society that Rupa Mody lost her son and she is relentlessly pursued her struggle to locate him. Based on this tragic episode the film Parzania captures the human tragedy which visited this residential area.

One does hope that higher courts, where the matter is being taken, will give full justice to the victims of violence.

*Ram Puniyani was a professor in biomedical engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, and took voluntary retirement in December 2004 to work full time for communal harmony in India. He is involved with human rights activities from last two decades. He is associated All India Secular Forum, Center for Study of Society and Secularism and ANHAD. Response only to ram.puniyani@gmail.com*



# Dead Reckoning: Memories of the 1971 Bangladesh War

Sarmila Bose

## Comments by Martin Woollcott

A long-overdue study of Bangladesh's war of independence.

*The wider revision of the conflict's history she implies exonerates the Pakistani government of any plot to rule the east by force, suggests that the Bengali Leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman let the genie of nationalism out of the bottle but could not control it, and insists that the conflict was a civil war within East Pakistan.*

*India wanted a bloated casualty figure to justify interfering militarily in the internal matters of Pakistan and now the 3m figure has been firmly instilled in the minds of Bangladeshis. Whatever the number was the killings perhaps could have been contained had the Indian government not funded, trained and provided weapons to the militant rebels (Mukti Bahini) and later invaded the country. Massacre and rampage was thus inevitable.*

*Bangladeshi authorities claim that as many as 3 million people were killed, although the Hamoodur Rahman Commission, an official Pakistan Government investigation, put the figure as low as 26,000 civilian casualties. The United States intelligence agency, the C.I.A. and State Department estimated that 200,000 people had been killed in the civil war. Sarmila Bose research estimates 50,000 and 100,000 people died.*

*A truth about the Bangladesh war is that remarkably few scholars and historians have given it thorough, independent scrutiny. Bose's research has taken her from the archives to interviews with elderly peasants in Bangladesh and retired army officers in Pakistan. Her findings are significant.*

*LISA is of the view that it is not just the arithmetic of killing that is important but to determine facts as factually as possible. History is not a fixed narrative so there is always scope for further analysis*

*Even if one disagrees with Bose but one thing stands out Bose's account warns us of how much we need to find out. We are of the view that an International Truth Commission be established with term of reference agreed upon in agreement by Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. The Commission should determine the casualties suffered by all Pakistanis including Bengalis, Biharis, and non-Bengalis/Biharis and opportune blame on parties concerned. It should then be followed by reconciliation on recommended terms. (Editor)*

The eyes would widen and the head move from side to side in the striking Bengali gesture of affirmation. "How many were killed?" we would ask refugees who had fled from areas where the Pakistani army and its auxiliaries were attempting to suppress the Bangladesh independence movement. "Lakhs and lakhs!" came the answer. Journalists who covered the Bangladesh war in 1971 remember the phrase with a mixture of amusement and frustration. Lakh is the Indian word for 100,000, and it sometimes seemed as if the majority of Bengalis knew no other number, or, if they did, it was "crore" – ten million – at least when describing the atrocities and depredations of their West Pakistani oppressors. Reporters had no doubt that there were such atrocities. Some of them witnessed bloody incidents or their aftermath, but for the most part correspondents had to rely on the accounts of others. Between the protestations of the Pakistani military, for whom all Bengali deaths were those of "miscreants" or criminals, and the manifest exaggerations of inflamed and sometimes bereaved East Bengalis, it was difficult to steer a measured course.

The numbers mattered, and matter still, because they make the difference between seeing the war as a tragedy and seeing it as a terrible crime, indeed as a genocide. That in turn is important because it profoundly affects the way in which the peoples of South Asia understand both their separate and their common histories. Much that is both wrong and dangerous in the subcontinent today, from Pakistan's paranoia to India's extreme self-righteousness and Bangladesh's sense that it is neglected and ignored, can be traced to the 1971 conflict, even if the roots go back further still. Sarmila Bose's attempt to set the numerical record straight in her aptly named book is a contribution to a debate that ought to have taken place a long time ago but instead has hardly started. It

is a grim kind of accountancy, because even when she concludes, as she often does, that fewer, sometimes far fewer, died than claimed, still we are dealing with murder, rape, unnatural deaths and the destruction of individuals and their families in a land that had joyously embraced the idea of Pakistan less than a generation before.

Her method is to take the worst of the alleged atrocities, and then to attempt to reconstruct and quantify them by interviewing the participants on both or, rather, all sides. She wove back and forth between Pakistan and Bangladesh, seeing mainly retired Pakistani officers in the west, and survivors of killings and their relatives in the east, as well as members of the non-Bengali and non-Muslim minorities. Bose (*pictured*) seems to have been the first to do this. It is a method not without its problems. My own feeling, remembering how charming Pakistani officers, like their Indian equivalents, can be, is that she may have been a bit too ready to accept the honourable, just-trying-to-do-our-duty image that those officers naturally prefer to convey, and that she may also be too convinced that the received wisdom needs to be entirely overturned. Yet when she underlines how stretched the Pakistani forces were, how unready they were for the role of suppression that was thrust on them, and how perplexed they were in the face of a Bengali hostility that seemed to them so disproportionate, what she writes rings very true.

Bose's case-by-case arithmetic leads her in the end to estimate that between 50,000 and 100,000 people died in 1971. One lakh, in other words, at most. One cannot say that she absolutely proves this, but her evidence points in that direction, and, in any case vastly away from the figure of 3 million still proclaimed in Bangladesh and India. The wider revision of the conflict's history she implies exonerates the Pakistani government of any plot to rule the east by force, suggests that the Bengali leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman let the genie of nationalism out of the bottle but could not control it, and insists that the conflict was a civil war within East Pakistan. The killings by Bengalis of non-Bengali minorities, of Bengalis who stuck with the idea of a united Pakistan, and even of some Hindu Bengalis – all of whose deaths were attributed at the time to the Pakistani army – needs to be reckoned in any fair balance. The notion that the Bangladesh movement was non-violent, even Gandhian, was always fantastical. Bose has written a book that should provoke both fresh research and fresh thinking about a fateful turning point in the history of the subcontinent.

# Bangladesh on trial

Ahmer Bilal Soofi

THE atrocities perpetrated by all the sides in East Pakistan in 1971 were reprehensible. For its excesses, Pakistan expressed regret to the people of Bangladesh in 2002, with a desire to bury the ghosts of the past and forge robust ties for the future.

But, since assuming power in Bangladesh in 2008, the Awami League government of Prime Minister Hasina Wajid has adopted a regressive pathway that may disrupt relations between the two countries, even upset the regional balance of power in South Asia. Dhaka has been selectively mining the tragic events of 1971 for political gains by holding shambolic war crimes trials of its political opponents belonging to the Bangladesh Jamaat-i-Islami and Bangladesh National Party.

Initiated in 2010, these trials are being held four decades after the events of 1971 and are a violation of the 1974 Tripartite Agreement concluded in “the larger interest of reconciliation, peace and stability in the subcontinent” between Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Under this, the latter agreed not to proceed against those it accused of committing war crimes in 1971. It was, in fact, in reciprocity of this guarantee that Pakistan officially recognised Bangladesh as a sovereign state.

These trials, which have so far resulted in over two dozen capital and life sentences and four executions, have been marred by consistent miscarriages of justice in breach of international law norms and standards.

From a legal standpoint, the trials have been blighted by, inter alia, denial of the accused person’s right to bail; limited rights to appeal capital and life convictions; pro-prosecution bias; admission of hearsay evidence and evidence from intercepted communications between the prosecution and judges amounting to prohibited and biased communications; capital convictions based on hurriedly enacted retrospective legislation; and arbitrary limitation on production of defence witnesses and documents. These are serious violations of fair trial and due process guarantees enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Bangladesh is a party. By conducting these

trials, Bangladesh is responsible under international law for directly breaching at least 11 Articles of the ICCPR (Articles 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14, 15, 17, 18 and 26).

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### **The trials make a mockery of justice.**

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The International Criminal Tribunal established to hold these trials is fundamentally flawed — Article 47(A) of the Bangladeshi Constitution states: “This Article further denies any accused under the ICT Act from moving the Supreme Court for any remedies under the Constitution, including any challenges as to the unconstitutionality of Article 47(A).” The latter essentially strips the accused before the ICT of certain fundamental rights, including the right to an expeditious trial by an independent, impartial tribunal, and the right to move the courts to enforce fundamental rights.

Moreover, the ICT Act 2009 excludes the application of normal rules of procedure and evidence in proceedings before the ICT. Section 23 states: “The provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1898 (V of 1898), and the Evidence Act, 1872 (I of 1872), shall not apply in any proceedings under this Act.”

Disturbingly, one accused, Delwar Hossain Sayeedi, was handed down the capital sentence despite allegations that government forces abducted a key defence witness. Mohammed Kamaruzzaman was hanged in April 2015 even though witnesses and documents were arbitrarily limited by the courts and the inconsistency of statements by prosecution witnesses were not factored into the evidence. In the case of Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, hanged in November 2015, the ICT refused to accept any testimony from his alibi witnesses.

Despite allowing the prosecution to call 41 witnesses, the ICT limited Chowdhury’s defence to four witnesses. The authorities ordered airlines flying into Dhaka to declare if any of Chowdhury’s defence witnesses, including some distinguished Pakistani citizens, were booked on their flights ahead of his review hearing, so as to deny them entry.

The numerous procedural and substantive flaws that have turned these trials into a farce have been highlighted by eminent lawyers and human rights groups across the globe. The current Bangladesh supreme court chief justice himself remarked during the appellate proceedings in Mir Qasim Ali's case that he was "very disappointed to see that you [the prosecution] are using these trials [for] your political benefit..." He was "shocked that the prosecution's case is full of contradictions". Despite these remarks, Ali's capital sentence was upheld by the supreme court, doubtless due to political pressure.

Last Wednesday, Jamaat-i-Islami chief, Motiur Rahman Nizami was hanged on trumped-up war crime charges. Pakistan must raise this issue at bilateral, regional and international levels to ensure that Bangladesh honours its international legal obligations by immediately halting these flawed trials as well as quashing all outstanding sentences pronounced by the war crimes tribunal. Apart from affirming the international rule of law, this will enhance peace and stability in South Asia.

*The writer is ex-caretaker federal law minister.*

## **China's Silk Road leaves India stranded in its region**

M.K. Bhadrakumar

The Chinese foreign ministry has announced that the Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe will pay an official visit to China starting April 6. The expectations in Colombo are that the four-day visit will advance the Sino-Lankan relations “to a new level”.

President Xi Jinping will receive Wickremesinghe, who will be accompanied by six cabinet ministers – in charge of foreign affairs, transport and civil aviation, special projects, city planning and water supply, housing and construction, development strategies and international trade.

The visit aims at charting out a new phase of economic partnership – especially in the infrastructure sector, which comes within the ambit of China's Silk Road strategies. The two countries have also been negotiating a free trade agreement.

Interestingly, Chinese Communist Party is set to establish formal ties with Sri Lanka's ruling party, the right-wing United National Party.

These are definitive signs that clouds over the Sino-Lankan relationship following the ‘regime change’ in Colombo last year (much to the elation of India and the United States) are lifting. The recent decision by Wickremesinghe's government to give the go ahead for the controversial Chinese-funded \$1.5 billion port city development project in Colombo testified to ‘business as usual’ in the bilateral ties.

The imperatives working on both sides are understandable. Sri Lanka faces acute economic difficulties. The West preaches democracy and human rights but is reluctant to loosen the purse strings to help the island's economy. Sri Lanka is cash-strapped and needs all the investments that China can make.

China is not perturbed about Wickremesinghe's 'pro-West' image. Beijing places confidence in Colombo's record of non-aligned and independent foreign policies.

Arguably, China feels comfortable that Wickremesinghe is a votary of the free market. The more the market forces come into play, the merrier it becomes for Chinese businessmen in the Colombo environs.

What China really needs is a level playing field where it can give a run for the money to the West – and even to India. China's One Belt One Road initiatives and Sri Lanka's developmental priorities enjoy complementarity. Clearly, a zero sum mentality is unwarranted.

From the perspective of regional politics, Wickremesingh's visit to China comes closely on the heels of Nepali Prime Minister K. P. Mishra Oli's seven-day tour of China last month. Beijing has offered to help Nepal create trade and transit routes and build rail links bypassing India as well as supply petroleum products. All of that helps Nepal to stand up to pressure from India.

Indeed, Oli's visit to China – and Wickremesinghe's forthcoming visit – highlight that India's neighborhood policies face an unprecedented challenge today. India can no more take for granted its pre-eminence in the region.

Importantly, Indian diplomacy needs to understand that respect and influence cannot be extracted but need to be earned, and the sort of crude pressure tactic that New Delhi instinctively resorted to recently against Nepal can prove counterproductive.

Wickremesinghe's forthcoming visit to China underscores that in the final analysis even a regime change in Colombo provided no guarantee that India's neighbors can be kept away from the attractions of the One Belt One Road.

Of course, in geopolitical terms, Beijing's future moves in Sri Lanka are fraught with profound consequences for India's security interests. The point is, there is a 'big picture' in all this.



Thus, China's comfort level is noticeably high that the new government in Myanmar led by Aung San Suu Kyi may give the green signal to the project approved by Naypyitaw last December for the construction of a deep-water port and special economic zone by a Chinese consortium in Kyaukphyu on the Bay of Bengal, with a 1200 km roadway and railway linking it with Yunnan province of China. (Kyauphyu is also to be linked to Kunming by dual oil and gas pipelines.)

Kyauphyu (Myanmar), Chittagong (Bangladesh), Hambantota (Sri Lanka), Maldives, Gwadar (Pakistan) – these form a chain in the sea lanes of the Indian Ocean. And they dovetail with China's Silk Road strategies.

But India has snubbed the One Belt One Road strategy. The Indian foreign ministry sponsored a Track II platform in New Delhi last month where India's Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar virtually admonished Beijing and explained how India would have gone about the One Belt One Road (if only it had the money.) Without mentioning Beijing or the South China Sea, Jaishankar hit out:

- The interactive dynamic between strategic interests and connectivity initiatives – a universal proposition – is on particular display in our continent. The key issue is whether we will build our connectivity through consultative processes or more unilateral decisions... But we cannot be impervious to the reality that others may see connectivity as an exercise in hard-wiring that influences choices. This should be discouraged, because particularly in the absence of an agreed security architecture in Asia, it could give rise to unnecessary competitiveness. Connectivity should diffuse national rivalries, not add to regional tensions...Indeed, if we seek a multi-polar world, the right way to begin is to create a multi-polar Asia.
- A constructive discussion on this subject should address not just physical infrastructure but also its broader accompanying facets. Institutional, regulatory, legal, digital, financial and commercial connections are important, as is the promotion of the common cultural and civilizational thread that runs through Asia. Nurturing connectivity

also requires a willingness to create arrangements which lead to higher levels of trust and confidence. A connected Asia must be governed by commonly agreed international norms, rules and practices. We need the discipline and restraint that ensure standards of behavior, especially by and between States that jostle to widen their respective spaces in an increasingly inter-connected continent. Respect for the global commons should not be diluted under any circumstances. Much depends on the commitment of nations to uphold freedom of navigation and peaceful resolution of disputes. There should be no place for use or threat of use of force.

India's mandarins are bristling because they have no Plan B, while China presses ahead with the Silk Roads in its backyard. There was always the option available to exploit the One Belt One Road to India's advantage, but then, Indian diplomacy instead opted to retaliate by moving against Chinese interests in the South China Sea – and ganging up with Japan.

The efficacy of such an approach is debatable, since India has differences and disputes to manage with China, which calls for a robust bilateral track. It is discernible that Beijing takes note of the Indian 'tilt' toward the US' rebalance strategy.

The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi last held a bilateral meeting with Xi in July during the BRICS summit in Ufa, Russia. They probably made eye contact at Paris in November (Climate Change Conference) and at Washington last week (Nuclear Security Summit). But there was no 'bilateral'.

*Ambassador MK Bhadrakumar served as a career diplomat in the Indian Foreign Service for three decades. He served as ambassador to Uzbekistan and Turkey. Apart from two postings in the former Soviet Union, his assignments abroad included South Korea, Sri Lanka, West Germany, Kuwait, Pakistan and Afghanistan. He has written extensively on Russia, China, Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan and on the geopolitics of energy. He writes the "Indian Punchline" blog and has written regularly for Asia Times and The Hind*

## Chilcot: The tip of absolutism

Samson Simon Sharaf

*Chilcot report is an eye wash has done very little more than to confirm the obvious. The report has no remit, and the findings were always going to be of very little importance. Experts are of the view that the anger that is felt in the UK and across the world about the invasion of Iraq is not going to be changed by what has been written in the report. As much as it is good for academics and historians, ultimately, it doesn't do anything to bring the process to court.*

*The fact that the inquiry wasn't given the remit to look into the legality of the war means that it could only confirm what we already knew." Unfortunately, it shall not be possible to take legal action against Tony Blair. It can't go to the International Criminal Court (ICC) because the UK has a seat in the UN Security Council (UNSC) and can veto that.*

“It is 20 years ago that I first joined Labour’s shadow cabinet. It is with regret I have today resigned from its cabinet. I can’t accept collective responsibility for the decision to commit Britain now to military action in Iraq without international agreement or domestic support.” - Robin Cook, 17 March 2003

Robin Cook lived and died a Labour Warrior. Thirteen years hence, he is vindicated. Blessings have come to UK in the form of Brexit followed by the Chilcot Report. For a democratically conscience UK, Iraq reflects how public mandates can be misused and the Brexit why policy decisions should not be thrown into public domain. The public institutions of UK failed their responsibilities. First, the UK Parliament acquiesced to falsehood and secondly, shied away from responsibility and positive decision making. Now is an opportunity for UK for atonement and resetting the sails.

Across the Channel, the two events provide opportunities to untangle from a predominantly US led policy in Middle East. This policy has no end and produces anarchy that swarms Europe with human waves of immigrants. There are also lessons for Pakistan, KSA, Qatar, Iran and Turkey; the inner circle operatives of the unrest in CENTCOM. Hares cannot hunt with hounds.

Anglo-Americans carry many a guilt of the past. Chilcot Report is one such exposure. They learnt no lessons from the Berlin Airlift, Gulf of Tonkin, Bay of Pigs, El Salvador, Sandinista and Nicaraguan Contras. History attests that Iraq was neither the first nor the last instance that incomplete intelligence was sexed up. The two trans-Atlantic allies had cooperated in the past on Assumed Intelligence that made the world bloodier. They must be prevented to do so in future, especially in the areas under CENTCOM.

It is time that mainland Europe wakes up to these realities and uses the argument to make the world more welfare oriented for those who suffer the machinations of the 'Dogs of War'. They need to realise that it is no more the North (US led capitalists) who dominate the world but also the rising South led by China, Russia, India, Malaysia, South Africa, Turkey, Iran, Middle East, South America and Pakistan. If the bifurcation does take place, Japan and South Korea will have to weigh their economic options with either the US led bloc, EU or Asia. The violence initiated by US led objectives after the exit of USSR from Afghanistan now stands fully exposed. In due course a tectonic shift is inevitable. As Libya, Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan lie in ruins, a new international equilibrium is the call else the multi headed serpent will devour the United Nations that stands as an ineffective spectator.

US Strategic mind is obsessed with dominance. Past seven decades have witnessed the gradual rise of bulls who advocate covert violent activities reflecting aspirations of zealots, cartels, energy giants and economic czars, all riding the technological edge. The Bush Doctrine of 2001 is another name for Political Absolutism with the objective of international dominance. Neo Clausewitzians exist aplenty in the US policy corridors bending backwards to support this policy by selective use of overpowering military might against the weak. This is called 'Shock and Awe'.

After the 9/11 attack, Bush Doctrine enunciated a policy that the United States had the right to secure itself against countries that harbour or give aid to terrorist groups and therefore the unsanctioned invasion of Iraq and the misuse of the blanket UN resolution on Afghanistan. USA misused a UN Resolution on Afghanistan far beyond the principal of minimum force to pursue dual and triple containment (Russo-Sino, Iran and Pakistan). The uni-polarity will get bloodier if sanity does not prevail.

When US bombed Afghanistan with daisy cutters and depleted uranium bunker busters, I called it a 'War of Hate' built on illogical strategic and military premises. Armed with absolutist logic of Bush Doctrine, the trigger happy neo Clausewitzians in Capitol Hill were making themselves important. As usual, the US intelligence and defence establishment took charge of the events. As events progressed, my hypothesis got stronger. 'If you have it, display it' was the impulsive reaction of the Bush administration to demonstrate its unchallenged broad spectrum dominance with technical supremacy. The neo right orthodoxy added fuel to fire. The fact that a Labour leader like Tony Blair and UK Parliament fell to the illogical proves the death of the left in UK. The resignation of Robin Cook fell on deaf ears. Today, he can be cited a hero.

Even Tony Blair in many arguments advocated focus on Afghanistan and not Iraq. To everyone's surprise, Afghanistan after the opening volleys was left to simmer whilst USA shifted its focus to destroy perceived havens of terrorism and sexed up weapons of mass destruction. The real intention was to consolidate the oil rich Southern Front, Brzezinski's strategic prescription of a comprehensive and integrated Euro Asian geo-strategy. The ultimate objective was to control the entire resources of Middle East and Central Asia through triple containment.

After the fall of Saddam Hussain's regime, UK had no clue of what was happening in Iraq, or chose to look the other way. Retired Colonel Jim Steele, a veteran of US atrocities in El Salvador and Panama was appointed as Vice President Cheney's and Donald Rumsfeld's personal advisor to Iraq's Special Police. He was a close associate of General Petraeus who later became head of CIA only to fall from grace. Steele's perpetuation of human indignity oversaw the worst forms of torture giving birth to the ultra-radical sentiment of ISIS. No one noticed that Colonel Theodore S. Westhusing a West Point professor of English and Philosophy who volunteered to serve in Iraq in late 2004 died in Baghdad in mysterious circumstances with a note that said, "I cannot support a mission that leads to corruption, human right abuses and liars. I am sullied—no more."

Rather than bring democracy to the world, Bush-Chenney-Rumsfeld-Blair nexus created anarchy with obvious outcome of ultra-sectarianism and Daesh. Within the complexities hares hunting with hounds complicated the situation.

The pressure generated in Iraq helped USA get a free hand in Afghanistan and what US neo Clausewitzians' term AFPAK. This is where the war will be decided.

Just to remind readers, the Osama Bin Laden nexus with the Taliban of Afghanistan is a cover. The world will know more once a Chilcot like report follows on Afghanistan. OBL was and remained a US asset. How else could the world's most wanted fugitive be transported from Sudan in chartered Lockheed C-130 flights to Jalalabad Afghanistan on invitation of President Rabbani and not the Taliban resistance in 1996?

Incidentally, 1996 was the time the Government of Pakistan had nearly succeeded in forming a broad coalition between Afghan Taliban and various war lords led by Ahmad Shah Massoud. Same year Benazir Bhutto was removed as prime minister. In 2001, Massoud was killed by OBL's men. Following 9/11, Afghan Taliban Movement was lumped with OBL, despite the fact they wanted to hand over the fugitive to a NATO Muslim Country. The chapter of reconciliation in Afghanistan is closed till emergence of dynamic and not imposed leaderships.

On the eve of elections, Americans have a Hobson's choice. They stand on a road with a One Way Ticket. Either way, the choice is bad. Bernie Sanders could go down in history as the American Robin Cook.

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## Sikkim as independent nation

Andrew Duff

*In any case the book by Andrew Duff is really great and interesting reading with lot of information which anyone interested in Himalayan history would definitely appreciate.*

Although the story of Sikkim as independent nation is long time closed, the topic still attracts the numbers of writers and readers alike. Also the recent accession of Crimea to Russia was appropriated to Sikkim case, making the issue actual again.

The Andrew Duff book is written in fresh, entertaining and scholarly way. Main advantage of the book is that it uses original and direct sources. The other strength of the book is that it cover wider geopolitical image in which the Sikkim issue is play ...more

*This is the true story of Sikkim, a tiny Buddhist kingdom in the Himalayas that survived the end of the British Empire only to be annexed by India in 1975.*

It tells the remarkable story of Thondup, the last King of Sikkim, and his American wife Hope Cooke, thrust unwittingly into the spotlight as they sought support for Sikkim's independence after their 'fairy-tale' wedding in 1963. But as tensions between India and China spilled over into war in the Himalayas, Sikkim became a pawn in the Cold War ideological battle that played out in Asia during the 1960s and 1970s. Rumours circulated that Hope was a CIA spy. Meanwhile a shadowy Scottish adventuress, the Kazini of Chakung, married to Sikkim's leading political figure, coordinated opposition to the Palace. As the geopolitical tectonic plates of the Himalayas ground together forming the political landscape that exists today, Sikkim never stood a chance. *On the eve of declaring an Emergency in India, Indira Gandhi brazenly annexed the country. Thondup died a broken man in 1982; Hope returned to New York; Sikkim began a new phase as India's 22nd state.*

**This is history another state annexed by India.**

# Kashmir's Facebook freedom fighters

AFP

SRINAGAR: Burhan Wani was part of a new generation of young, educated Kashmiri freedom fighters using social media to spread their demands for independence from Indian rule, turning growing Internet use in the restive region into a powerful recruiting tool.

Wani, whose death in a shoot-out with government forces has triggered deadly clashes with protesters in Indian held Kashmir, was the son of a headmaster who excelled at school before he left home aged just 15 to join the region's largest rebel group.

Wani's father has said he took the decision after he and his brother were stopped by government forces on their way home and "assaulted and humiliated".

"Our young pick up guns because of the daily humiliation and torture they face here," Muzaffar Wani told AFP in 2014.

"My son is not the first one. But if he dies for his self-respect and his people, he will be a martyr."

Charismatic and articulate, Wani rose quickly through the ranks of Hizbul Mujahideen, a group that fights for mainly Muslim Kashmir to be part of Pakistan.

He soon began posting pictures on Facebook of himself in battle fatigues holding an assault rifle and videos of his band of young fighters -- a departure from the militant tradition of anonymity that won him a loyal following among the region's youth.

His posts, made from different accounts to make it harder to trace his whereabouts, would be shared thousands of times over within minutes of going live.

By the age of 21 he had become the most senior Hizbul Mujahideen commander in the Kashmir Valley.

Local reports after his death said cricket tournaments had been named after him and schoolchildren were acting out his life in plays.



Army and government officials say his messages on social media led to a major rise in the number of homegrown freedom fighters on the Indian side of the Line of Control that separates Indian-administered Kashmir from Pakistan. Previously, they had been outnumbered by fighters from Pakistan.

The death of his brother Khalid Wani last year sparked an outpouring of public sympathy as well as angry protests.

The government said Khalid was killed in a shoot-out, but his father said his body showed signs of torture, and there were no bullet wounds.

In his last video statement on June 8, Wani exhorted Kashmiri police officers to stop supporting "Indian occupation" and to join the struggle for "freedom".

Nearly 100,000 people are estimated to have attended his funeral in his native Tral area on Saturday.

"Mark my words - Burhan's ability to recruit into militancy from the grave will far outstrip anything he could have done on social media," Kashmir's former chief minister Omar Abdullah tweeted.

