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EDITORIAL

Corrupt Leaders of Pakistan

Pakistan is an exceptional nation of over 200 million that has survived internal turmoil, wars, external coercion and most importantly it has survived highly corrupt leaders. Endemic corruption by its political elite has degraded national moral and cultural values of this otherwise very resilient and strategically important country.

For the first time in its history a ray of hope had surfaced when the Supreme Court full bench and the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) picked up the courage to challenge the political mafia that has run the country to a state of virtual financial and moral bankruptcy that has adversely affected its sovereignty and national dignity. In July 2017, the Supreme Court removed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from office, barred him from politics for life and ordered the NAB to try him for corruption and money laundering, drawing on allegations that had initially surfaced in the Panama Papers leaks in 2016.

06 July 2018 shall be remembered as ‘Bright Friday’ in the history of Pakistan when the NAB Accountability Court sentenced Sharif to 10 years in prison for corruption. The court ruled that Sharif and his family laundered money in the 1990s to pay for four luxury apartments in Park Lane, in Mayfair area of London.

The court also sentenced Sharif’s daughter and presumed political heir, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, to seven years’ imprisonment, fined the family £10m and ordered the seizure of the Avenfield properties in Mayfair London. She received an additional one-year sentence for perjury by presenting forged documents in the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Pakistan is a weird and wonderful country where the dishonest are respected; where the politicians like Sharif convicted on corruption charges have the audacity to publically abuse the Supreme Court and its honourable judges and get away with it; where the corrupt are so powerful, shameless and impertinent to reason that since people have voted them to power so no court has jurisdiction to impeach or imprison them. The democratic farce of the last decade in Pakistan has significantly added to Pakistan woes of poor governance, disrespect for law and a free for all society that has been addicted to corruption unleashed by unscrupulous politicians.

The Khan Phenomenon

The central challenger to Nawaz Sharif's corruption is Imran Khan, who has struggled for nearly two decades by leading a pro justice national party and brought the original allegation against Nawaz Sharif in the superior courts.

Commenting on the forthcoming general elections in Pakistan on 25 July 2018, *Jason Burke* writes in *The Guardian*: "The frontrunner in the poll is Imran Khan, the cricketer turned politician. Now 65, Khan has been on the stump for two decades. This is a long time in politics. I stood close enough at one of his first major rallies in his hometown of Lahore in 1998 to read his speech over his shoulder. The first line on the first page read: "Believe in Pakistan." I was sceptical of his prospects and my report was headlined No Khan Do.

Now the top job in one of the world's most troubled, resilient and strategically important nations could soon be his. The story of how this happened contains a lesson for us all. Khan has attracted much attention in western media over the years, much of it for the wrong reasons. His sporting prowess, playboy reputation and marriage to and divorce from Jemima Goldsmith fuelled tabloid fascination. His midlife turn to religion, conservative values and political ambitions attracted more serious analysis. But what I, like most others, long missed was that Khan was ahead of his time, not behind it."

Imran Khan has assured to focus on education, health, more wealth, fairer opportunities but above all has promised less corruption and better services, and the hugely potent medicine of national and cultural pride too.

Transparency asks UK not to provide 'safe haven' to Nawaz Sharif

Reacting to corruption charges related to four London properties, the UK Chapter of Transparency International has asked the British government to investigate those assets and no longer provide a safe haven to Nawaz Sharif and his family.

"If a UK investigation concludes that the properties have been bought with corrupt money, then the authorities should move to seize the assets. Transparency International also calls on the UK law enforcement to investigate any further property in the UK owned by the Sharif family," says a press release issued by the UK chapter of the corruption watchdog.

"It has been reported that Nawaz Sharif is currently in London and has regularly been visiting the UK during the trial. The UK government has consistently said it aims to crack down on the laundering of corrupt funds

through the UK, although recent media reports suggest that the authorities failed to properly assist Pakistani counterparts during this investigation,” it said.

Head of Advocacy at Transparency International UK, Rachel Davies Teka said: “We are calling on the UK authorities to investigate the London-based assets identified in this conviction and ensure that Mr Sharif and his family are no longer able to enjoy any luxury homes that are found to have been bought with the proceeds of corruption. Furthermore, we believe the UK must look into any other potentially criminal UK-based assets owned by the Sharif family.

“This will serve as an important test as to how serious the government is on cracking down on the prevalence of corrupt money in our capital. The laundering of dirty money is not confined to Russian oligarchs and it is important that we target illicit assets wherever they originate from.”

“The recent passing of legislation that will require British Overseas Territories to publicly reveal the true owners of companies is a key step towards preventing the purchase of UK property with suspicious wealth. The UK must now ensure it follows through on this legislation, so that we no longer need to rely on leaks like the Panama Papers to reveal cases such as this one.”

Duncan Hames, Director of Policy Transparency International UK, said: “It should not take a leak like the Panama Papers for us to know who is buying property in the UK. Allowing corrupt individuals to discreetly stash illicit cash in UK property hurts people in the societies they have stolen from and also contributes to the housing crisis here in the UK.”

“The Government has repeatedly committed to introduce a register of the real owners of overseas companies that own property here, so it’s high-time those words were turned into action. The need to act is well illustrated by the case of London property connected to Nawaz Sharif.”

“Knowing who owns UK property is the first step to being able to seize and eventually return assets to the people from whom they have been stolen. Until the Government brings in all the necessary tools to do this, our country will remain a safe haven for dirty money from around the world.”

London Institute of South Asia has persistently insisted the international community and western nations should take measures to return all the wealth that has been laundered into many western capitals by the corrupt political leaders of developing nations, In this regard the recently passed law on money laundering in the United Kingdom is welcome with a hope that it shall be implemented in letter and spirit. If the West wants genuine democracy in the

developing world it should not protect and support the corrupt rulers who have looted the wealth of their poor people and stashed it abroad.

Ikram Sehgal a highly regarded senior journalist, defense and security analyst observed: “If popularity is to be taken as the yardstick to measure the strength of democracy, some of the world's most notorious criminals and drug lords were extremely popular with their countrymen. Building roads, motorways, etc is all very well, that is what you were voted in for but this does not give anyone the license to loot the nation and indulge in corrupt practices. Is this the kind of democracy that we yearn for where there is no rule of law and no accountability? *Accountability sits at the heart of the democratic process, if accountability is lost once the winners step into the governance mode, we will have a democracy in name only, a farce.*”

Convergence of Civilisations

‘CPEC: Changing Geopolitical and Geo-economic dynamics in South Asia and beyond’

Editors

The London Institute of South Asia (LISA) and the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) organised this joint conference to discuss ‘CPEC: Changing Geopolitical and Geo-economic dynamics in South Asia and beyond’ held at RUSI on 08 June 2018 at 9:30 am.

It was addressed by members of think-tanks and professionals who are linked with the project. It was attended by several diplomats, officials and scholars from China, Pakistan, India, United Kingdom, USA, Afghanistan and Azerbaijan etc.

The seminar invited experts, analysts and leaders to discuss the CPEC including challenges and solutions. The regional and global impact including the socio-economic and strategic dimensions were discussed. It covered a wide range of sub themes including: -

- The latest developments and progress on CPEC and future plans.
- Potential and prospects of economic development and integration aspects.
- Potential of CPEC dividends to nations that cooperate with this initiative including the UK
- Strategic and tactical impediments to development of CPEC, challenges and solution. It was also considered important to highlight the strategic challenges to this mega project in view of the changing geopolitical landscape with special reference to South Asia
- The conference discussed regional and global impact including the socio- economic and strategic dimensions.
- It examined the extent the CPEC could be instrumental in regional cooperation for peace and to end extremism/ terrorism and to alleviate poverty?

Speakers looked at various aspects of the project and assessed the opportunities and risks related to the project that’s seen globally as a game changer in the region. They said that regional countries, neighbours including India and Afghanistan, Africa, Europe and the UK association with this project could unfold phenomenal benefits to all participating nations.

The conference was addressed by:-

1. Raffaello Pantucci (Director International Security Studies RUSI)
2. Hassan Daud Butt (Project Director CPEC. Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan)
3. Julian Hamilton (Chairman Pakistan Britain Business Council)
4. Saeed Ismat (A soldier and diplomat, currently Chairman London Institute of South Asia)
5. Syed Ibn Abbas (High Commissioner of Pakistan in the UK)

Raffaello Pantucci (Director International Security Studies RUSI) moderated the proceedings. After welcome address on behalf of London Institute of South Asia and RUSI Raffaello Pantucci introduced the panelist and then delivered his opening address. This was followed up with a detailed and comprehensive briefing by Mr Hassan Daud Butt: CPEC is a Geo-Political and Geo-economic project which will have positive impact on the whole region and beyond. Mr Butt said: CPEC is on almost on its time line and progress has been made on fast tracking the areas needed attention. In response to a comment that China may become East India Company (an Imperial Arm of British in 17th Century), he said the Chinese policy of non-interference in the local affairs of the countries where projects are based is more focused on development”. He further added that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is the flagship of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that could enable the possibility of a 21st Century Maritime Silk Route. It carries the vision of opening-up of and cooperation amongst nations. The ultimate objective is peace, prosperity and well being of the people of the two countries, the region and the world.

‘China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the flag ship of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). CPEC will not only benefit China and Pakistan but will have positive impact on Iran, Afghanistan, India, Central Asian Republic, and South Asia and beyond.

Julian Hamilton (Chairman Pakistan Britain Business Council) gave a power point presentation stating as to how CPEC could be extended for the benefit beyond Pakistan. He made a very important observation that many British entrepreneurs are interested in participating in the CPEC but showed his apprehensions that that there are various issues that are impeding an otherwise a great project. He said that there exist impractical procedures, excessive bureaucratic hurdles, unnecessary litigation and obstructions by the (corrupt) system for the foreign investors. Mr Butt, however, replied that: ‘CPEC has full backing of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and therefore, no stay orders would be issued against any projects concern CPEC.’

Raffaello Pantucci reinforced Hamilton's comments by saying that a lot needs to be done to attract foreign participation to improve governance and create a smooth level playing field for domestic and foreign investors. There exists perception that it shall tilt heavily in China favour at the expense of Pakistan. This aspect can become more acute if Pakistan does not perform its act adroitly. Problems arising from corruption have to be checked if there is to be future of CPEC. There have been reports of lack of transparency and accountability that need to be addressed by Pakistan

Saeed Ismat said: you have heard of the grand opportunities and extraordinary potential of CPEC but you are also aware that such a large-scale and unprecedented initiative comes with tremendous risks *and the countries they pass through can fall victim to upheavals and instability*. CPEC being flagship of BRI is no exception to these risks and challenges.

While CPEC has support of sixty eight (68) nations it could be expected that some would oppose it. *United States and India perceive their interests run counter to the concept to BRI and CPEC.*

United States is concerned that China's planned Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has the potential to further shift the global strategic balance in Beijing's favour particularly in Asia. The US official document '*National Defence Strategy of the United States of America 2018*' is clear in defining its future goals 1) "*Inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security.*" Down the lines it reads 2) "*China is a strategic competitor using predatory economics to intimidate its neighbors while militarizing features in the South China Sea*".

India has become one of the most important partners of the US to counter Chinese influence in the region. In the US 'Pivot to Asia Strategy', India is an important strategic partner and has a key role to play in the region of Indo-Pacific. India's objection to CPEC based on its passing through the disputed territory of Jammu-Kashmir is rather flimsy but it may find acceptability in some quarters. However, its effort to block BRI investments in *other* South Asia nations may not be easy to justify.

Ismat pointed out that the whole of South Asia is rapidly undergoing changes under China's influence. Chinese infrastructure and loan diplomacy have impacted the whole of South Asia. Over the last three years, India has worked to secure a major diplomatic engagement and even resorted to "political manipulation" to secure its relations with its immediate neighbourhood that

includes Sri Lanka, Nepal and Maldives. However, there is little tangible evidence of any significant outcome of these initiatives.

The emerging scenario involving two global powers, US and China, vying for greater access to energy markets; and two regional nuclear rivals India and Pakistan becoming partners of two opposite camps for their own economic and strategic considerations, *portray a new great game in making*.

Strategist, scholars and pundits in India have written and the media has been campaigning for “surgical strike” in Pakistani territory and there have been talks of an unthinkable “limited intervention” aimed at cutting CPEC in half through Gilgit-Baltistan (both of these options are fraught with frightening consequences). Would the ruling government growing overconfident with new found US support be tempted to undertake such a venture??

The Pakistani strategists do not take this conventional military threat so seriously but in fact are more apprehensive *of regional and extra regional actors* resorting to operating through proxies in order to achieve the objective of sabotaging this project by Hybrid Warfare.

For those global strategist who supports peace and development through CPEC and resultant convergence of civilizations fear that such external interference could seriously jeopardise the endeavour.

Realistic appraisals indicate that India does not possess economic or geopolitical leverage to counter BRI or CPEC. But India can determine the course of CPEC by getting engaged with it. It should consider giving priority to its economic development and poverty alleviation rather than its obsession to geopolitically dominating the region. It has seen for itself that its initiatives have not succeeded in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Maldives who are gradually drifting away.

Saeed Ismat concluding remarks found reverberation with almost all participants when he remarked: Geo-economic imperatives favour India supporting BRI and joining CPEC that could propel India to become a dominant economic power and also pave the way for *peace and prosperity* for the whole of South Asia while retaining its dominant status as a regional power. It shall also be in complete sync with charter of SAARC (South Asian Association of Regional Countries). In particular it could lead to promoting peace and friendship among the traditional rivals of India and Pakistan. And

when this is extended to Afghanistan it could eventually lead to ‘*South Asian Common Market.*’

Pakistan has to avoid strategic reliance on any single major world power. It must maintain the balance between an old ally the US, its deep friendship with China and the newly developing relations with Russia. More importantly its foreign policy has to be more neutral, pragmatic and committed to developing a balance in its relationships with major powers: only then it can creatively contribute to convergence of civilizations and consequent multipolar stability. Down turn in US-Pakistan relations need to be checked to create geopolitical balance in South Asia.

Finally -Absent any external interference, CPEC is likely to develop as expected. However we should not undermine the significance of USA and India policy as related to CPEC. Will it be that of accommodation or would it adopt aggressive approach? Indeed interventionist policies could lead to tension and escalate the prospects for conflict. Both India and the US are responsible democratic nations and would avoid doing anything that could lead to a wider conflict. ***The world is awaiting ‘Convergence of Civilisations’ and does not wish to end up with ‘Clash of Civilizations’***

The UN Report on Kashmir: Reassuring Development

Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai

The United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights (UNHCHR) has issued its “Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir.” The report contains graphic documentation of human rights violations being committed by the Indian military and paramilitary forces in Indian Occupied Kashmir. This is a significant step towards greater international recognition of the serious abuses committed against Kashmiris at the hands of Indian army. This report takes the veil of secrecy off of India’s crimes against humanity. Perhaps now the global community can share the outrage felt by the people of Kashmir.

The 49-pages report cites specific incidents where the Indian Government violated the very principles of human decency and democratic freedom against the people of Kashmir. The reports states that, “In responding to demonstrations that started in July 2016, Indian security forces used excessive force that led to unlawful killings and a very high number of injuries. ... One of the most dangerous weapons used against protesters during the unrest in 2016 was the pellet-firing shotgun.”

The report details many instances where the use of draconian laws has given sense of total impunity to the Indian army in Kashmir. It states “The government of India has passed legislation under the Jammu and Kashmir Disturbed Areas Act of 1990 which gives extraordinary power to all ranks of the Indian military and paramilitary forces.” These laws, the report emphasizes, “have created structures that obstruct the normal course of law, impede accountability and jeopardize the right to remedy for victims of human rights violations.”

The report underscored that “Impunity for human rights violations and lack of access to justice are key human rights challenges in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.” And that “Impunity for enforced or involuntary disappearances in Kashmir continues as there has been little movement towards credibly investigating complaints including into alleged sites of mass graves in the Kashmir Valley and Jammu region.”

Many international NGO’s have suggested that Kashmir was the largest army concentration anywhere in the world. The report noted that “Civil society and media often cite the figure of 500,000 to 700,000 troops which would make Kashmir one of the most militarized zones in the world.”

As we know that during the latest phase of uprising, virtually the whole population of Kashmir turned on the streets to demand the right of self-determination to be given to the people of the territory. The report underlines this fact by stating; “While Indian-Administered Kashmir has experienced waves of protests in the past—in the late 1980s to early 1990s, 2008 and 2010—this current round of protests appears to involve more people than the past, and the profile of protesters has also shifted to include more young, middle-class Kashmiris, including females who do not appear to have been participating in the past.”

It is a fact that bilateral talks between India and Pakistan have failed because they sought to by-pass the leadership of the people of Kashmir, which is the primary party to the dispute. This fact has been recognized in the report which clearly says, “There remains an urgent need to address past and ongoing human rights violations and to deliver justice for all people in Kashmir who have been suffering seven decades of conflict. Any resolution to the political situation in Kashmir should entail a commitment to ending the cycles of violence and accountability for past and current human rights violations and abuses committed by all parties and redress for victims. Such a resolution can only be brought about by meaningful dialogue that includes the people of Kashmir.”

The Indian human rights organizations and NGO’s including ‘The People’s Union of Civil Liberties’, and others sent out teams to Kashmir to study specific allegations of human rights abuses including torture and publish reports on their findings, which are often highly critical of government authorities. The United Nations report validates these finding by suggesting that [As a State party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which prohibits torture under any circumstances (Article 7), India is obliged to ensure that no person is “subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”. There have long been persistent claims of torture by security forces in Kashmir.]

Here are few more examples of torture cited in the report about torture.

“On 18 August 2016, a 30-year-old college lecturer, Shabir Ahmad Mangoo, died after being severely beaten in the custody of the Indian Army.”

“Another case of torture involving the Indian Army is that of manual labourer Nasrullah Khan who was allegedly detained and tortured at the Indian Army’s 27 Rashtriya Rifles camp on 31 August 2017.”

Medical services and ambulances are clearly being targeted for no other reason than that they are carrying young men who show evidence of having already been in the line of fire somewhere and therefore again become victimized. There is clear intent to physically disable these young men and civilian population. The report warns that “Doctors in Srinagar accused the security forces of firing tear gas near hospitals and, in some cases, inside the hospital, which affected their ability to work and further affected the health of the patients.”

Meanwhile to get the attention of international community remains a challenge. The world powers have taken a hands-off stance in having asked India for permission to send in a team to investigate. On the other hand, India does not allow the Kashmiri human rights activist to visit the international forums to raise the subject of human rights. Here are few examples cited in the report.

“Human rights defenders who have tried to bring international attention to the human rights situation in Jammu and Kashmir have faced reprisals while access has been obstructed for some journalists.”

“... prominent human rights defender Khurram Parvez was arrested and detained under PSA on 15 September 2016, a day after being prevented from travelling to the Human Rights Council in Geneva.”

Human rights lawyer Kartik Murukutla, who works with Khurram Parvez at JKCCS, was detained at the New Delhi airport immigration desk on 24 September 2016 on his return from Geneva after attending the same Council session.”

“French journalist and documentary film-maker Paul Comiti was arrested on 9 December 2017 in Srinagar for allegedly violating Indian visa conditions.”

It is well documented that the bloody occupation has resulted in massive human rights violations, particularly targeting women and children. The sanctity of women has been violated, in a gruesome and unforgiving fashion. The UN report upholds that [In the 2013 report on her mission to India, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, said, “[W]omen living in militarized regions, such as Jammu and Kashmir and the north-eastern states, live in a constant state of siege and surveillance, whether in their homes or in public. Information received through both written and oral testimonies highlighted the use of mass rape, allegedly by members of the State security forces, as well as acts of enforced disappearance, killings and

acts of torture and ill-treatment, which were used to intimidate and to counteract political opposition and insurgency.”]

The United Nations report makes the following recommendation to the UN Human Rights Council to, “Consider the findings of this report, including the possible establishment of a commission of inquiry to conduct a comprehensive independent international investigation into allegations of human rights violations in Kashmir.”

The report also makes 17 recommendations to the Government of India so as to bring these atrocities to an end, including:

-- “Urgently repeal the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990.”

-- “Establish independent, impartial and credible investigations to probe all civilian killings which have occurred since July 2016.”

-- “In line with its standing invitation to the Special Procedures, accept the invitation requests of the almost 20 mandates that have made such requests; in particular, accept the request of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances and facilitate its visit to India, including to Jammu and Kashmir.”

-- “Fully respect the right of self-determination of the people of Kashmir as protected under international law.”

It is our hope that the United Nations report will mobilize the policy makers of the member states of the UN Human Rights Council to do everything in their constitutional power to stop the killings in Kashmir. It is further our hope that the policy makers of these member countries will look to solving the root cause of the problem – the unfulfilled promise of self-determination as guaranteed by successive United Nations Security Council resolutions.

We believe that history is not predestined, and it is up to us to make peace its destiny in Kashmir through all of our energies, goodwill, wisdom, and compassion for the tragic afflictions of that once glorious land.

Dr. Fai is the Secretary General of World Kashmir Awareness Forum. He is an American citizen of Kashmiri origin and can be reached at: 1-202-607-6435 or gnfai2003@yahoo.com

Asian Water Crises in the Shadow of Nuclear War

Tayyab Baloch

The Indian government's declaration to scrap the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) of 1960 unilaterally shocked Pakistan as it failed to build dams on rivers at the lower riparian. This unexpected Indian action came after the Uri attack on Indian soldiers in Kashmir. In fact, Modi's government in New Delhi is taking every step to isolate and terrorize Pakistan in response to Islamabad's recent diplomatic effort to highlight the Kashmir issue. India has also become furious on the construction of thousands of dams by China in the Tibet Plateau on the upstream of the Indo-Gangetic Plain. India publicly considers Chinese dams on the upstream end as a water weapon against it. Therefore, India's current water diplomacy hints that India is trying to unite "downstream" Asian nations to force Beijing to sign a trans-border water sharing treaty to counter its massive damming policies. India's act of revoking the IWT is part of this effort for diplomatic pressure on Beijing to be accelerated for a new water treaty in the region.

Water as a double-edged weapon

Water control in an upstream area could be used as a double-edged weapon against downstream countries. The current geopolitical scenario in South Asia can easily describe how upstream countries are using this in human practice against downstream countries. As China is building dams on freshwater resources in Tibet, the same India is working on hundreds of hydropower projects and dams in Kashmir on Pakistani rivers. Unfortunately, India has the first control of all 6 Indus water rivers of Pakistan which provided strategic advantages to India against Pakistan just as Chinese control over Tibet plateau waters provided strategic advantages to Beijing against other Asian nations.

Historically, for the first time after the birth of Pakistan, India used the water weapon by stopping the supply of water from every canal flowing from India to Pakistan on April 1st, 1948. After the continuous protest of Pakistan, India agreed on an interim agreement with Pakistan on May 4th, 1948, but a permanent solution came in September 1960 when both countries signed the agreement known as the Indus Water Treaty. According to this treaty, Pakistan gained exclusive rights to three western rivers, namely the Indus, Jhelum and

Chenab, while India retained rights to the eastern rivers, namely the Ravi, Beas and Sutlej.

Unfortunately, India has not only built mega dams on Pakistani rivers such as the Indus, Chenab and Jhelum, but is also working to divert Pakistani rivers to India through massive tunnels.

The Impact of Indian dams in Jammu & Kashmir on Pakistan

The first time that India publicly threatened to revoke IWT, it was India that practically breached the treaty through building disputed dams in occupied Kashmir on Pakistani rivers. In fact, India is working on a strategy to render Pakistan's link-canal system redundant, destroy Pakistan's agriculture, which is the country's backbone, and turn Pakistan into a desert. India has no special rights to the Chenab River, but it has built 14 hydroelectric plants and is building more power projects which will enable it to block the entire water flow of Chenab for up to 20-25 days. This damming policy on the western river Chenab is an open violation of the treaty and provided strategic advantages to India against Pakistan, as these dams have provided India with the opportunity to use water as a weapon of mass destruction through releasing huge quantities of water downstream not only causing damage to standing crops, but also breaking canal systems. The Chenab River provides water to 21 canals and irrigates about 7 million acres of agricultural land in the Punjab province of Pakistan.

Although the treaty restricted India from building gates for flushing silt out its dams, it has built gates on the Chenab and Jhelum River. These gates on dams increase Indian manipulation of the river's flow, of which the Baglihar Dam on Chenab is an example. When India chose to fill Baglihar, it did such exactly at a time when the filling caused maximum damage to Pakistani farmers. According to a report, "Storage of water in Baglihar Dam reduced the flow of water in Chenab River during the sowing period of August to October and badly affected the agriculture sector of Pakistan. Pakistan lost thousands of cusecs of water; farmers could not irrigate their fields due to a shortage of water and resultantly more than 3.5 million agriculture tracts were left barren. The standing cotton, paddy crops of basmati rice of Kharif season in Punjab which were ripe was badly affected because of the absence of water."

Meanwhile, the Indian "Chutak" dam on the River Suru, (a major tributary of the Indus River in Indian-held Kashmir) has also become a direct threat to the Pakistani side of the Silk Road (Karakoram Highway also known as KKH). In

the case of a dam collapse or deliberate release of a large quantity of water, the KKH between Basham and Jaglot would be washed out, which is also dangerous for the Pakistani-proposed Bhasha dam. This could also submerge the city of Skardu (a northern city of Pakistan) and its airport.

Beside the Chenab and Jhelum rivers, India is also working on dams on the Indus River which can be described as a direct threat to Pakistan's agriculture, because it is one of the longest rivers of the world which flows from Tibet Plateau and runs 400 km through China and about 300 km in Indian Ladakh and then enters into Pakistan with a total length of 3200 km. All rivers which flow in Pakistan meet with this mighty Indus River reaching its mouth in Arabian Sea.

A recent study entitled 'Mountains of Concrete: Dam Building in the Himalayas' warns that Pakistan is on the brink of a water disaster. There is the possibility that its water could plunge to 800 cubic meters per capita annually by 2020 from the current 1,200 cubic meters. Just 60 years ago, 5,000 cubic meters of water was available to every Pakistani citizen.

A matter of survival for Pakistan

Unlike India, Pakistan is highly dependent on agriculture and the Indus River's unique irrigation system. Pakistan is 80% dependent on this irrigation. There is no doubt that agriculture is the mainstay of Pakistan's economy, as it accounts for 21% of GDP and, together with agro-based products, fetches 80% of the country's total export earnings. More than 48% of the labour force is engaged in this sector. Therefore, being an agrarian country, Pakistan's water issues with India are just as important as the UN's resolutions on the Kashmir issue. In fact, these two are interlinked, as Kashmir is a lifeline for Pakistan. Hence why three wars between India and Pakistan have been fought over control of Kashmir and its water reservoirs.

Pakistan has raised its voice against Indian damming policy on Indian occupied Kashmir on Pakistan's water. India has already constructed 50-60 medium-sized projects and it plans more than a hundred. This Indian policy shows that India wants to block every drop of Pakistan's water.

Pakistan's water issues with India are about just as important as the resolution of the Kashmir problem. In fact, the two are interlinked. Therefore, the resolution of the water issue should be part and parcel of any process of normalization between India and Pakistan. The Dul Hasti Hydroelectric

Project, Salal Hydroelectric Project, Uri Hydroelectric Project - I & II, Kishanganga Hydropower project, Baglihar, Bursar, Kirthai, Sawalkot, Nimoo Bazgo, Dumkhar & Chutak dams and Wullar barrage are disputed dams and projects between Pakistan and India and they are all built on the western rivers to which Pakistan has exclusive rights.

After India's threat to revoke the water treaty, Pakistan should have also looked beyond IWT, because India has already violated it through building disputed dams on Pakistan's water. The World Bank arbitration process should be reactivated to immediately stop the construction of disputed dams on the Indus, Chenab and Jhelum rivers.

Thirsty Dragon: Chinese damming policy in Tibet and water scarcity in Asia

Like China, South Asian and East Asian countries are also facing water scarcity and all are dependent on Chinese control of the Tibet Plateau for freshwater. Tibet is the source of ten major Asian rivers upon which 25 percent of the world population depends. Therefore, it is known as Asia's lifeline. But unfortunately, China's massive damming policy in Tibet has become an open threat for severe water shortages in South Asia and Southeast Asia. Currently, China has 87000 dams and most of them are constructed in Tibet. What's more, it has plans to build more dams and hydropower projects in the future to fulfil the needs of the country's water-scare areas. Chinese dam building and water division plans along the Yarlung Zangbo, also known as the Brahmaputra in India, are a source of tension between China, India and Bangladesh.

Despite the dams on South Asian Rivers, China is also working to build 21 more dams in addition to the 7 dams it has already built on the upper stream of the Mekong River (known as the Lancang in China) which is the main source of water for Southeast Asian nations. The Mekong crosses through Qinghai, Tibet, and Yunnan before flowing into Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Four riparian (downstream) countries, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand, had constituted the intergovernmental Mekong River Commission (MRC) to avoid conflict between Mekong basin countries through the promotion of sustainable management and water development for mutual benefit, while China has an observer status in MRC. China and the MRC directly dispute the construction of dams on the upper stream, but China has rejected all downstream concerns. However, due to diplomatic pressure by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), China did agree to the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism (LMCM) last year in November.

International laws and conventions provide the first rights to water use to downstream countries on trans-border rivers, but unfortunately, China is the only country which does not adhere to this. Its damming policy has hinted that China is working only to fulfil its own national interests in facing severe water shortage challenges. One quarter of Chinese territory consists of deserts while, as a whole, it is an extremely arid country with the world's largest population. But on other side, all Tibetan rivers which flow into South Asia and Southeast Asia have the most populated basins with mouths running into the South China Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and Arabian Sea.

Geopolitical consequences: Water to replace oil and gas

A Russian professor at Tomsk Polytechnic University and chief researcher of the Institute of Petroleum Geology and Geophysics, Stepan Svartsev, told TASS that water is a resource equal in value to oil, gas, and gold, and, sooner or later, we will start to sell it. We already sell it in stores and more and more people buy it. Water is becoming a commodity, and with time it will become more valuable than oil. We should be ready for this.

It is also predicted that future wars will be fought over water and, unfortunately, all border disputes between the Asian nuclear triangular (China, India and Pakistan) are based on water control reservoirs. Now, as the world is tilting towards total war, the tension in South Asia has increased as Pakistan threatens India with nuclear war for blocking/diverting rivers which are directly linked with Kashmir. Moreover, Pakistan is already being subjected to Indian Hybrid War because it has given land access to China to reach the Arabian Sea, which is the mouth of Indus River.

Indian efforts to counter China can easily be observed, as in its successful attempt to split up SAARC and bring the new cold war to South Asia. In fact, India is teaming up with South Asian and Southeast Asian countries against China by fuelling water disputes. Hence why in South Asia, Bangladesh, who is totally dependent on Indian rivers, and Bhutan, who also has disputes with China, are supporting Indian diplomacy in isolating Pakistan, a move regionally aimed to counter China. Meanwhile, Pakistan, which is also fighting in the "Chinese war" in South Asia, has become the victim of the Indian water war against China.

Chinese control over the roof of the world has given a unique, strategic position to Beijing to secure its water supply and future needs unilaterally. But in Pakistan's case, the Indian threat to scrap the IWT unilaterally hints that India

is going to adopt some of China's water policies against Pakistan, as both have signed bilateral water sharing agreements for trans-border rivers. Unfortunately, Pakistan is living in a fool's paradise if it really thinks India cannot annul and render the treaty void. In fact India has not only violated the treaty, but now it has continued to pursue its dream of making Pakistan docile in order to realize Indian ambitions.

Suggestions: Peaceful development with a give-and-take policy for a “win-win” scenario

It is high time that China revisit its policy on Tibetan freshwater rivers upon which the populated Asian countries are dependent for their basic necessities and livelihoods. China still has not signed any multilateral treaties regarding shared trans-boundaries rivers, nor did it sign the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention that set the legal framework for rules and co-operation between more than 100 nations and their relevant international watercourses.

On the one hand, China is working towards peaceful development and has created a “win-win” scenario for the revival of the ancient Silk Road through its proposed “Belt Road” initiative. But, on other side, it is going to block freshwater rivers which were part of ancient Silk Road. In other words, all Tibetan rivers are the branches of China's Silk Road. Strategic control over Asian waters has also provided China with access to reach its maritime routes in the South China Sea, and Indian and Arabian oceans, which are the mouths of Tibetan rivers.

Being the big brother of Asia, China should adopt a give-and-take policy and even help its friendly neighbour Pakistan through formulating multilateral or bilateral trans-border water co-operation rules and regulations, because Pakistan has become the victim of the same damming policy which the Chinese have launched in Tibet. A give-and-take policy could also help China clear its maritime routes involving the Bay of Bengal and South China Sea.

In fact, the ball is in the Chinese court as it has appeared on the world stage as a leader of the multipolar world. But now, it is time to give up its selfish policy for the betterment of the multipolar nations of ASEAN and SAARC. If China can sign a shared water trans-border treaty with Russia for the Siberian Mighty Amur River's water, then why can it not sign such treaty with Asian nations?

It is true that every country in world must secure its own interests. But the massive damming policies of such Asian giants as China and India testify to the

fact that, sometimes, these individual interests must be sacrificed for the sake of mutual benefit and positive regional development. If China is interested in saving Asia from nuclear war, it must come to the table to solve water disputes in Asia. China has also become Pakistan's last hope to save it from

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Bangladesh General Elections and India: From Blatant Engineering to Colonial Control?

Professor M Adil Khan

Until 2008, Bangladesh elections did not attract much attention in India and at the same, within Bangladesh, India never figured as an important factor in any of its election discussions, neither. This changed since 2008. Although seeds of the change were sown more immediately in the aftermath of the end of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) rule in 2006, its origin goes back to the evolving character of politics of Bangladesh, especially since 1975.

In 1975, numerous coups and counter coups contributed to Ziaur Rahman, the military commander and a liberation war hero assuming power who also formed within couple of years his own political party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, BNP.

Zia re-oriented Bangladesh both ideologically that promoted the notion of a Bangladeshi national identity based on its majority faith, Islam. He also redefined Bangladesh's geopolitical arrangements leaning more towards the Islamic block. Until August 1975 Bangladesh's foreign policy was dictated by a '25-year India/Bangladesh friendship treaty' that gave India disproportionate control over Bangladesh's foreign and defence policies. Zia scrapped the treaty. India was unhappy but not hostile.

India's ire with BNP started and intensified after Zia's death, more pronouncedly since 1990 when after staying few years in the political wilderness, the party returned to power through a first ever free and fair election in the country. During its first tenure, BNP focused more on development issues and less on foreign relations. But it was during its second term, 2001-2006, that India became particularly unhappy with BNP as the party leaned more and more towards the Islamic block especially Pakistan. India was also annoyed as it blamed BNP for alleged collaboration with Pakistan's notorious ISI, its military intelligence in supporting cross—border insurgencies in its North East.

The discord between BNP and India was mutual – while, India regarded BNP as a security threat, BNP viewed India as an impediment to Bangladesh's progress.

In end 2006, BNP's second term ended amidst allegations of massive corruption, harbouring of cross—border terrorism against India and promotion of Islamic sectarian politics in Bangladesh. Furthermore, against the backdrop of growing mutual dislike between itself as the prospect of an election loomed, India for the first time became openly active in Bangladesh's internal politics, with the aim to replace BNP with the party of their choice, the Awami League (AL), in the seat of government.

2008 Election and India: the beginning of engineering

An army backed Care-Taker Government (CTG) took over power in 2007 and under its supervision, an election was held in 2008 and as was predicted and given BNP's poor record in governing it lost the election and AL won. Up to this was fine. Given BNP's poor record in governance no one doubted that AL win but what surprised most observers was the magnitude of the victory – AL won with two-third majority and this is where India's engineering of Bangladesh's election first began and became evident.

Indeed it is surmised that one individual that played a key role in catalysing India's engineering of Bangladesh election outcomes was none other than the then Foreign Minister, Mr. Pranob

Mukherjee whom Sheikh Hasina, the leader of AL addresses as 'Dada' (brother). India's backing of AL did produce its desired result but as could be expected, not without a price.

Indeed, reporting on India's role in AL's victory and AL's subsequent gratuitous reciprocation to India, the Economist, recorded how 'bag full of Indian cash and advice' produced dramatic results for the AL and that how ever since this victory, "..... relations with India have blossomed.....Bangladesh has cracked down on extremists with ties to Pakistan or India's home-grown terrorist group, the Indian Mujahedeen, as well as on vociferous Islamist (and anti-Indian) politicians in the country. India feels that bit safer."AL's 2008 victory also resulted in granting of numerous other favours without a quid pro quo, most notably the promised Teesta water never flowed to irrigate and navigate Bangladesh Rivers. AL's gratitude and subservience to India also had a sad side to it. At this time when India's Border Security Forces were indiscriminately killing border-crossing Bangladeshis – indeed illegally – AL government looked the other way and never complained.

Other changes of ominous nature that have since changed Bangladesh's political processes for ever followed soon, presumably with India's nod. After ascending to power in 2008 AL took steps to ensure its permanency in the government. In order to do so, it took full advantage of its two-third majority in

the Parliament—reportedly, an outcome of India’s election engineering – and scrapped the non-party election-time Care-Taker Government (CTG) system, a system that while in opposition AL itself once demanded and got installed and a system that has since conducted four elections – including the one that brought AL to power in 2008 – with such integrity and neutrality that it became a world model. However, killed by its midwife and by putting the government controlled Election Commission (EC) in charge of polls, AL has virtually banished all possibilities of fair contest in the country and instead introduced a government controlled poll supervision arrangement that virtually guarantees its permanency in government, an arrangement that obviously suited India.

2014 Election and India: blatant engineering

However despite these opportunistic changes and because of its poor record in human rights, corruption, rule of law and also due to deteriorating law and order etc. AL’s popularity plummeted by the end of its tenure in 2013 and as another election neared; AL sensed trouble especially because its adversary, the BNP which it subjected to untold repression and suppression during the last 4 years of its rule re-surfed as a formidable force.

Encouraged by its renewed strength BNP started to prepare to participate in the upcoming 2014 election, but fearing engineering from within and outside, it was reluctant to do so through the government controlled EC system. They demanded re-introduction of the non-party CTG system, as poll supervisor. However, given its dwindling popularity, this was too much of a risk for AL to take and thus it refused to revert to CTG system. BNP remained adamant and decided to boycott the election. This shook AL and also its patron India. India immediately got into the act to the rescue its client. By ignoring all diplomatic norms India got itself engaged in Bangladesh’s election process quite openly and its top bureaucrats became regular visitors to Dhaka, lobbying and pressurizing brazenly various opposition parties including BNP to participate in the election under the EC system.

Indians also started to lobby the international community in a partisan manner arguing that AL was West’s best bet in their fight against ‘Islamic terrorism’ and thus an AL ‘win’ in the ensuing election is a must and not be compromised. However, as BNP’s – the only credible opposition party in Bangladesh – boycott of election became more and more evident, India’s biggest challenge was to find an ‘opposition’ to give the election result – which no one had any doubt what that would be – some legitimacy.

India’s scheming bureaucrats got into action with incredible zeal to manufacture an ‘opposition and found in the Jatiyo Party (JP) – party of the much despised and deposed military ruler, Ershad -a willing partner. JP agreed

to ‘participate’ in the ‘election’ in exchange of basket-full of favours in a post-election AL government.

Thus JP ‘participated’ and AL ‘won’ and JP got its promised gifts. JP is now both an opposition in the Parliament and also a partner in the government, it holds several cabinet posts and the party chief, Ershad who once earned the unenviable title of *BiswaBehaya*(the most shameless person on earth)became a special envoy of the Prime Minister.

This is how India, World’s largest democracy created history by engineering one of world’s worst. Commenting on the farcical nature of the 2014 Bangladesh General Election the Hindu, a leading newspaper in India observed at the time that “By every account, the January 5 election [of 2014], Bangladesh’s 10th so far, was a low point for democracy. The boycott of the 18-member Opposition alliance meant half the seats Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s Awami League won were uncontested, and about half of the remainder were against unknown candidates with estimates of the turnout just 22-30% of the voting population.”Furthermore, even though West would always prefer a government in Bangladesh, a Muslim majority country that takes a strong stand against ‘Islamic terrorism’ and AL promised to do so, they found the engineering a bit too much to stomach. Thus they refused to endorse the ‘election’ which the US slammed by saying that it was “disappointed” and UK, Australia and the EU actually called for “another poll at the earliest.”

“Another poll” never happened. AL continued to rule, without any legal and moral legitimacy and with impunity. It unleashed unimaginable brutal and dubious legal means – which is continuing till to date – to suppress and marginalise the opposition, allegedly, with India’s help. Indeed, according to Shafquat Rabe, a social media activist that in post 2014 periods India’s control over Bangladesh complete and all-encompassing that “Many in Bangladesh now believe.....that India is behind the day-to-day security protection of certain Bangladeshi leaders. India is carrying out stealth operations inside Bangladesh wearing Bangladeshi forces’ dresses. India has trained and sent special operations teams in Bangladesh.”

India rejects these claims as “outrageous and unfounded” but with another general election in Bangladesh looming at the end of 2018, its domineering role in Bangladesh’s internal politics has not only re-surfaced but it is re-appearing with a worrying difference giving much credence to this theory.

Upcoming 2018 Election and India: from blatant engineering to colonial domination

With general election in Bangladesh lurching and with ruling AL's popularity plummeting again and in the absence of its old ally, the Congress in the government in India, AL including Sheikh Hasina, the PM of Bangladesh herself are vigorously lobbying the BJP government for its patronage (read this as engineering) in the election. Indeed, reporting on a recent meeting between Hasina and Modi, the Indian PM in Kolkata in May this year, the Ananda Bazar revealed that the Bangladesh prime minister made a fervent appeal to her Indian counterpart for support, while reminding him of the favours her government had extended to his country especially in tackling militant insurgencies in India's Northeast and suppressing Islamists and also of the support the party provided to India "...in all its international endeavours since her party came to power in January 2009". Quoting unspecified sources, the Ananda Bazar also reported that Sheikh Hasina further reminded Modi that if AL failed to 'win' the upcoming election, "India would have another Pakistan on its eastern front" alluding to the BNP, its rival as a 'pro-Pakistan' party and thus arguing that if BNP comes to power it would risk India's security, with Pakistan's help all over again.

However, what is quite revealing in the current dynamics and something that had never happened in the political landscape of Bangladesh before is that the opposition BNP, often regarded as 'anti-Indian' and a staunchly nationalist political party have also become cahoots in the cabal. In June the BNP had sent a high-powered delegation to Delhi and met BJP heavies and while promising to assist India in its security concerns and stressing that if elected the party would never allow and/or support any cross-border insurgency activities on Bangladesh's soil, argued that it is in India's interest that they be seen as a "champion of democracy and human rights" in the coming election and not be partisan and support Sheikh Hasina who according to BNP is building a "one-party rule" in Bangladesh. BNP delegation appealed to the Modi government to support a free and fair election and play "a constructive role, and not back any one party in the elections." Following the trail of AL and BNP, other political leaders including Ershad have also joined the cavalcade to Delhi.

As could be predicted, parleys with India by the two rival major Bangladeshi parties for the election-time patronage have degenerated into usual AL/BNP spat. The pro-AL local media have greeted BNP's - a party that until recently projected itself as a staunch nationalist party and AL as India's stooge - lobbyist with India with sarcasm though BNP claims that there is an important difference between them and AL - AL wants Modi to arrange its win, BNP appealed to India to ensure a free and fair election.

Regardless, the ominous dimension of the pilgrimage of Bangladeshi politicians to India on the eve of another general election in Bangladesh drives one hard and unpalatable truth which is that it is not the people of Bangladesh but India that decides who they be governed by – this is nothing but a clear manifestation of colonial structuration of relations that currently existing between the two countries.

On Delhi's defence this can indeed be claimed that so far they have remained non-committal and have indicated that they may not take any particular side. Some in Indian media have counselled Modi government it must not to put 'all eggs in the same basket'. But putting different 'eggs' in different baskets hardly changes the fundamental and this is because in a colonial arrangement that currently characterizes Delhi/Dhaka relationship 'eggs' may be different but the 'basket' would still be Delhi's – they would be calling the shots, not Bangladeshis.

Indeed, in this evolving self-inflicted self-colonizing political scenario, the people of Bangladesh have lost their freedom. Thanks to self-seeking politics, their leaders have turned them into a flock of sheep to be herded by India. This is both sad and also dangerous.

Capture of Bangladeshi institutions, engineering election outcomes and installation of puppet governments in Bangladesh by India to fill its hegemonic aspirations may help the latter in the interim but a whole nation disrespected and cornered over a long period of time is unlikely to be in its best interest. A time came when 'East Pakistanis', the Bengalis of Pakistan's eastern wing – 90% of whom are Muslims – rose against their Muslim cousins, kicked them out and separated from them in bloodied conditions.

Indeed, prolonged suppression of popular wills has its risks, so would 'Dadagiri', eventually!

In order to chart a more mutually respectful and thus a more enduring relationship between the two countries what is required is that both countries understand and appreciate each other's needs and fears in equal measure. Bangladesh has to realize that India is an important and a powerful neighbour and therefore, it is not in its best interest to do things that threaten its neighbours interests especially its security interests and at the same time, as Kofi Anan once said, "No nation can make itself secure by seeking supremacy over all others" *India also has to appreciate that colonial domination and by installing puppet and unpopular governments in its neighbourhood may give it temporary but not enduring reprieve. If history is any guide, such an approach may do just the opposite. While India has to ensure that it does not have*

another Pakistan next door, it also has to make sure that its actions do not produce another Kashmir in its backyard.

Therefore, as fast growing economies both India and Bangladesh must look at opportunities that benefit them mutually and also equitably and promote activities that strengthen each other's security as well as sovereignty.

The Bangladesh 2018 election offers a good opportunity to both India and Bangladesh to end an arrangement that is unhealthy and mutually predatory and make a new beginning, working together towards lasting peace, security and prosperity of their people.

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The Geopolitics of Hindutva

Gunnar Bjornson

The word Hindutva is widely discussed across the world since Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in India in 2014. The term is used to describe the special Indian religion-based political philosophy that emerged in the beginning of the 20th century. The Indian National Congress, which had ruled India through the half of the century, opposed such religion based nationalism. Hindutva is founded on religion, the defence of traditional values and culture, and rejection of western liberalism. It has both ideological and geopolitical dimensions that are closely interconnected. The first in is the defence of Indian uniqueness, culture and traditional religions that are believed to be the basis of identity. Western and Muslim influences are claimed to be dangerous for Indians. Support for social justice is coincided with the support for traditional Hindu values and social structures, including a reformed caste system.

Today, with the BJP's coming to power and Hindutva becoming the most significant Indian conservative trend, it is important to explore the problem of its geopolitics. The question is whether Hindutva has an imminent geopolitical strategy, and if not, what it may be.

Despite the great importance of the issue, the geopolitical dimension of the Hindutva worldview has not been examined very well. Western scholars mostly concentrate on the critics of what they see as a political manifestation of Hindu religious fundamentalism. Their works lacks objectivity and is full of typical western prejudices towards other civilizations. Indian authors do not like to explore this theme. Some Hindus try to fill that lacuna but they cling to extravagant, but not elaborated ideas [1].

India as a sacred land: problems and prospects

The concept of Hindutva has always had geographical dimensions. According to Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, an Indian philosopher, who coined the very term Hindutva, the great advantage of India is that most of its inhabitants consider the land of India to be their Fatherland as well as their Holy land [2]. For this reason, Indian Muslims and Christians in this conception are put aside from other Indians, because their Holy lands are in other parts of the world. This brings us to the problem of Indian sacred geography, as well as attitudes

towards religious minorities. Perception of the space of the country as something holy, a holy land on the one hand to strengthen patriotism, on the other hand opposing the adherents of dharma religions' (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism) representatives of other religious traditions.

In this concept of Indian Space, Christians and Muslims are always in the position of second-class citizens, despite the fact that the prospect of understanding India as their holy land exists too. This is primarily due to the mystical Sufi tradition in Islam, which is filled with a widespread cult of local saints. Accordingly, the maintenance of the cult of sheikhs and ascetics who lived and died in India among Indian Muslims underlines the sacred status of the associated places in India. Such a promotion is in the interests of the Indian state and Hindu conservatives. Moreover such a policy fits into the original concept of Indian Sacred Space as it allows Muslims to understand India as a sacred land.

The same can be said about the Christians. Specifically, Indian religious groups are the "Christians of St. Thomas", descendants of the first Indian Christians - a group that has been around for almost two thousand years in India. The perception of their own land as sacred and associated with the names of Indian saints, the Apostle Thomas, who according to legend suffered martyrdom in India, is a unique feature of the Indian ancient Eastern churches. Another branch of Christianity characterized by emphasized national orientation is Orthodoxy. The example of the Japanese Orthodox Church shows the theoretical possibility of the formation of the Orthodox Christian discourse, which would completely resonate with the culture of the non-Western people; it would have been completely loyal to the state and civilization. Unfortunately, there is currently no understanding among the supporters of Hindutva of the need to support such particularize Christianity, as opposed to the expansion of universalistic Catholicism and Protestantism with a focus on Rome and the United States in India.

The situation is similar with traditional Indian Sufi Islam. The Muslim community of India is experiencing a serious impact on external centres in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, offering a globalized version of Islam refined by specific Indian cultural characteristics. At the same time, the extension of concepts of Indian Islam and Indian Christianity, as opposed to how secularism erodes traditional civilizational identity and extreme Hindu nationalism's destructive stability in the country, could on the one hand contribute to the realization of the ideas of preservation of Indian civilizational specificities, and on the other prevent the split of the country along religious lines.

Akhand Bharat

Another important part of the idea of the geopolitics of Hindutva is Akhand Bharat, or Undivided India. It involves the creation of a single state, which would have united the entire territory of the former British India, including Bangladesh and Pakistan. According to the founders of the ideology of Hindutva, the Indian "natural borders ran from the Indus to the Eastern Sea, and from the Himalayas (including Kashmir, of course) to Kanyakumari"[3].

In their radical version it implies Hindu domination in the new state and territorial expansion towards Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. At the same time there is another possible interpretation of this idea, implying the creation of integration associations in South Asia, which would be able to remove the existing conflicts between the two major countries: India and Pakistan, like what happened in Europe, where the age-old enemies France and Germany became the nucleus of the new European Union association. In the Hindutva worldview, Indian natural borders ran from the Indus to the Eastern Sea, and from the Himalayas (including Kashmir, of course) to Kanyakumari, the future European Union.

In December 2015, Ram Madhav, BJP general secretary, on the Al Jazeera TV channel said that he hoped to create a Great India. According to him, one of the major geopolitical problems of his party is to create Akhand Bharat, or "Undivided India", which would include India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. According to the representative of the ruling party, creating united South Asian strategic space will happen peacefully.

Sanskrit civilization

Sanskrit as a sacred language, and sacred texts formed thereon, are at the heart of the Indian identity according to Savarkar. Sanskrit is a language, like the other languages of the world cultures, which intended to convey specific religious revelations. Its structure and categories are designed to transmit a particular view of the world, which is understandable only in the context of the language. Usually the criterion of belonging to the Sanskrit civilization was used for its exclusion from Muslims and Christians in India, and the marginalization of Hindutva. However, this principle can be used in an expansive view. The Indian civilization of Sanskrit has had a major influence on the formation of local cultures in Southeast Asia. In Muslim Indonesia the influence of Hinduism is still felt, and the same situation is in the countries of

Indochina, this effect is only intensified with the arrival of Buddhism, which also appeared in India.

The geopolitical dimension of Hindutva means the creation of Great Space (Grossraum) in South Asia which includes India, Sri-Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and a projection of power towards South Asian countries greatly influenced by Indian culture and religious traditions in the past. The inclusion of Pakistan in this sphere is important from both ideological and realistic positions. Previously the Bharatiya Janata Party strongly opposed the very existence of Pakistan, but from 2000 it behaved more realistically. If Pakistan cannot disappear it should become a part of an Indian-centric South Asia, they think.

Realism

A specific feature of the ideology of Hindutva is its emphasis on a realist character. For them the world is in complete agreement with the ideas of Hobbes, meaning the field competition sets powers, each selfishly pursuing their own interests only.

Ever since its inception, Hindutva supporters have paid considerable attention to military power as the main indicator of the security of the state. Savarkar wanted India to become a militarily strong power, like Russia, and criticized the country's leadership for insufficient militarization of the country. He believed in the maxim, 'might is right' as the leading principle in International Politics. According to the founder of Hindutva, force is more important than morality [4].

It is significant that Savakar, the first leader of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh - Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, its second leader who developed Hindutva - Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar and father of Indian independence movement Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak were of Marathi ancestry. It was Marathi who distinguished high militancy that allowed them to crush the 18th century Mughal, and fight the British colonialists for a century. Despite the fact that all the aforementioned authors represented the Brahman Varna, except Tilak, the most distinguished feature of them is their dynamic, Kshatriya approach that makes an emphasis on strength and material power.

On the future of expansionism of the Indian state, Savarkar wrote:

“Thirty cores of people, with India for their basis of operation, for their Fatherland and for their Holyland with such a history behind them, bound together by ties of a common blood and common culture can dictate their terms to the whole world. A day will come when mankind will have to face the force [5].”

The peculiarity of Hindu realism from its Western counterpart is the attention to the national and cultural base, which contributes to the unity of the nation. Savarkar Hindutva is understood as a way of ensuring the sovereignty of India, in order to protect it from falling under the yoke of the conquerors and colonizers.

Swaraj and Vasudeva Kutumba

The concept of Swaraj, self-management, is crucial for India's political culture. It was used by representatives of Congress, especially the anarchist Swaraj philosophy that Gandhi developed, as well as other political figures. For representatives of Hindutva, Swaraj meant to achieve cultural independence in addition to political independence, rejection of Western cultural, social and political practices and doctrines, India's own special way of development against is Universalist logic imposed by Western civilization.

Swaraj is deep sovereignty, the sovereignty of civilization. The realist paradigm focuses on the protection of sovereignty, but it does not mean that the followers of Hindutva are hostile towards other civilizations. In the case of India, they respect civilizational uniqueness and are ready to engage in the process of a multipolar dialogue of civilizations.

In 2014, Prime Minister of India, Modi said:

I believe in Hindutva, which is based on the age-old concept of "Vasudeva Kutumba." I believe mutual respect for one another and cooperation should be the basis for relationships with foreign nations. And I am confident my Hindutva facade will be an asset when dealing with foreign affairs with other nations [6].

“Vasudeva Kutumba "is a Sanskrit phrase that usually translates as, "the entire world is a single family ". It is a phrase from Maha Upanishad. The context of this verse is to describe one of the attributes of an individual who has attained the highest level of spiritual progress, and one who is capable of performing his worldly duties without attachment to material possessions. Though the world as

a single family is possible but in the higher spiritual way. This worldview does not reject martial aspects of Hindutva but complements them.

This vision is closer to the theory of a Multipolar World, where different civilizations are brought together to construct the space of dialogue on the basis of mutual respect, rather than Universalist globalism. So the militant ideology of Hindutva has an inner dimension open to other civilizations.

Pro-Israel orientation

Surprisingly, for the outside observer, the inherent ideology of Hindutva may seem like an orientation to friendly relations with Israel. Indo-European, Hinduism and Judaism are indeed the most religious systems that are not similar. But there are things, which bring together their representatives.

Due to the fact that the other, in relation to which political identity built for the followers of Hindutva ideology, has traditionally been a symbolical figure of the Muslim, connections between BJP and Israel have become more apparent. Zionists as followers of political Hinduism have to oppose the Islamic world. Besides the very existence of the state being not Muslim or Christian, it is based on its own national religious tradition that arouses sympathy from supporters of Hindutva. Unlike the Congress, which has always supported Palestine, the BJP during the Cold War tried to maintain good relations with Israel.

With the BJP returning to power, Indo-Israel relations are set to deepen. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was among the first to congratulate Narendra Modi's election as the Indian Prime Minister, and the two leaders have expressed their interest in further enhancing cooperation between their countries[7].

Israel today is the second largest supplier of military equipment to India (after Russia) and India is now Israel's biggest arms purchaser.

Rapprochement with Russia

While the inner core of Hindutva remained practically unchanged for the past century, views on particular issues, especially with respect to changes in international politics have changed. If during the Cold War BJP stuck with a mainly Atlanticist orientation, as opposed to the pro-Soviet policy of the Congress, now Prime Minister Modi stands for friendship with Russia and

strengthening the role of India in the BRICS alliance, which undermines the unipolar American domination of the world.

Attempts to privatize the BJP's heritage of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, who during World War II tried to organize an armed rebellion against Britain addressing firstly the Soviet Union and later Germany and Japan, are indicative of this. Despite the struggle, his army, alongside Japanese forces, ended with defeat, and the people who joined the army later played a crucial role in gaining Indian independence. The first Indian National Army trial, which was held in public, became a rallying point for the independence movement from the autumn of 1945. The release of INA prisoners and the suspension of the trials became a dominant political campaign, superseding the campaign for freedom.

Today Bharatiya Janata underpins efforts to include Bose and the legacy in a broader understanding of Hindutva. "Privatization", for a person like an Indian nationalist and socialist, means privatization of his legacy, which includes a clear continental and ant-Atlanticist geopolitical strategy.

The rejection of a Western values system is the common thing that makes India and Russia closer from an ideological point of view. Like Putin's "Russian World" concept, Modi's "Hindutva" is on the defence of traditional values and identity of their countries. Despite different religious basis (Orthodox Christianity in Russia's case and Hinduism in India's), both ideologies have similar features.

Conclusions

Hindutva proponents seek to restore India's status as a world power. Hindutva worldwide is both realistic and culturally biased. It supports the state system based on sovereignty and world powers, sees war as an imminent part of world order. On the other side Hindutva asserts a more cultural, neo-Imperial approach, as opposed to a purely national one. It is not Nationalism in the proper sense, or internationalism, it is the ideology of Indian civilizational uniqueness and India as an Empire, as an independent geopolitical pole in a Multipolar World System.

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Geostrategic impact of CPEC: Risks and Challenges

Saeed Ismat

The London Institute of South Asia (LISA) and the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) organised this joint conference to discuss 'CPEC: Changing Geopolitical and Geo-economic dynamics in South Asia and beyond' held at RUSI on 08 June 2018. This paper was read by Saeed Ismat and does not necessarily reflect the views of London Institute of South Asia (LISA). Editor

The economic appeal of CPEC is like an irresistible magnet not only to China and Pakistan but for many nations who shall benefit from its infrastructural interconnectivity. European Union, Mideast, and African states are looking at it with enthusiasm while Russia and Central Asian republics find in it a convenient outlet to the Indian Ocean. But the most fascination aspect of CPEC is convergence of so many civilisations that could promote multipolar stability and creation of global civilization cultural harmony.

Beijing hopes to eventually undertake many additional mainland trade routes across South Asia and Eurasia. This has been highlighted by speakers this morning. *Many of these projected routes are somewhat dependent on the successful completion of CPEC as Beijing is aware of the risks associated with economic overstretch or geographic outreach.*

You have heard the grand opportunities and extraordinary potential of CPEC but you are also aware that such a large-scale and unprecedented initiative comes with tremendous risks *and the countries they pass through can fall victim to upheavals and instability.* CPEC being flagship of BRI is no exception to these risks and challenges.

What are the Impediments and Opposition to CPEC?

While it has support of sixty eight (68) nations it could be expected that some would oppose it. *United States and India perceive their interests run counter to the concept to BRI and CPEC.*

United States is concerned that China's planned Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has the potential to further *shift the global strategic balance* in Beijing's favour particularly in Asia. National Defence Strategy of the United States of America 2018 is clear in defining its future goals 1) *"Inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security."* Down the lines it reads 2) *"China is a strategic competitor using predatory economics to intimidate its neighbours while militarizing features in the South China Sea".*

USA views BRI and CPEC as a *counter to its 'Pivot to Asia Strategy'* which is meant to check Chinese rise at the global level. The planned network of infrastructure is historically unparalleled in terms of time, space and scope. This is viewed as a threat to the US and a challenge to its hegemony and supremacy.

In an era of the politics of energy security, Washington is concerned and views CPEC as a challenge to its stakes in resource-rich regions of the Persian Gulf, the Middle East, and Central Asia. US is inclined to perceive the Maritime Silk Road as a camouflage strategy, aiming to build naval bases, project China's military power overseas, and expanding its regional and global influence. Its stated policy thus is aimed at minimizing China's expanding influence.

There are scholars in the West who are of the view that the process had started some 18 years ago within China and its extension beyond its borders is a natural process. China's BRI plans of infrastructure abroad basically mirror its approach at home.

India has become one of the most important partners of the US to counter Chinese influence in the region. In the US 'Pivot to Asia Strategy', India is an important strategic partner and has a key role to play in the region of Indo-Pacific.

When asked why India is opposing BRI, New Delhi has constantly raised the issue of CPEC passing through Gilgit- Baltistan that India considers as a part of the disputed territory of Kashmir, as the main cause of opposition. This is however debatable and controversial.

The basis of objections to CPEC may find acceptability in some quarters but its effort to block BRI investments in *other* South Asia nations may not be easy to justify.

1. Indian ruling elite views entire South Asia and the Indian Ocean to be its (sphere of influence). India fears Chinese investments in Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanmar will adversely affect its regional influence. Add Afghanistan to this list the impact could be enormous. China's economic and infrastructural connectivity initiatives in these countries are bound to reduce dominant Indian influence in the region.

2. Most countries of South Asia are in dire needs of infrastructure and foreign investment and inevitably the Chinese investments have a very powerful attraction for them.
3. The whole of South Asia is rapidly undergoing changes under China's influence. Chinese infrastructure and loan diplomacy have impacted the whole of South Asia. Over the last three years, India has worked to secure a major diplomatic engagement and even political manipulation and intimidation to secure its relations with its immediate neighbourhood. However, there is little tangible evidence of any significant outcome of these initiatives.

Risks and Challenges.

Let us briefly take an overview of the risks and challenges to CPEC. The project's '*unrivalled geostrategic significance*' makes it an *irresistible target of subterfuge*. It may be fair to state that it is fraught with significant risks and dangers as *Pakistan sits at the crossroad of conflicting geostrategic interests of big powers*.

The emerging scenario involving two global powers, US and China, vying for greater access to energy markets; and two regional rivals India and Pakistan becoming partners of two opposite camps for their own economic and strategic considerations, *portray a new great game in making*. A UN report titled 'The Belt and Road Initiative and the Role of ESCAP' also recently pointed out that *CPEC may kindle Indo-Pak tensions*. CPEC is the hotspot where the US and Indian interests converge particularly when it holds the potential to act as a counterweight to the growing Indo-US strategic partnership and their mutual strategic interests in the Indian Ocean region

US Secretary of Defense, General James Mattis has said that China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative is untenable because it passes through a disputed territory. He was alluding to the CPEC which passes through the northern areas of Pakistan – claimed by India as part of the disputed Jammu and Kashmir territory. Mattis' statement simply reflects what was already well known about American policy towards China and now its fallout on Pakistan.

Strategist, scholars and pundits in India have written and the media has been campaigning for "surgical strike" in Pakistani territory and there have been talks of an unthinkable "limited intervention" aimed at cutting CPEC in half through Gilgit-Baltistan (both of these options might *frightening*. Would the

ruling government growing overconfident with new found US support be tempted to undertake such a venture??

The Pakistani strategists do not take this conventional military threat so seriously but in fact are more apprehensive of *regional and extra regional actors* resorting to operating through proxies in order to achieve the objective of sabotaging this project by Hybrid Warfare.

For those global strategist who supports peace and development through CPEC and resultant convergence of civilizations fear that such external interference could seriously jeopardise the endeavour.

Conclusion

Realistic appraisals indicate that India does not possess economic or geopolitical leverage to counter BRI or CPEC. But India can determine the course of CPEC by getting engaged with it. It should consider giving priority to its economic development and poverty alleviation rather than geopolitically dominating the region. It has seen for itself that its initiatives have not succeeded in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Maldives who are gradually drifting away.

Geo-economic imperatives favour India supporting BRI and joining CPEC that could propel India to become a dominant economic power and also pave the way for peace and prosperity for the whole of South Asia while retaining its dominant status as a regional power. It shall also be in complete sync with charter of SAARC (South Asian Association of Regional Countries). In particular it could lead to promoting peace and friendship among the traditional rivals of India and Pakistan. And when this is extended to Afghanistan it could eventually lead to South Asian Common Market.

The convergence of civilizations is dependent on the successful completion of multilateral connectivity potential of CPEC. Pakistan appears to be conscious as to how intimately the country's future is tied to CPEC but the challenges and impediments are overwhelming and real. It has number of internal challenges that could impact CPEC:-

- 1) It has to show continuous resilience to deal with the scourge of terrorism.
- 2) There have been reports of lack of transparency and accountability that need to be addressed.

- 3) Politicians from the less developed provinces have voiced their concern for inadequate and unequal benefits. Pakistan would need to create internal political harmony to remove the feeling of deprivation amongst various parts of the country.
- 4) More importantly its foreign policy has to be more neutral, pragmatic and committed to developing a balance in its relationships with major powers: only then it can creatively contribute to convergence of civilizations and consequent multipolar stability.
- 5) It has to avoid strategic reliance on any single major world power. It must maintain the balance between an old ally US, its deep friendship with China and the newly developing relations with Russia.
- 6) Downturn in Pak - US relations has to be checked. It is a challenge to diplomats on both sides who need to put this relationship on track in the interest of peace in the region.

Finally -absent any external interference, CPEC is likely to develop as expected. However we should not undermine the significance of USA and India policy as related to CPEC. Will it be that of accommodation or would it adopt aggressive approach? Indeed interventionist policies could lead to tension and escalate the prospects for conflict. Both India and the US are responsible democratic nations and would avoid doing anything that could lead to a wider conflict. The world is awaiting ‘Convergence of Civilisations’ and does not wish to end up with ‘Clash of Civilizations’

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The Quest for ‘Zone of Peace’ in the Himalayas –Nepal’s Critical Engagements with India and China

K M Seethi

The tiny Himalayan State Nepal continues to be economically vulnerable, primarily because of its geopolitical status as a land-locked country. This is the case with all land-locked countries across the world that does not have direct access to the seas. As the UN Committee for Development Policy says, these countries’ “ability to competitively trade in goods largely depends on political goodwill domestically and regionally, particularly on efforts by transit neighbours to provide a facilitating technical and administrative infrastructure in order to contain the transaction costs incurred by land-locked operators.” The UN acknowledged that many such “land-locked developing countries are marginalized in the global trading system and occupy low-end positions in international value chains” (UN, Committee for Development Policy 2018:16). The case of Nepal is too conspicuous as underlined by the UN.

It is in this background of its geopolitical vulnerability that Nepal has been struggling hard to make itself a ‘Zone of Peace’ between the two Asian giants—India and China. But this has always been viewed with suspicion and apprehension in New Delhi. During the recent visit of Nepali Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli to China, there were speculations apropos the tiny Himalayan State’s emerging pattern of relations with India and China. It is quite natural for some to suspect if some of Oli’s comments in China amount to bringing back the much-discussed ‘Zone of Peace’ proposal that was in place in the 1970s and 1980s.

In an interview with the *Global Times*, Oli had to encounter a question whether Nepal was the land of the competition or bridge of cooperation for China and India. He said that Nepal being a sovereign and independent nation “never deviated from its well-pronounced foreign policy dictum of friendship toward all and enmity toward none.” He emphasized that Nepal has been firmly committed to not allowing our territory to be used against the sovereign interests of our neighbours.” He said that “We have the resolve to maintain this and we naturally expect similar assurance from our neighbours. Given this policy percept that guides us and given the level of goodwill and sense of solidarity both our neighbours and their people have toward Nepal, I see a good prospect of cooperation among our three countries.” Oli further noted that Nepal can serve as a bridge between our two neighbours. In fact, we want to

move from the state of a land-locked to a land-linked country through the development of adequate cross border connectivity. Our friendship with both neighbours places us in an advantageous position to realize this goal” (GT 2018).

Many speculated whether Kathmandu has been moving away from New Delhi for some time, in spite of its geopolitical proximity and other advantages it enjoys vis-à-vis India. Moreover, observers say that whatever problems that the two countries have had in the past have been addressed recently with the visits of the Prime Ministers of India and Nepal. It was believed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s recent visit to Nepal (that too, within weeks of Oli’s visit to New Delhi) would have set right the irritants in bilateral relations that developed following India’s unsolicited comments and interventions with regard to the 2015 Nepalese Constitution. Modi’s statements in Nepal on the historical connectivity, cultural linkages, democratic credentials and developmental imperatives were all aimed at winning over the Nepalese people as well as different sections of the polity in the background of China making strategic inroads into the Himalayan geopolitics (Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs 2018b). It may be noted that the two Prime Ministers also underlined the catalytic role of connectivity in stimulating economic growth and promoting movement of people (Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs 2018a).

India-Nepal ties worsened badly in 2015 when Nepal promulgated its long-awaited constitution which, New Delhi believed, had not given adequate attention to the Madhesis, Tharus and Janjatis in the plains. India’s Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar made a visit to Nepal, as Modi’s special envoy, at this crucial juncture of the promulgation of the new constitution. But Jaishankar had to return empty-handed. His visit had also generated widespread criticism in the Nepali media (*The Rising Nepal*, 20 September 2015). What followed was another spell of economic blockade from India disrupting the movement of even essentials supplies.

In 2016, during Oli’s previous term as prime minister, Nepal had made efforts to reduce its reliance on New Delhi as a major supplier of essential items like energy as well as the route for transit and trade. Oli went to China in the wake of his visit to New Delhi in February 2016 and entered into agreements for the import of fuel and on trade. This was in the background of the deteriorating relations between India and Nepal over the 2015 constitution. Many even saw New Delhi as responsible for the fall of an unstable coalition dispensation in Nepal, which eventually led to Oli’s resignation in August 2016. With Oli back in power in 2018, New Delhi sought to repair the damage by announcing new connectivity and development projects. However, during his visit to India,

Prime Minister Oli underlined the need for building “mutual trust” and seeking a relationship based on friendship. This obviously echoes Nepal’s desire to diversify its relationship with the immediate neighbours keeping in view its long-held desire to escape from its underdevelopment trap set by both internal as well as geopolitical circumstances.

From “Durant Syndrome” to “Reciprocity”

India and Nepal being proximate neighbours in the Himalayan geopolitics have a special relationship marked by open borders and entrenched people-to-people contacts. The free movement of people across the Himalayan borders has been a distinct feature for decades. Nepal, a country of 29 million population, has a border of over 1850 kilometres in the east, south and west with five Indian States—Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand and in the north with the Tibetan region of China. Successive governments in New Delhi considered the India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 as the bedrock of the special relations” between India and Nepal. Under Article 6 of this Treaty, the Nepalese citizens have enjoyed unparalleled advantages in India, availing facilities and opportunities at par with Indian citizens (Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs 1950). As such, nearly 6 million Nepali citizens live and work in India (Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs 2017). New Delhi, therefore, expected some sort of diplomatic finesse and political loyalty from Kathmandu.

However, the ruling dispensations as well as different sections of the Nepalese society did not appreciate this perpetual loyalty, particularly under the mutual ‘security’ arrangements with India under the Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1950. The main criticism was that the Treaty was ‘unequal’ and that it was signed when the Ranas were in power; and therefore it did not represent the goals and aspirations of the new government in Nepal. Though the new ruler King Tribhuvan’s period was characterized by Nepal’s special relations with India, it did not last long. There were protests and criticisms about India’s growing influence in Nepal. When King Mahendra came to the throne in 1955, a change in Nepal’s policy was quite visible. His was a more assertive policy intended to substitute Nepal’s ‘special relations’ with India obviously in favour of ‘equal friendship’ with all countries. It was in line with this that Nepal established diplomatic relations with China in 1955. The changing dimensions of India-China relations after the development of border issues, especially with the Lhasa uprising in 1959—tended to influence Nehru’s security perceptions, and his statements and postures testify this. In a Lok Sabha speech, he said: “May I just say this to repeat what we have said previously, that any aggression on Bhutan and Nepal would be considered by us as aggression on India. It is a

very grave responsibility” (India, Lok Sabha 1959:2211). This naturally set in motion anti-India feelings and sentiments in Nepal.

In April 1960 Nepal and China signed a Peace and Friendship Treaty. Earlier a boundary agreement was also signed by the two countries. King Mahendra also negotiated for building a road connecting Kathmandu with Chinese (Tibetan) border at Kodari. But this generated a high tension campaign in India and there were demands for the cancellation of the construction. But King Mahendra dismissed all this and reminded India that “Communism does not travel by Taxi cab” (see *The Kathmandu Post*, 7 April 2017). During the India-China war in 1962, Nepal maintained a neutral position and made no effort to understand New Delhi’s sensitivity. This was also the time when King Mahendra sought to diversify Nepal’s trade and economic relations, instead of maintaining dependence on India. Since then Nepal’s foreign trade had been very gradually changing, and total trade with India declined from 98 per cent in 1958-59 to 95 per cent in 1959-60, even as that with Tibet and overseas countries growing (Pant 1962: 362-63).

The idea of Nepal as a ‘Zone of Peace’ became a key foreign policy proposition when King Birendra came to the throne in January 1972. The proposal was initially planned to be floated at the fourth Non-aligned Movement summit at Algiers in September 1973 (Government of Nepal, Embassy of Nepal, Washington, DC US 2018). But the idea was apparently dropped by the King albeit the text of the speech brought out to the media earlier had a reference to the proposal that “Nepal, situated between two of the most populous countries in the world, wishes within her frontiers, to be enveloped in a Zone of Peace (*Rising Nepal* 9 September 1973.)

However, the official announcement came after two years on 25 February 1975, on the occasion of the official coronation of the King. He said:

As a matter of fact Nepal in the past has signed formal peace and friendship treaties with both our friendly neighbours. And if today, peace is an overriding concern with us, it is only because our people genuinely desire peace in our country, in our region and everywhere in the world. It is with this earnest desire to institutionalize peace that I stand to make a proposition that my country, Nepal be declared a zone of peace. Only under a condition of peace we will be able to create a particularly stable Nepal with a sound economy which will in no way be detrimental to any country. I also wish to declare that in making this proposition for a zone of peace, we are not prompted out of fear or threat from any country or quarter (King Birendra 1977: 12).

Further elaboration of the idea came much later, in February 1982, when the then Prime Minister, S.B. Thapa articulated a seven point definition of the

“Zone of Peace” proposal which also included a reciprocity in commitments regarding security and other internal issues. By 1991, Nepal’s proposal had been endorsed by more than 110 nations, which included the United States, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh etc. Many of these countries also recommended a regional approach to peace as the goal (Government of Nepal, Embassy of Nepal, Washington, DC US 2018).

M.K. Rasgotra, former Indian Ambassador to Nepal and, later, the Foreign Secretary of India, writes that Nepal always had some sort of a ‘Durant Syndrome’, a kind of strategy to play China against India in pursuit of its interests. The term ‘Durant Syndrome’ is a reincarnation of the security notion of the British Resident Edward Durant (1888-1891) who at that time wrote to his foreign office that “the settled policy of the durbar is to play of China against us and to make use or pretended subordination to that power as a safeguard against the spread of our influence over this country.” Rasgotra took a step further and wrote that “Nepal durbar was actually trying to reduce, if not eliminate, India’s interests, role and influence in the country” (Rasgotra 2016: 310). Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was quoted as saying that the rulers in Kathmandu “can not to be trusted”. They say one thing and do the opposite. I do not like that. They are not our friends....Be firm in dealing with them” (Ibid: 297). Rasgotra again noted that within a few weeks of his arrival in Nepal, he found that the Royal regime had tilted towards China, and actively encouraged anti Indian propaganda while blatantly violating trade treaty provisions. Rasgotra wrote that India would have to learn to live with the Nepal Government’s Durant Syndrome. I advised the Government to neither accept nor reject the Zone of Peace proposal and keep asking the Nepalese what its implications will be for India-Nepal relations, to the rights Nepalese enjoy in India in matters of residence and employment, and to India’s security and other interests.” He said that the Nepalese Government also started insisting that there should be two separate treaties for transit and trade. But this was rejected by New Delhi. However, as things turned differently in the 1977 general elections, Nepal was able to secure two treaties, which was made possible by the Janata Government led by Moraji Desai (for details see Ibid: Chapter 20). During the period, India’s External Affairs Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was reported to have said that India had an “open mind” on the proposal to declare Nepal a zone of peace: ““We have neither accepted the proposal nor rejected it,” Vajpayee said. He had promised the leaders in Kathmandu that India would consider the proposal with an open mind (*Sunday Standard*, 17 July 1977).

The decade of 1980s witnessed many developments in the region such as the beginning of India’s border talks with China, militarization and arms build-up of the subcontinent following the Afghan war etc. By the end of 1980s, however, there was a serious setback in India’s relations with Nepal. It all

started when India refused to renew the trade and transit treaties with Nepal. The Rajiv Gandhi government argued that Nepal resorted to ungrateful moves by imposing work permit on Indian workers in Nepal, tariffs on goods imported from India and, above all, importing military items from China without India's consent apparently in violation of the 1950 Treaty !

New Delhi, however, insisted a composite treaty for trade and transit obviously to prevent Nepal from diversifying its trade. Nepal demanded two separate treaties as they existed one for trade and the other for transit. Kathmandu's position was that under the UN law, transit was the right of a land-locked country. Failure to renew the treaties, however, resulted in the closing of the India-Nepal transit points for trade and transportation, amounting to a serious economic blockade which lasted for several months during 1989-90. Even essential supplies were disrupted for months. This was also the time when Nepal witnessed a surge in democratic movements. However, with a new government in office in Kathmandu, Nepal and India sorted out the impasse. Yet, the unexpected economic blockade remained a permanent scar in India-Nepal relations.

There was a significant change in India-Nepal relations during the mid-1990s. I.K. Gujral, who was India's foreign minister, and later prime minister, was instrumental in improving India's relations with small neighbours under his much-acclaimed 'Gujral Doctrine.' The five principles of Gujral Doctrine envisage that (1) With Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka, India would not seek reciprocity, but would give and accommodate what it could in good faith and trust; (2) No South Asian country should allow its territory to be used against the interest of another country of the region; (3) No country should interfere in the internal affairs of another; (4) All South Asian countries must respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; (5) They should settle all their disputes through peaceful bilateral negotiations (Gujral 2011:406). Perceptibly, the principle of non reciprocity helped strengthen India's relations with Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka etc.

However, the Nepali politics began to experience several twists and turns which eventually resulted in the termination of constitutional monarchy and the emergence of democratic forces. The pattern of India-Nepal relations also witnessed some changes with political forces in the country demanding a revision of the 1950 Treaty and further concessions from India. There were occasional setbacks in bilateral ties also. This was also the period when Nepal began exploring the option of strengthening relations with China. It had reasons to do so. There was also a surge in India's relations with China (leaving aside the boundary question) and bilateral trade between the two giants has been growing since 2001.

Over years, China has been making quick moves in Nepal to be its paramount neighbour, even overtaking the status enjoyed by India for long. Naturally, there have been growing suspicion and anxiety with regard to Nepal's broadening relations with China. Many in India shared the concern that Kathmandu had "gone a bit too far and too fast in strengthening relations with Beijing (Shrestha 2017). For geopolitical and geo-economic reasons, Nepal is seen as vital for China. There are many perceptible reasons which led to the deepening ties between Nepal and China.

First, Nepal has encountered two major episodes of economic blockade by India, in 1989 and 2015, and that it cannot afford to have another one, given the prevailing social and economic conditions. Nepal's land-locked status, in particular its India-locked geopolitics, compelled the ruling dispensation to further diversify trade, as in the past. Nepal is also interested in China's "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) Initiative which the rulers consider as very important for Nepal's long-term development. It may be noted that after the 2015 blockade, Nepal moved towards China and signed a transit trade treaty including nine other pacts on 22 of March 2016 (Ibid). The OBOR pact between Nepal and China have five broad areas; economic development; transport connectivity; trade connectivity (economic zone, industrial park, and dry port development); financial integration through opening branch of Chinese bank and People-to-people contact through visits and media(Ibid).

Meanwhile, Nepal's exports to India have grown more than eleven times and bilateral trade more than seven times since 1996. The bilateral trade that was 29.8 per cent of total external trade of Nepal in 1995-96 grew to 61.2 per cent in 2015-16. The two-way trade increased from INRs. 1,755 crores in 1995-96 to IN Rs.32294 crores (US\$ 4.8 billion) in 2015-16. Exports from Nepal to India saw a jump from INRs. 230 crores in 1995-96 to INRs.2468.3 crores (US\$ 371 million) in 2015-16. Likewise, India's exports to Nepal grew from INRs.1, 525 crores in 1995-96 to INRs.29825.7.6 crores (US\$ 4.48 billion) in 2015-16. Indian companies are the biggest investors in Nepal, accounting for about 40 per cent of the total approved FDIs. There are about 150 Indian ventures working in Nepal, basically in manufacturing, services (banking, insurance, dry port, education and telecom), power sector and tourism industries (see Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs 2017a, b).

Even as India-Nepal trade registered a significant increase over years, Nepal's economic ties with China also showed a big leap. Nepal's export to China saw a jump by 72 per cent during 2017-18. As Nepal has been struggling to reduce its burgeoning trade deficit, the surge in exports to China was seen as a great relief to the country which has been heavily dependent on remittance for financing most of its imports. Nepal exported goods worth US \$17 million to China

during first seven months of the fiscal period 2017-18, an increase by 72.3 per cent over the same period last fiscal year (Xinhua News 2018).

Nepal's desire to escape from the state of a land-locked to a land-linked country through the development of adequate cross border connectivity means many things for both India and China. Even under Article 125 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982), Nepal has legitimate claims as a land-locked country insofar as it protects the right of transit, as well as endorses rights over the resources and possibilities of the high seas (UN 1982). Yet, India glossed over the fact that these provisions have provided Nepal many entitlements even as the people were made to suffer under two spells of economic blockade in 1989-90 and 2015. Situated as it is in a sensitive hot-spot of the Himalayas, Nepal's aspirations to come out of this geopolitical shell appear to be reasonable. This certainly calls for a much deeper appreciation of Kathmandu's quest for a 'Zone of Peace,' especially in India and China.

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Muslims Lynched in India

Harsh Mander

This is what India has become: One more pitiless lynching. This time of two older men, a petty goat trader and a marginal farmer in a village in Hapur, Uttar Pradesh, a two-hour drive from the national capital. The same frenzied gratuitous cruelty of the mob, the passivity of the bystander, the triumphant video-taping of the crime broadcast through the internet, the cynical silence of the country's leadership, the cover-up by the police.

A team of the Karwa- e-Mohabbat visited the families of the victims a week after the crime. The distraught wives of the two men, their children, brothers, sisters, neighbours had watched many times the terrifying video of the lynching. The story of what exactly happened was still hazy. What we were able to piece together was that Qasim went to the neighbouring, predominantly Hindu, village, after a phone call to pursue his trade, probably to buy a goat.

There, reportedly, an announcement was made on the temple loudspeaker claiming that he was a cow-killer, urging people to gather. No one had ever troubled him before, so he was walking unsuspectingly through Samiuddin's fields to reach the village. A group of men caught both Qasim and Samiuddin, dragged them to an enclosed compound and beat them ruthlessly. Later they hauled them out into the open fields.

There a large crowd had gathered, many of them boys in their teens. Here they assaulted the two men with anything they could find — iron rods, sticks, knives, daggers, screw-drivers, even pens. Through all of this, they taunted and humiliated the two men. They pulled Samiuddin's beard and stripped Qasim to his underwear. Some in the crowd filmed the last stages of the lynching. "There was not a part of his body which was not bloodied and torn," Qasim's family grieved when we met them in their tiny rented one-room tenement in the village Sadikpur.

We met the family of the other victim, Samiuddin, during their anxious vigil outside the ICU ward in a private hospital in Hapur. They listed mournfully the litany of his wounds: Fractures in his legs and hands, two broken ribs, damaged lungs and kidneys, ears cut, head smashed.

Qasim's family is visibly impoverished. In his forties, Qasim earned a tenuous livelihood buying and selling goats. Overweight and increasingly unsteady on his feet, he would walk from village to village offering to buy kid goats. His wife would raise and fatten for sale in their tiny one-room home, crowded with their children and the clutter of their worldly belongings.

The conversations in the video suggest that some policepersons were standing by during the lynching. A later video shows the policemen dragging the two critically wounded men face down. Qasim was declared dead at the hospital while Samiuddin was admitted to the ICU. The mob grievously injured the two men; however, the act of the policemen, of dragging them along the ground, took Qasim's life. The policemen were merely transferred, not even suspended let alone charged with abetting murder. According to the police complaint, the men were attacked in road rage.

To make matters worse, when we visited the crime site in village Baghera, we found the police had done nothing to cordon it off to preserve evidence. Blood stains were visible in the field. A pair of broken red rubber slippers lay there. Curious villagers and a medley of journalists and fact-finders walked over these. This deliberate destruction of evidence is another recurring pattern in India lynch crimes.

Each of these deaths has destroyed families. Samiuddin's family is paying for his ICU treatment in a private hospital with no support from the government. No senior official has met either family. Qasim's widow sat shrouded in a veil in the corner of their single-room tenement. Their teenage daughters spoke of their loving father: "He had no money, but still wanted us to enjoy the Eid. So he did not pay this month's rent and borrowed a thousand rupees for our Eid feast." Their hands still bore the colour of henna.

What kind of country have we allowed ourselves to become? Many countries display trends similar to India, of rising hatred and bigotry cloaked in aggressive, militant nationalism, spurred by popular authoritarian leaders. Yet, India is singular for its mounting wave of public lynching. In a great many countries, governments and dominating majority populations have become openly hostile to minorities — Muslims, religious or ethnic minorities, indigenous populations, Romas, people of colour, immigrants or sexual minorities. But nowhere except in India has this resulted in mobs feeling encouraged and empowered to regularly lynch people of minority identities, and further to film these and proudly post the videos on social media.

India has transmuted into a country where we elect leaders who display no compassion, and even less remorse for each hate crime, where leaders and

officials side with the killers against the victims. It is a society in which children and young people hate, stone and beat other human beings to death only because they are of another religion or caste, and lawyers angrily agitate if a killer is arrested.

Yet, among the rest of us, there is a wearying even of outrage, the sapping of empathy. Lynching is now a normal, even essential, emblem of our public life. It is the way we have taught our young people to discipline and subjugate the hated other in our midst. Is this what we choose to become — a republic of hate?

Harsh Mander is an activist, who works with survivors of mass violence and hunger, as well as homeless persons and street children ¹¹ He is the Director of the Centre for Equity Studies and a Special Commissioner to the Supreme Court of India in the Right to Food case.

He is associated with various social causes and movements, and writes and speaks regularly on issues of communal harmony, tribal, Dalit and disabled persons' rights, the right to information, custodial justice, homelessness and bonded labour.

London Institute of South Asia Book discussion and LISA Book Award 2018

Special Report

A book discussion on “The Betrayal of India” Revisiting the 26/11 Evidence by Mr Elias Davidsson was held in the House of Lords (British Parliament) on 20 June 2018. The event was attended by well over ninety persons and chaired by Lord Nazir Ahmed. Lord Qurban, MP Faisal Rasheed, Ambassador Stefan Haukur Johannesson from Iceland, scholars, journalists and researchers also attended the event.

The proceeding commenced at 1515 hrs with opening welcome address by Lord Ahmed followed by Mr Saeed Ismat from the London Institute of South Asia. He thanked Lord Nazir Ahmed for his support to the London Institute of South Asia by hosting this event at the House Lords. He welcomed the distinguished guest and a very warm welcome was extended to the guest of honour, the most distinguished writer Mr Elias Davidsson and his daughter Miss Ester Eliasdottir. He stated that London Institute of South Asia (LISA) is an independent not for profit think tank that steadfastly stands for truth and justice. LISA primary focus is on human rights and promoting peace and amity amongst nations.

In brief this book is an investigative work par excellence; it is monumental, thorough and detailed. It is free of filler and rhetoric and is rich in detail. Author has relied on primary source material that could be *of immense value to any future official inquiries local or international*. Clearly this is a book of highly significant achievement and is of objective importance to anyone interested in the true face of War on Terror. Mr Davidsson has adroitly exposed the patterns of deception in the War on Terror and has revealed through reasoning providing plausible evidence that the *Mumbai Massacre was a false flag operation and had nothing to do with Pakistan or LeT or ISI who were promptly and persistently blamed for perpetrating this crime*.

This book has clearly shattered many illusions some might have about India: its farcical democracy, the integrity of its military and police, the alleged independence of its judiciary and the role played by its media in maintaining these illusions. In the words of the author this book is about betrayal of Indian nation by corrupt, greedy and ruthless elite for whom the lives of ordinary Indians are expendable,

Pakistan was isolated and intimidated to an extent that its cowardly leaders caved in to the pressures and the propaganda. We witnessed the tragic *Betrayal of Pakistan* when its leaders started obliquely accepting the blame and arrested a number of its citizens on false charges of collaborating in the crimes at Mumbai. *Senior ministers of the Pakistan government Mahmud Durrani (National Security Adviser), Sherry Rehman (Information Minister) and Rehman Malik (Interior Minister)* made statement that were detrimental to Pakistan either through naivety but as some would say they were in fact complicit in supporting the Indian narrative. *Mr Davidsson stated in the book that Rehman Malik had publically stated "part of Mumbai conspiracy was hatched in Pakistan"* but failed to produce any verifiable evidence to support this claim. *It is significant that his statement, hailed in India and the West as a definitive Pakistani admission of complicity. Ref: page 790-791 of the book. The author indicates that Malik had at different times rendered services to USA and had connections with the CIA*

Mr Davidsson eloquently and succinctly states in this book that the number of Synthetic or False Flag operations terrorist operations round the world increased since 2001 and *26/11 of 2008 was no exception* as it has all the ingredients of a false flag operation. In fact it classical cases study of a ruthless false flag operation. He has given a detailed account to justify this claim but in brief he says:

- Lack of claim for its responsibility by bona-fide organisation
- Lack of demand of any sort by the perpetrators of this heinous crime.
- Refusal of any public independent investigation of this crime.
- Existence of significant motives for the crime

The author concludes that major institutional actors in India, the United States and possibly Israel were complicit in conceiving, planning, directing and executing the attacks of 26/11. The plotters had to conceal their hand by blaming Pakistan – it has worked as great cover up for a well planned False Flag operation and very cleverly covering up the truth.

Barrister Iftikhar Ahmed was the third speaker who was asked for his comments on the book from legal perspective. He was of the view that there exists substantial material that could be used for any future court action. The enormity of breach of evidence laws, biased evaluation of testimonies, entertainment of irrelevancies and brazen collusion with the prosecution is evident on the face of the record. He highlighted major legal failings in the Indian judicial system.

He stated: “The Betrayal of India” by Elias Davidsson, emerged as an honest, independent and incisive book exposing every dark nook and corner of this terror act. The most needed and extremely vital treatise that comes as a lightning blow to this international conspiracy.

The whole evidence of 26/11 and execution of this carnage is skilfully evaluated in this masterly structured book by Elias Davidsson. The creditability of this book is impeccable as the scholarly approach backed by painstaking research belies any suggestion of partiality or bias.

Even a fair Indian reader cannot but admire this book which can easily be the ultimate on this subject with little room for improvement. I, as a lawyer, approached this book as a legal brief and quickly found myself submerged in the sea of settled legal issues, probative and persuasive value of each piece of evidence, backed by various laws and legal principles interspersed by the author- leaving no scope to improve on the contents.”

Mr Elias Davidsson said that his background was Jewish, born in Palestine and explained what motivated him to undertake this project. Who really profited from this carnage? Mr Davidsson states that India, United States and Israel profited significantly from 26/11 and in his address gave brief but convincing reasons for his assertion that it was a ‘false flag’ operation. Historically, every operation of this kind, inevitably has clearly defined political agenda.

The ancillary proposes achieved by India could be in areas of intelligence, rapid response training, police-army operational coordination- but above all denouncing and demeaning Pakistan in the world as a place nurturing terrorism and its export into India. It was a bloody and gory Indian drill. Ref: page 66-75.

Pakistan’s motive in the whole saga remains mysterious and intriguing. Rehman Malik and Mahmood Durrani jumped onto the bandwagon early in the day and completed the RAW and NSA story. Who engaged and trained the terrorists in Pakistan? Barrister Iftikhar said that in the absence of this book, the Ajmal Kasab saga would have remained a case consigned to archives. Now that each and every aspect of the intelligence, planning, execution, investigation, trial and its multifold ramifications across major capital has been exposed threadbare-there has to be a way forward. But Mr. Davidsson has through this book exposed the lies, deceit and suppression of facts. He has raised profound issues of such devious and clandestine internationally planned terrorist acts that find state protection and cover at all levels.

His suggestion for setting up of some kind of an international truth commission would be the most vital step towards carrying the story forward. Pakistan and India

being nuclear states cannot afford their lands to be used as playground of strategic games of interested parties with grand Kissingerite global designs.

All the speakers were of the view that steps should be initiated by London Institute of South Asia (LISA) to weave the warp and weft of such a commission that could be headed by Mr. Elias Davidsson.

Mr Saeed Ismat in concluding remarks said, *“In end I would say the Mumbai Attack of 26/11 was not only ‘Betrayal of India’ and its people, it was ‘Betrayal of Pakistan’ and its people by its leaders and of course it was ‘Betrayal of Humanity’”*.

LISA Book Award 2018

After the Q&A the Chairman of LISA read out the citation and asked Lord Nazir Ahmed and Lord Qurban to present the LISA Book Award 2018 Certificate and a LISA Souvenir.

Citation for the Award

Mr Elias Davidsson book “The Betrayal of India” Revisiting the 26/11 Evidence is an investigative work par excellence; it is monumental, thorough and detailed. It is free of filler and rhetoric and is rich in detail. Author has relied on primary source material that could be of immense value to any future official inquiries local or international.

This is a book of highly significant achievement and is of objective importance to anyone interested in the true face of War on Terror. Mr Davidsson has adroitly exposed the patterns of deception in the War on Terror and has revealed through reasoning providing plausible evidence that the Mumbai Massacre was a false flag operation and had nothing to do with Pakistan or LeT who were promptly and persistently blamed for perpetrating this crime.

A book of outstanding accomplishment where Mr Davidsson has brilliantly exposed the grotesque failures of official investigation and the judiciary, lack of transparency and deviation from laid down rules and procedures. He convincingly reveals how the real perpetrators of terror are shielded and rewarded and underscores that the War on Terror, which goes by different names in different countries but continues as a global framework for violent conflict, thrives on this fraud.

In acknowledgement of his outstanding ability as an investigator and his extraordinary ability to expose the real perpetrators of crime against humanity

and above all his exceptional achievement and commitment in search of truth, he is conferred the London Institute of South Asia (LISA) Book Award 2018.

Recommendations:

- This book is given wide publicity/circulation as it is based on evidence and truth. Pakistan should examine the feasibility of approaching the United Nations Security Council.
- Precedents exist for establishing International Truth Commissions (including terrorist attacks) under the authority of Chapter VII of UN Charter. Mr Eias Davidsson who has done this commendable research is competent to head the commission.
- Both India and Pakistan should hold independent ‘Truth Commissions’ to establish the facts and initiate legal action against all those responsible for planning, conducting and abetting the Mumbai massacre.
- This crime against humanity needs independent investigation by UN Commission on Human Rights, Amnesty International and other reputable world bodies.

London Institute of South Asia (LISA) is a not for profit, independent organization committed to promoting education, human rights and peace.

Bhutanese dilemma: To be or not to be with India

P K Balachandran

The Bhutanese are in a dilemma: Should they continue to be tied to India economically and in the conduct of foreign policy or should they be independent in every way as a sovereign country and a member of the United Nations?

To put the question more bluntly, should Bhutan be continually tied to India's apron strings or be free to negotiate with China for more favourable economic terms and settle the long pending border dispute?

Should it sacrifice its interests to accommodate those of its supposed "protector" India, in the latter's endless spats with China?

Should Bhutan be a victim of Sino-Indian rivalry in the Himalayan region, or should it have the option to take sides or remain neutral?

The Bhutanese's fear is not only vis-à-vis India; it is vis-à-vis China too. China could take it over as it took over Tibet in 1959.

However, studies have revealed that fear of India is more pronounced. In fact, the Bhutanese fear that if they continue to be handmaidens of India and take an anti-China stand continually, China will punish them by unofficially taking more territory than it already has in the Northern region.

ENODO Survey

Last year, ENODO, an international risk rating agency, found that 76% of Twitter and 65% of Facebook users in Bhutan have questioned their government's over-reliance on India's diplomatic channels to broker a deal with China on the border issue.

Messages on Bhutanese news websites, blogs, and Facebook reveal "anxiety" about the absence of a direct dialogue between Bhutan and China, say ENODO analysts Akhilesh Pillamarri and Aswin Subanthore in an article in *The Diplomat* in August 2017.

“The people of Bhutan do not want to be seen as pushovers, which is reinforced by the Bhutanese people’s sense of identity and nationalism. This is illustrated by the large number of tweets, including #War Clouds, #Thunder, #Dragon that centre on pride in Bhutanese culture and values,” the authors say.

Former Indian Ambassador and Himalayan area expert, P.Stobdan writes in *The Wire* that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was acutely aware of the changing strategic imperatives in the Himalayas when he took over in 2014. That is why his first foreign visit was to Bhutan.

But Modi’s solution was not to re-fashion the basic principles of Indo-Bhutan relationship. His solution was to do more of the same failed thing, which is to pump more money into Bhutan unmindful of the fact that the Bhutanese think that Indian “aid” is nothing but a “millstone” around their necks.

Economic Stranglehold

Over 60% of Bhutanese government’s expenditure goes into the import of goods from India.

“India’s stranglehold over Bhutan’s economy along with unfair business practices often leads to economic crisis such as the debt and rupee crunch,” Stobdansays.

India’s limitless budgetary support loans, grants and lines of credit in billions of rupees, including the setting up of hydropower-plants have been useful for Bhutan, but have also helped India make money disproportionately says a study by the Institute of Defense Studies and Analysis.

Ninety five percent of Bhutan’s exports and 75% of its imports are to and from India and a common saying in Bhutan is that 90 to 95% of what the country borrows from India goes back to India!

“In 2012,when the grants inflow did not match the rupee outflow a rupee crunch occurred,” Stobdan recalled.

Because of the close links between the two countries, the Bhutanese market is highly susceptible to Indian inflationary trends.

The other detrimental aspects highlighted by the IDSA study are: illegal cross border trade, under-invoicing, tax evasion, illegal bank transactions and unfair,

exploitative, monopolistic commercial practices by Indian contractors especially in the mining and construction sectors.

Cheap food imports from India weakened Bhutanese agriculture, the share of which in the GDP declined to 14%.

Public debt in Bhutan is over 80% of its GDP (in 2011) and this is due to the loans from India.

Because Bhutan has not been vocal about its grievances vis-a-vis India, unlike Nepal and Bangladesh, Indian government have tended to take the country for granted assuming that Indian “paternalism” is being appreciated, Stobdan observes.

Political Pitfalls

Some good things India did for Bhutan also backfired. After India helped Bhutan secure UN membership in 1971, and toned down the basic bilateral treaty in 2007, Bhutan’s dependence on India on foreign policy declined.

“Bhutan started to take a divergent approach, siding with China and others on Cambodia’s Khmer Rouge issue at the NAM’s Havana summit in 1979. It did not follow India’s stance on the status of landlocked nations at the UN. It signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1985 and supported Pakistan’s Nuclear Free Zone South Asia proposal,” Stobdan points out.

India was dismayed. But what really set alarm bells’ ringing in Delhi was Bhutan’s inching towards China in 2012 under the democratically elected Prime Minister Jigme YoserThinley. Thinley met the Chinese and discussed some purchases as well a deal to end the border dispute.

The Chinese had apparently offered economic assistance in exchange for some adjustments on the border issue such as exchanging Doklam for territory in the Northern border.

In July 2013 an enraged India is said to have rigged the general elections and thrown Thinley out of office. In the run up the polls India had cut subsidies on gas and kerosene sales which sharply increased the prices of these articles of daily use in Bhutan.

Karma Temphelel Ngyamtso, a writer and an political observer **added:** “Our friends in India, unwittingly ensnared in this game of political brinksmanship, must remember that such inadvertent, mercenary and gravely injurious attitudes and moves do not bode well at all for Bhutan-India friendship in the long run.”

“In a tsunami of public outcry, bloggers wrote at length about how the Indian intelligence service had rigged the elections,” Stobdan pointed out.

“The world’s biggest democracy throttled the youngest democracy” was another popular comment.

Critics urged the Indian media and politicians to stop their “over-lordship” over the Kingdom’s affairs and stop treating Bhutan as a “pawn” and manipulating the Bhutanese like “lambs in a pen to slaughter whenever India desires a dish of lamb stew,” were other comments.

“One could not imagine such ferocity amongst ordinary Bhutanese against India ever before,” Stobdan observed. Modi’s advisors had become more ham-handed than their predecessors as they seemed to be more obsessed with China’s intentions.

According to Stobdan, the prevailing sentiment in Bhutan is in favour of resolving the border issue with China amicably and without further delay, so that the country can have a peaceful boundary with its northern neighbour as it has with India. But India would not allow it. Therein lays Bhutan’s frustration with India.

Beggaring Pakistan Through “Democracy”

Ikram Sehgal

When criminals or the corrupt disguise the original ownership and control of the proceeds of criminal conduct by making them appear to have derived from a legitimate source, this is known as money-laundering. Billions of dollars of criminally derived money is laundered through financial institutions every year globally, however criminal money can be laundered without assistance of the financial sector. The nature of the services and products offered by the financial services industry (namely managing, controlling and possessing money and property belonging to others) means that it is vulnerable to abuse by money-launderers.

Financial crimes related to narcotics trafficking, terrorism, smuggling, tax evasion, and corruption remain a significant problem. This is compounded by respectable bankers becoming part of the process, either through greed or in many cases threats and intimidation. Working around the world with partners in the public and private sector to counter corruption and other financial crimes, and to improve the quality of governance, the Basel Institute on Governance, an independent not-for-profit competence centre in an August 2017 report placed Pakistan on the 46th spot on a list of 146 countries that face significant money laundering/terrorism financing risks. The US State Department's International Narcotics Control Strategy Report in early 2017 estimated that around 10 billion dollar per annum is money laundered by Pakistanis. Billions are shipped off every year in by criminals and corrupt individuals in an effort to escape paying taxes and avoid govt scrutiny.

Anti-money laundering and countering financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) in line with Pakistan's action plan agreed with Financial Action Task Force (FATF), continues to be a serious problem. The World Economic Forum's (WEF) “Partnering Against Corruption Initiative” (PACI) Fall Meeting held in Oct last year in Geneva agreed that without conforming to international standards there can be no effective implementation of laws. Without adequate proof of assets and money trail it is almost impossible to prove a crime in court when our methods and tools of investigation in the emerging countries remain outdated. Developed countries, where most of the ill-gotten money/assets reside, pontificate endlessly about adhering to the "rule of law", where is the morality of not practicing what they preach by not cooperating in implementing the laws on their own statute books? Notwithstanding that effective anti-money laundering law might be in place, corrupt politicians and others, criminals

included, will find loopholes in the banking legal system around the world and banks willing to handle their ill-gotten money and bribery payments in safe havens. They then set-up anonymous off-shore companies and trusts that allow them to hide their identity. This is done without technically breaking any rules to access the global financial system with almost impunity. Failing in their due diligence they are complicit in corrupt practices in the transfer and deposit of stolen funds. Millions have been stashed abroad with no questions, whether tax was paid at its source in Pakistan. Many expensive apartments in London are owned by known white-collar criminals comprising former dictators, bank defaulters, tax evaders, money-launderers, politicians, etc.

On July 6 disqualified Prime Minister (PM) Nawaz Sharif was sentenced to 10 years rigorous imprisonment in jail in the Avenfield Apartments corruption reference by a National Accountability Bureau (NAB) accountability court, Maryam was awarded 8-year imprisonment while Maryam husband, Capt (Retd) Muhammad Safdar was handed 8-year imprisonment. The court also disqualified all three from holding any public office for 10 years or availing themselves of bank loans for the same period under Section 15 of the NAO. Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz are presently in London and are scheduled to return to Lahore on Friday, July 13. Sure Lahore is considered to be the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)'s stronghold and preparations are being made by the party leadership to give a "historic welcome" to Nawaz Sharif and Maryam. It is more than obvious that this is going to be more a show of political power than anything else. The PML-N wants nothing but a confrontation with law enforcement agencies and then plays an innocent victim by claiming denial of Nawaz Sharif right to speak to his followers. The PML-N is playing a very dangerous game, the govt must not fall into the trap. With the situation likely to get out of hand, the alternative could be to divert the flight from Islamabad to any other city than Lahore, arrest the duo and whisk them away to Islamabad, all this without making it public.

PML-N leadership claims the ousted PM is extremely popular in Pakistan, brazen facedly declaring that Nawaz Sharif has the mandate of 200 million Pakistanis, an outright lie in the 2013 elections PML (N) obtained 14.9 million or 32% of 46 million out of 86 million who voted as opposed to PTI's 7.7 (17%) and PPP's 6.8 million (15%). PML (N) should have got 84, PTI 42 and PPP 37 seats respectively but PML (N) disproportionately got 53 seats more and PTI and PPP 13 and 6 less. Having a million votes more PTI got four seats less than PPP. The "first past the post system" does not ascertain the real majority, the "run-off" measure does. Negating "proportional representation" bedevils good governance as has now been proven with Nawaz Sharif being sentenced to serve time for his shenanigans, including money laundering.

If popularity is to be taken as the yardstick to measure the strength of democracy, some of the world's most notorious criminals and drug lords were extremely popular with their countrymen. Building roads, motorways, etc is all very well, that is what you were voted in for but this does not give anyone the licence to loot the nation and indulge in corrupt practices. Is this the kind of democracy that we yearn for where there is no rule of law and no accountability? Accountability sits at the heart of the democratic process, if accountability is lost once the winners step into the governance mode, we will have a democracy in name only, a farce.

Branded Public Enemy No. 1 by the Chicago Crime Commission Al Capone got 11 years for tax dodging, Mexican drug lord Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman who faces trial in the US is accused of running a global cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine smuggling operation as the leader of the Sinaloa Cartel El Chapo played a central role in a decade-long Mexican drug war in which more than 100,000 people have died. Guzman raked in \$14 billion, his network spanning four continents. Wanted by the govts of USA, Mexico and Interpol, he was extradited by the Mexican govt to the US to face criminal charges there related to his leadership of the Sinaloa cartel. One of the most wanted criminals on the planets, Guzman Guzmán took pains to burnish his image in Mexico, residents tell stories of his sudden appearances suddenly at village fiestas, doling out rolls of cash to adoring crowds. Most viewed him as a leader and a hero because "he started from below, very poor, a peasant, and he helped people". He built concrete roads and would pay hospital bills for treatment of the sick. In contrast, the govt often failed to provide even basic infrastructure for those in poor, remote villages. Another darling of the people was Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar whose ambition and ruthlessness made him one of the wealthiest, most powerful and most violent criminals of all time. Entering the cocaine trade in the early 1970s Escobar formed the Medellin Cartel. His popularity was due to sponsoring charity projects and soccer clubs, he built houses and cared for the poor. Seen by many as a Robin Hood figure, he was killed by Colombian police in 1993.

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari and his sister Faryal Talpur have been banned from travelling abroad by the Supreme Court (SC) in the wake of recent revelations in a fake bank accounts case. That they are accused of using 29 such accounts for suspicious transactions and money laundering amounting to Rs 35 billion, this is only tip of Zardari’s illegal iceberg. The vast assets Asif Zardari (friends and family) have acquired through illegally acquired income transferred abroad are well known but in different companies and names. Then consider the assets Asif Zardari had declared, this comes out of Haris Anderson’s fairy tales. One feels very sorry

for my good friend Hussain Lawai, it is his misfortune to have become the banker of a vile creature like Zardari. Unlike drug lords Chapo and Escobar Zardari has done nothing for the people of Sindh, he has only enriched himself. Because of new international laws Nawaz Sharif, Asif Zardari etc cannot camouflage their assets behind offshore companies anymore. UAE National Mr Nasser Lootah is a very nice man who has been a gracious host to Pakistan politicians and bureaucrats out of power for decades in Dubai. While he is just a frontman for Zardari in Summit Bank I am sure he would not like to run afoul of UAE laws and money-laundering. An honourable person who is very rich in his own right, Nasser Lootah is not likely to lie about Zardari's money-laundering. Why not the SC ask him how much is his investment in Summit Bank and how much is Zardari's?

Zardari and Faryal Talpur have been summoned by the FIA on July 11 and by the SC on July 12. If the subsequent investigation proceeds in the manner of the Panama JIT, Zardari friends and family will face a far worse fate than Nawaz Sharif and family. A change is definitely happening in Pakistan where the mighty and powerful are being charged for their crimes, unheard of not too long ago. Having beggared Pakistan through their version of democracy, they will be punished for their despicable crimes against the people of Pakistan

Ikram Sehgal is a senior defence and security analyst

Nagaland Unrest: Fate of “Indian Balkans”

Andrew Korybko

*Indian State of Nagaland is fuse which could easily light “India’s Balkans” ablaze in the Northeast. It could be a headache for Modi if the unrest doesn’t fully stabilize sometime soon. **The Indian state of Nagaland is poised to once more create a major headache for India if the unrest there doesn’t fully stabilize sometime soon, although this story is almost completely overlooked by the Mainstream Media’s blackout on the topic.***

This situation has calmed, at least for now, but the history of sudden explosive outburst of violence reminds us all those who followed the events that Nagaland is fuse which could easily light “India’s Balkans” ablaze in the Northeast. This isn’t by any means a new realization, but the contemporary domestic and international context has markedly changed since India’s independence and the original onset of the Naga conflict shortly thereafter. In light of the recent violence, and taking into consideration the relevant geopolitics of the New Cold War and the Modi Era, it’s worthwhile to conduct a strategic analysis about this long-standing issue and forecast the implications that an intensified renewal of the Naga Conflict could have for India and the “Greater South Asia” region at large.

The research begins by bringing the reader up to speed with the historical and recent context of this issue, and then proceeds to identify the most realistic interconnected catalysts which could spark a more pronounced aggravation of violence in and around Nagaland. The next part of the work then analyzes the domestic and international implications of an intensified Naga insurgency, while the final segment takes a look at the most feasible way that this conflict could be resolved in order to avoid the negative scenarios previously described.

Background Briefing

Historical

The Naga were never a part of what is generally considered to be “Indian Civilization”, at least in the sense of not going through the same historical experiences as most of contemporary India did during the Mughal Empire and its many predecessors. This is because the rugged and mountainous geography in the group’s homeland, as well as the ‘civilizational buffer’ of the Bengalis,

served to insulate them from the rest of the subcontinent's affairs. As a result, Nagaland wasn't even conquered by the British in the same way as they wrested control of the rest of India, but rather was taken from what was then Burma as a result of the Treaty of Yandabo which ended the First Anglo-Burmese War in 1826. Other Naga populations in what is nowadays northern Myanmar were occupied after the Third Anglo-Burmese War ended in 1885 with the annexation of what was at that time Upper Burma.

Following the conclusion of that conflict, all the Nagas were living in British India until London decided to make the Burma Province its own separate colony in 1937, arbitrarily giving Assam (of which most of the Nagas were administratively a part of at that time) to India despite its lack of historical connections with the rest of that political entity. This had the effect of drawing the modern-day dividing line between the Nagas in North-eastern India (then referred to simply as Assam) and their cross-border kin in Burma (nowadays Myanmar). Prior to their separation, however, both groups of Nagas converted en masse to Christianity as a result of the frenzied missionary activity which took place under British rule, and this further exacerbated this demographics' sense of identity separateness relative to the rest of their Indian 'compatriots'.

The distinct feeling of pride that the Nagas had retained during the British occupation became a political issue after London granted independence to its South Asian colonies, as the Nagas in the North-eastern Indian state of Assam did not want to be part of the newfound union and instead agitated for independence. According to New Delhi, they voluntarily acceded to join India, while Naga nationalists refute this and say that it was done under severe pressure and that they didn't really have a choice. The contradiction between these two narratives gave rise to an armed insurgency that began in the early 1950s and intermittently continues into the present day, though many of the militant actors have changed since then and the Indian government officially classifies some of them as being "terrorist groups".

Throughout the course of the conflict, a new demand began to arise, and that's the desire for Naga nationalists to create what they call "Nagalim", which is their term for "Greater Nagaland". Different groups have various interpretations over how large this entity should be, but its maximum extent covers almost half of Northeast India and a strip of northern Myanmar. Some organizations favour the sub-state creation of "Nagalim" purely within India's existing international borders but through the revision of domestic ones in the Northeast, while others want an independent state either on this territory and/or in northern Myanmar. After numerous rounds of peace talks, the government and the powerful National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Isak Muivah (NSCN-IM) militant

faction signed a Framework Agreement in August 2015, though the text has scandalously not been made public ever since.

Recent:

As could be expected, the “Nagalim” project is not only perceived as a threat by the central authorities in New Delhi, but also by the peripheral ones in the North-eastern states which stand to lose a large amount of their territory (or in the case of Manipur, all of it) if this vision is actualized to its maximum extent. Due to the “world’s largest democracy” being contradictorily opaque about releasing any details of the framework agreement, local political and civil society leaders in the region have legitimate reasons to fear that New Delhi’s peace with the Nagas might ultimately come at their territorial expense despite unnamed officials’ insistence to the contrary. From the opposite perspective, Naga nationalists argue that “Nagalim” should incorporate all of the contiguous areas presently inhabited by the Nagas, but this view predictably arises fear in the non-Naga populations that excessive migration into what they consider to be their ancestral homelands might lead to a series of Kosovo-like separatist scenarios which take away their land, whether in the form of a regional reorganization of state boundaries or outright separatism.

This feeling is especially pronounced among the Assamese, which have seen their administrative-political unit progressively decrease in size ever since 1947 as new states were intermittently carved out of it as the decades passed, Nagaland being one of them. The competing sub-state nationalisms at play in North-eastern India have led to a very explosive geopolitical situation which in many senses could be stereotypically simplified as “India’s Balkans”.

The focus of the present text isn’t to elaborate on the details of the other competing nationalisms present in “India’s Balkans”, whether it’s that of the Bengalis versus the Tripuris or the Assamese against the Bodos for example, but to stay focused on how the Naga issue in particular could impact on the region at large. The reader should never forget the degree of justifiable trepidation that the non-Naga population feels concerning the secret Framework Agreement, since they reasonably speculate that New Delhi – and especially boast-prone “56-inch chest” Modi – would have otherwise bragged incessantly about the details of the deal had it not contained some ultra-controversial aspects such as the partial territorial re-division of the Northeast.

The most likely reason why the government has remained so uncharacteristically tight-lipped about the agreement that’s supposed to end one

of India's longest-running insurgencies is because it acknowledges that the timing isn't right to reveal its contents, properly assessing that the Northeast might explode if the truth was bluntly disclosed. In conditioning the population to accept what might likely be the administrative-political expansion of Nagaland into the territory of neighbouring states, New Delhi wanted to 'cushion the blow' by using what it presumed to be its leverage over the Nagas in order to compel them into making concessions to their rigid socio-cultural standards which would thus make formal Naga rule over any forthcoming "non-Naga" (relative to "Nagalim", not their declared homelands) minority groups potentially more acceptable to the affected populations. The Nagas are known for being a very masculine culture which doesn't traditionally accept female governance, but it's precisely this element of their society which the central authorities tried to disastrously change just a few weeks ago.

The most direct cause of the recent unrest was New Delhi pressuring former Nagaland Chief Minister T. R. Zeliang to agree to a 33% female quota for all representatives elected to Urban Local Bodies (ULB). According to reports, he promised local tribal leaders that he would refuse what they viewed to be the illegal superimposition of Western 'modernity' onto their traditional culture, pointedly in alleged violation of Article 371 (A) of the Indian Constitution which stipulates that the Indian government cannot infringe on the "religious or social practices" or "customary law and procedure" of the Naga people.

Nevertheless, Zeliang supposedly reneged on his word and decided to implement the 33% quota anyhow for the upcoming ULB, which instantaneously triggered thousands of Nagas to riotously take to the streets in protest of what they believed was New Delhi's illegal socio-political power grab against their culture. Throughout the course of events, government buildings and vehicles were torched, three participants were killed by police, and a state-wide "bandh" (strike) froze Nagaland to a standstill until the ULB polls were declared null and void and Zeliang acquiesced to the demonstrators' will and resigned.

Zeliang's resignation narrowly avoided an even more lethal escalation of the conflict, as the only other possible recourse would have likely been to apply the provisions of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in giving the military the prerogative to shoot and kill any "threats" on sight and potentially place the state under "President's Rule" until the unrest could be quelled. In other words, the Nagas were very close to coming under the same sort of brutal oppression that the Kashmiris regularly experience had it not been for the sudden restoration of relative stability in the state. As seen from the jingoist perspective of the Modi-Doval national security state, the 'unexpected'

outbreak of violence in Nagaland ran the risk of disastrously spreading throughout the “Indian Balkans” (particularly Manipur and Assam) had it not been promptly stopped, which is why they were likely countenancing such draconian extreme measures in the event that the chaos continued.

India would rather not have to react this way for reasons which will be elaborated on soon in the text, but what’s important for readers to understand is just how close the “Indian Balkans” came just a few weeks ago to the brink of Hobbesian sub-state tribal-ethnic warfare and an approximate structural repeat of the Kashmir scenario, and all because New Delhi arrogantly, clumsily, and perhaps even illegally sought to impose its desired Western socio-cultural standards on the Naga.

Catalysts

While the situation in Nagaland has temporarily calmed down and seems to have stabilized, the underlying causes of the latest bout of violence and the ethno-separatist insurgency in general have yet to be fully dealt with. It’s indeed possible that the latter is secretly addressed in the mysterious Framework Agreement that New Delhi reached with the NSCN-IM, but there’s no way to know for certain. Even if it is, however, it’s likely that it’s being kept secret precisely because the eventual outcome is predicted to be unacceptable for the non-Naga populations which might be forced to cede their territory to “Nagalim” and come under that community’s overwhelming socio-political control, hence, to remind the reader, one of the most probable reasons why New Delhi might have been so desperate to infringe on the Naga’s masculine-dominated culture and risk the rapidly intensifying conflict which inevitably unfolded in order to placate the “minority” populations which would in that case have to eventually come under the Nagas’ control.

Looking forward and attempting to forecast the next crisis in the “Indian Balkans”, it’s very likely that it will in some way or another involve Naga-driven (even if New Delhi-initiated/-provoked) events, whether caused by the proactive moves taken by this group (protesting, rioting, taking up arms against the state, etc.) or the reactive ones of the neighbouring populations (i.e. non-peaceful responses to “Nagalim”).

There’s of course the possibility that one of the two other flashpoints explodes in the future instead, such as the regional spill over of the Bodo or other non-Assamese minority groups’ anti-state insurgency to other territorial units or the “Bengali issue” escalating to the point of international tensions, but keeping

with the theme of the present text, the article will continue analyzing the prospects for this happening with the Nagas. It can't be ruled out that the following triggers could also contribute to the aforesaid scenarios or vice-versa, owing to the complex interconnectivity of the "Indian Balkans" conflicts, but without further ado, here's what could happen to worsen the tense status quo in Nagaland:

* New Delhi continues to pressure the Nagas to acquiesce to what they view to be radical and incompatible socio-political concessions, inadvertently sparking renewed street unrest and the emboldening of separatist organizations alongside their increasingly popular appeal;

* In seeking to explain to the Nagas the reason behind the above and accommodate/appease them, New Delhi reveals some of the administrative-political territorial plans contained in the secretive Framework Agreement, thus triggering reactive violence among the affected non-Naga populations;

* The Framework Agreement collapses because either the NSCN-IM decides for whatever reason to abrogate its truce with New Delhi (perhaps due to popular grassroots pressure) or it's superseded in importance and widespread appeal by new or rival groups which provoke a new phase of conflict;

* The 'irredentist' Naga population contiguously outside of Nagaland agitates against the local non-Naga state authorities either out of anger at being excluded from the Framework Agreement's scope of authority (i.e. no New Delhi-approved creation of "Nagalim") or in riotous support of this measure;

* Cross-border attacks by Naga militants in Myanmar such as the NSCN-K who aren't party to the Framework Agreement prompt New Delhi into yet another 'hot pursuit' or 'surgical strike' just like in the summer of 2015, unwittingly provoking an international crisis between the two neighbours;

* The Myanmar's Tatmadaw start to suppress the Nagas in the northern part of the country, provoking a harsh response from the NSCN-K and other nationalist-militant (or, according to India, "terrorist") groups which spills across the border into India and/or inspires Naga "volunteers" to fight in Myanmar;

* and/or New Delhi overreacts to any of the above with a trigger-happy response characterized by a Kashmir-like orgy of AFSPA violence against the

population and the galvanization of a National Liberation Movement for Nagaland/"Nagalim".

To be sure, these scenarios could either occur independently of one another or in some sort of combination, but a detailed reading of the Nagaland Conflict indicates that these are nevertheless the most likely to happen if the examined conflict trajectory is to be advanced at all. That's not to say that they *will* occur, or that an unforeseen catalyst won't spark the cycle of violence instead, but just that the previously examined triggers are the most relevant ones at this time for observers to keep a watchful eye on.

Implications

It's impossible to know exactly how any large-scale Naga-provoked conflict in the "Indian Balkans" would unfold, so the author will refrain from speculating about the specific details of this course of events, but will instead examine the larger structural consequences that could be expected. These can be divided into two categories – domestic and international – with the "Two-Front War" concept bridging both of them. In progressive order from the least intense and impactful to the most, the expected consequences of a large-scale outburst of Naga violence is:

Domestic

*** Pre-Election Test for Modi:**

The Indian Prime Minister would come under immense pressure to resolve the conflict as soon as possible, with his political opponents capitalizing on any real or perceived misstep in order to score points ahead of the pivotal 2019 election.

*** Kick Start Internal Administrative-Political Reform:**

Whether limited to the "Indian Balkans" or ultimately expanded to other parts of the country such as West Bengal, the Naxalite-held areas of the eastern hinterlands, or Tamil Nadu, Indians will likely enter into a conversation about whether or not an updated 21st-century version of the States Reorganization Act is a long overdue necessity for preventing other similar sorts of conflicts from transpiring.

*** Copycat Conflicts:**

By its very nature in being the “Indian Balkans”, the Northeast ‘Seven Sisters’ could see a copy-cat effect of conflict breaking out within and among all or some of them, particularly as it relates to the future of “Nagalim” but also the two other flashpoints previously mentioned (Bodo and other minority separatism in Assam, and the Bengali issue in Tripura and elsewhere).

*** Low-Intensity ‘Civil War’ In the Northeast:**

Left unaddressed, the logical progression of a rapidly evolving Naga Conflict and consequent copycat ones in the region would be the de-facto start of low-intensity ‘civil war’ in the Northeast (relative to the unity and territorial integrity of the Indian state), with all of its resultant humanitarian risks of ethnic cleansing and even genocide.

*** “Act East” Is Indefinitely Frozen:**

Faced with a spiralling conflict or series thereof in the geo-pivotal North-eastern “Indian Balkans”, New Delhi’s “ASEAN CPEC” of the Trilateral Highway and other related infrastructure connectivity projects would indefinitely be frozen, therefore constituting a major security crisis for the country’s grand strategists and compelling them to rapidly react in one way or another.

*** The “Eastern Kashmir”:**

The Modi-Doval jingoists presently running India nowadays aren’t known for their patience or smooth handling of crises, so it’s very likely that they’ll overreact once they realize that their “Act East” project and ASEAN geopolitical legacy are at stake, and thus command the military to carry out a brutal Kashmir-like repression campaign in the region.

*** Two-Front War:**

The “Indian Balkans” have 45 million people in total, though Nagaland and “Nagalim” account for a considerably small percentage of the total, but in any case, the time, resources, and effort expended towards ‘keeping the peace’ after a large-scale insurgency might end up being much costlier than in comparatively less populated Kashmir, ironically serving as karmic justice for India after it endeavoured so hard to open up a two-front internal war against Pakistan in Baluchistan and the FATA.

International:

*** Two-Front War:**

There are international implications to the two-front war concept as well, since the porous and lightly policed border that India has with Myanmar but also Bangladesh (relevant in the event of a pertinent sub-state/international conflict) could be easily penetrated by militant non-state actors, eventually leading to a security dilemma between both states and the rebalancing of India's war doctrine.

*** Dragging Myanmar into the Mess:**

In the event that a Naga War gets too out of control, it's inevitable that Myanmar will somehow get dragged into the mess soon enough, whether through a cooperative anti-insurgent/"-terrorist" campaign with India or by being the recipient of New Delhi's 'hot pursuits'/'surgical strikes', the latter of which might be commenced without Naypyidaw's approval and could therefore lead to problems.

*** Myanmar's Meltdown:**

The Southeast Asian state is presently engaged in a multifaceted civil war against the Bengali "Rohingyas" and a various assorted of eastern rebels, to say nothing of the Colour Revolution threat posed by hyper-nationalist Buddhist monks, and the unexpected re-emergence of what was thought to have been a long-resolved front in this Hybrid War could trigger Myanmar's meltdown.

*** Naypyidaw Turns on New Delhi:**

While unlikely, there's the chance that Naypyidaw might turn on New Delhi if India gets arrogantly carried away with any cross-border strikes against Myanmar-residing Naga militants, which could produce a very negative reaction from Naypyidaw that might see it pivot towards China in response, though with a consequent Western-induced intensification of its civil war in vengeful response.

*** Pakistani Reverberation:**

If India is compelled to reorient its military-strategic focus from the Pakistani border towards the Myanmar's one in the Northeast because of the "Eastern

Kashmir” scenario, then New Delhi might take some of the Hybrid War pressure off of Islamabad, or contrarily, amplify it out of anger and a paranoid sense that Pakistan might have somehow ridiculously been behind the latest Naga Conflict.

*** The Strengthening Of the Chinese-Pakistani Strategic Partnership:**

As both sides are fond of saying, the strategic partnership between the two is as strong as steel and as high as the Himalayas, and this relationship will be reinforced even more amidst the period of internal Indian turmoil and potential international tensions with Myanmar, as the relative weakening of their rival cynically works out to their benefit by reorienting part of India’s military focus elsewhere.

*** China Wins Out In ASEAN:**

There doesn’t necessarily have to be a zero-sum competition between Asia’s two largest Great Power giants, but India has unfortunately framed the coming years as an epic strategic struggle against China, so in reference to this angle, any indefinite period of unrest in the “Indian Balkans” would stop New Delhi’s “Act East” strategy dead in its tracks and grant China the corresponding ‘win’.

*** India’s Implosion No Longer Becomes Taboo:**

The most admittedly extreme ramification of prolonged and/or ultra-intense conflict in the “Indian Balkans” would be that the topic of India’s possible implosion no longer becomes taboo, no matter how seemingly improbable, though this could also serve as the much-needed impetus for the country and its society to move forward with the realistic solution of a 21st-century States Reorganization Act.

The Pre-emptive Solution

The best way for India to deal with the apparently intractable interconnected series of nationalist-separatist conflicts in its “North-eastern Balkans” is to proactively take charge in preparing the region, and perhaps even the rest of the country, for a 21st-century States Reorganization Act. This historic 1956 document largely created the administrative-political basis for most of India’s modern-day states, stressing linguistic commonality as the key feature in each unit’s formation. In the contemporary context, however, it might be more

prudent to take ethno-cultural characteristics into account when dealing with the ‘Seven Sisters’.

Understandably, however, the reason why New Delhi hasn’t taken the brave step towards reconfiguring its territorial entities for the 21st century is because its leadership wisely understands that the clumsy execution of this ambitious policy could inadvertently lead to India’s unravelling and subsequent implosion, which is why it should only be carried out by the most effective technocrats. Importantly, the process must be completely transparent, too, unlike the secrecy surrounding the Framework Agreement which has predictably given rise to distrustful speculation about New Delhi’s motives against some of its own people.

The harsh reality is that the status quo in the “Indian Balkans” is unsustainable in the long-term except in the event that New Delhi turns all or part of this region into an “Eastern Kashmir” through AFSPA, so the logic in suggesting the proposed solution is to find a way to pre-emptively solve this geopolitical socio-cultural puzzle of multisided contradictions in the most peaceful manner possible, though understanding that all deals require every party to concede something in order to gain something else.

This will be hard to do in the “Indian Balkans” or even in other parts of the country for that matter, and it’s obvious that New Delhi has tried its hardest to keep the lid closed on what it legitimately believes to be a Pandora’s Box of the highest magnitude. Nevertheless, it might be inevitable for them to open that box one of these days anyhow, and the longer that India waits before doing so, the less likely it is to achieve the outcome that it desires, which is to keep the country together in its present boundaries (not counting for Indian-occupied Kashmir and “Arunachal Pradesh”/South Tibet, which are entirely separate matters unrelated to this proposal).

That can only happen with a progressive loosening of India’s political model into more of a traditionally federative one with increased flexibility, specifically as it relates to resolving the identity contradictions of the “North-eastern Balkans” through the reorganization of the administrative-political territorial entities. Whether or not this ultimately leads to the creation of a sub-state “Nagalim” is a moot point in this context because the broader idea being expressed is that such revisionist conversations need to begin taking place in Indian society first in order to brainstorm the most ideal solutions for resolving the conundrums of the ‘Seven Sisters’.

The ‘contagion effect’ that New Delhi so obsessively fears could break through the Siliguri Corridor’s “chicken neck” and ‘infect’ the rest of India might become a self-fulfilling prophecy if India allows its “North-eastern Balkans” to fester for too long and lead to the explosive conditions for having this happen, which is why the author believes it to be preferable for the country to initiate this discourse as soon as possible – perhaps beginning at the expert think tank level – in order to best prepare the population for this convincingly imminent eventuality in the most responsible way that it can.

Andrew Korybko specializes in Russian affairs and geopolitics, specifically the US strategy in Eurasia. His other areas of focus include tactics of regime change, colour revolutions and unconventional warfare used across the world. He contributes to the Expert council for the Institute of Strategic Studies and Predictions at the People’s Friendship University of Russia.

Assam: Why India denying Bengali Migrants?

Rajeev Ahmad

Since Muslim bashing ultra-Hinduism is the main driving force of Modi government, Assam has been observing a series of discontent and violence between these two religious groups. It appears as a successful strategy because the anti-Muslim Bengali sentiment is rising within the total demography.

Assam accommodates more than 50 different tribal, semi-tribal and plain land ethnic groups as well as several religions. According to the 2011 census, 61.47% of Assam's population was Hindus, 34.22% were Muslims and Christian was 3.7%. Hindus are predominant here, and the religion is playing the leading role in uniting many ethnic groups against a made-up enemy, Muslims. In addition to that most of Muslims are ethnic Bengalis, who speaks and practices Bengali Muslim culture.

Assam is a North-eastern India state, situated south of the eastern Himalayas along the Brahmaputra and Barak River valleys. It has the largest oil field (65 sq.km) of India and the field contains more than 160 million metric tonnes of crude oil. It is bordered by the state of Nagaland and Manipur to the east; Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram and Bangladesh to the south; West Bengal to the west via the Siliguri Corridor, which is the 14 miles strip of land that connects the state to the rest of India; and finally, Bhutan and the state of Arunachal Pradesh to the north.

The Moamoria rebellion that mainly took place between the Ahoms and the Moamorias (Chutias, Morans and Kachari supporters of the Moamara Sattras), made the ways for Burmese invasion and later British colonization during the first quarter of 19th century. Primarily Assam was made a part of the Bengal Presidency, then it was made a part of Eastern Bengal and Assam province in 1906, and in 1912 it was re-formed into a chief commissioners' province.

Assam is famous for its tea and silk. During the colonial period, tea plantations by the British companies mushroomed in Eastern Assam. But problems with the imported labourers from China and hostility with the locals resulted in the migration of forced labourers from central and eastern parts of India. In Shillong, the former capital of the region, a legislative council and, the Assam Legislative Assembly, were formed respectively in 1913 and in 1937. The British tea planter's imported labour from central India had been adding to the demographic canvas.

After the partition in 1947, Assam became a constituent state of India. The Sylhet district of present Bangladesh was given up to East Pakistan excluding the Karimganj subdivision. India divided Assam into several states. Naga Hills district took the name Nagaland and became the 16th state of India in 1963. To meet the political demands of the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo people, Meghalaya state was formed in 1972. In 1972, Arunachal Pradesh and were separated from Assam as union territories and declared as states in 1986.

The separatist movements of Assam started in 1970 following a conflict between the tribal and semi-tribal Assamese people and the Indian government over the federal centre Delhi's negligence and alleged colonization. According to several reports, the conflict took more than 30000 lives in Assam region within 5 decades. Several armed organizations contribute to the insurgency including the ULFA, the Adivasi National Liberation Army, Karbi Longri N.C. Hills Liberation Front (KLNLF) and the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) with ULFA perhaps the largest of these groups, and one of the oldest having been founded in 1979. It is now a widely accepted fact that the economic and developmental negligence by the Indian state is the main reasons behind the growth of this secessionist movement in Assam.

Hindutva is not new in Assam. The Hindutva based organisation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) had its presence in Assam before the partition of India. There are several allegations sprung up that the RSS has been attempting to club together the non-Muslim tribes under the umbrella of Hinduism. So far, the strategy is working in favour of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as the Party won the Assam Legislative Assembly election of 2016. Last year the RSS pranta prancharak of the Assam chapter told the media, "We are helping the BJP either directly or indirectly. Although the BJP runs the government today at the Centre, the credit has actually indirectly gone to the RSS. In Assam, BJP had no organisation before. Even though we have not claimed credit, it is because of the RSS that the BJP won in the state."

Many analysts believe that BJP-RSS has successfully diverted the poverty-driven secessionist movement into an anti-Bengali Muslim communal movement so that they can hide their failure to develop the Assamese society economically, politically and culturally. This BJP-RSS inflicted social communal tension has significant geopolitical value for India as well. It gives India a legitimacy to put pressure on Bangladeshi government since Indian security establishment considers and echoes the BJP-RSS narrative that the security crisis in Assam is mostly related to the illegal Bengali Muslim migrants.

On February 21, 2018, referring to reports of the increase in Muslim population in several districts of Assam, Indian army chief General Bipin Rawat said, “I think the proxy game is very well played by our western neighbour (Pakistan), supported by our northern border (China) to keep the area disturbed. We will continue to see some migration happening. The solution lies in identifying the problem and holistically looking at it.” The army chief gave some economic statements as well. He said that the Centre was seriously taking several measures to ensure the development of the region. “The development will finally happen in the area, that should take care of a lot of things,” he said.

According to the Aljazeera report, the government of Assam is preparing to publish a preliminary list of citizens to incorporate into its National Register of Citizens (NRC) but nearly five million people failed to provide documentation proving that their families lived there prior to 1971. The report also stated that the registration updating process was aimed at detecting and deporting undocumented immigrants from Bangladesh. Therefore, nearly five million Bengali Muslims in Assam are facing the threat of deportation.

Recently, National Security Advisor to Prime Minister of India Mr. Ajit Doval paid a visit to the US and Mr. Doval met his US counterpart HR McMaster, Pompeo, and CIA director-designate Gina Haspel. Stratfor reported that, during his visit, India was exploring a deepening defence partnership with the United State as it seeks to balance against an increasingly assertive China in the Indo-Pacific region. The meeting also included discussions on the long-pending bilateral Communications, Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA). The COMCASA is a precursor to Indian acquiring US advanced defence technologies and BECA is the foundation for any spatial cooperation between the two.

After his US visit, Mr. Doval came to Bangladesh for participating in BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) summit. It is highly anticipated within the analyst community that Mr. Doval conveyed some necessary messages which were decided in Washington for the stakeholders in relation to South Asia and Bangladesh in order to address the alleged Chinese assertion in South Asia. Many analysts believe that Assam is a geostrategic pressure point against Bangladesh, therefore, the timing of Mr. Doval’s Dhaka visit and the ‘5 million Muslim Bengali deportation from Assam’ threat signify that the Assam deportation issue is being used by the US- Indian strategists to limit Bangladesh’s rapprochement to China.

This is a clear path to increase the geopolitical crisis in the region. The communal and sectarian clash, which is aimed to contain and disturb Chinese envisioned projects in the region, will bring deadly chaos, opposition, the contradiction to India sought Act East policy. Such unwise US-India synchronized geostrategic push will also tear apart the harmonious relationship between the South Asian countries. Indeed, the wisest way for India is to develop and upgrade infrastructures, explore her economic potentiality with a humane approach, find ways to work with China in a win-win manner as she is already enjoying in BRICS and SCO forums. India shouldn't alienate herself from the South Asian regional politics, rather those alleged challenges involving China can be addressed and solved collectively with the help of her friendly neighbours.

In this regard, India should pay attention to collectively (Bangladesh, India, Japan and some European countries) develop the Brahmaputra river waterways and some river ports between Assam, Meghalaya, Bangladesh and the Bay of Bengal. It is a well-known fact that the mother of all conflicts lies in economic deprivation; in modern times, communication and transportation is one of the key factors for sustainable economic development. Therefore, this Brahmaputra river transportation system will solve the major part of the Indian North Eastern economic, social, ethnic and sectarian crisis. Pushing alleged Bengali Muslims into Bangladesh will never solve it; rather it will open up new doors to the path of global proxy warfare.

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