

The Battle without Borders

(La guerre sans frontiers)

Kawser Ahmed



OS DER
PUBLICATIONS

The Battle Without Borders

Kawser Ahmed

Published by

Osder Publications

House 9/A, Road 15 (New), 28 (Old)

Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1209, Bangladesh

Phone: 88 02 9134258

Email: info@osderpublications.com

Website : www.osderpublications.com

Copyright ©Author

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in form by any means without prior written permission from the publisher.

First Edition

June 2010

Price

Local : Tk. 500

Foreign : US S 40

Printinted by

Osder Printers

131 D1T Ext. Road Fakirapool

Dhaka-1000, Bangaladesh.

Cover Design

Abdullah al Mamun

ISBN : 978-984-33-1830-5

Dedicated
With profound love to

Mr. Zaidul Islam Pasha and Mrs. Rokeya Islam,
my father and mother in law for their continuous
support without which I could not
have come so far.

Foreword

I have gone through a number of articles written by Lieutenant Colonel Kawser Ahmed (retd) and I must say I am deeply impressed. That he is a patriot of the highest order and that he wants to share his views with other knowing persons around him has been obvious in the writings. Having been in the military for quite some time and inheriting the ethos of Officers' corps of the military, he seems to have been at ease while handling issues relating to peace and conflict both within and outside the country he lives in, but he never falters in undertaking such issues as education and nature of politics in a less developed society like Bangladesh. He is indeed a genuinely well-read young author. Though not well-versed in methodological niceties (and that is not an absolute necessity either in such small pieces published in a Daily), the host of references he has used to make his point clear and telling is admirable and excellent.

One may not agree to what he has stated in some of his articles, but I am sure, the readers will be extremely delighted and gainfully illuminated by going through the lines in most of the pieces. Some such quotations as; *'One is left with the horrible feeling now that war settles nothing; that to win a war is as disastrous as to lose one'*- Agatha Christie, or *'If a nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects whatever was and will never be'*- Thomas Jefferson, are much like precious gems collected from the shabby granary of the good old days. I have known Kawser for quite some time as a brilliant young man, always anxious to serve the nation in a meaningful way. If he is provided with opportunities for undergoing academic rigours in a stimulating environment, I am confident he will make his mark as a distinguished analyst.

I feel very strongly that if these articles are lumped together in the form of a book after an efficient editing, it is likely to serve two purposes: the coherence in the thinking of the author of the articles may surface and illuminate; it will provide a wider landscape where the readers can share some of the views of the author and through close interactions of the two, a new vista may emerge where the anti-war feelings may crystallize in to an action-plan.

Professor Emajuddin Ahamed
Vice Chancellor
University of Development Alternative
Former Vice-Chancellor
University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Preface

k's been a while since I was dreaming of publishing my series of adventurous efforts as a column writer. I undertook the enterprise of writing on contemporary issues in the newspaper - The Independent, back in September 2009, while I was genuinely chased by an amorphous idea - what motivates Al Qaeda operatives around the globe and why they are more successful than anyone else? It was germinating as I was participating in one of the seminars of Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESAS), Washington D.C. However, with a little effort, I sat on writing the first essay of this collection and initially named it as Battle of Narratives, why Al Qaeda wins? It appeared in three installments subsequently in editorial and post editorial. I wishfully also sent a copy to my supervisor professor at NESAS. Later on, NESAS agreed to print it as one of their whitepapers. And there commenced my ambitious venture of writing.

It was not incumbent on me to write on socio-political issues by my chance. I am neither an activists nor an organization affiliate. I am rather a commoner wandering within my own thoughts and dreams. But what used to stir me were the series of events unfolding around me. It used to generate questions about my perception of democracy, the world I live in, the society I represent etc. Thus the series of essays was the product of my intense thoughts on contemporary issues generating conflicts both globally and domestic. The essays collected in this book though will not suggest any prescription of conflict resolution; nevertheless, these are aimed at viewing conflicts from a different angle.

The essays are not politically motivated and have no intention to belittle the ruling political party rather it is a compilation of pure criticisms so that we all remain aware of the possible pitfalls. There are many viewpoints that might be available to readers but here, these are nine. Let me paraphrase Arundhati Roy's famous quote on power relationship which influenced me a lot as well, while Foucault was too difficult to comprehend. I join the club of powerless and I believe the universal struggle of powerful and powerless will go on.

"Yet just as inevitable as the journey that the powerful undertake is the journey undertaken by those who are engaged in the business of resisting power. Just as power has a physics, those of us who are opposed to power also have a physics. Sometimes I think the world is divided into those who have a comfortable relationship with power and those who have a naturally adversarial relationship with power".

Few of the essays were written while I was serving my magnificent time in Bangladesh Army. I also recall my wonderful time serving with civil administration of Rajshahi District during those extraordinary times

which gave me enough time and space for reconciliation and enable me to cast an inward look.

The book is titled, 'The Battle without Borders', underpinning my conception of a perpetual battle that is being waged and fought all day long against the oppressor, terrorist, fundamentalist, communist, democrats, extortionists, politicians, capitalists, guitarist, florist, cartoonist, intellectuals, pseudo-intellectuals, corporate, and ideologues equally. It is an all out war. Some are capitulating and some are being escaped miraculously. In a globalized world, war itself is a globalized phenomenon and fears are seeped into our thought process and intruded even in our dreams. It transpired to me that this battle is a difficult one where there is no enemy defined, no borders to demarcate, no victory to be achieved, no prophecy to guide. Either you kill or get killed. We have become so desperate that any collateral damage is acceptable, negotiable. Finally all the writers (if I may qualify as one of them!) of the world are possibly faced with a question; why do you write? I have a simple straight forward answer, I write because I feel good writing. I am not an activist rather an observer of social disorders and that is how I wish to perform my responsibility.

While acknowledging, my brother in law Mr. Shafiullah Siddique comes first who played a significant role turning me as a column writer in the newspaper. He sat the necessary background and encouraged me. With him naturally comes the Editor of The Daily Independent.

My wife naturally comes next who perforce shared her emptiness. My two sons deserve a mention here since they wondered what I write about. Finally, for financing the whole adventure, let me very profoundly acknowledge my Fupa Mr. Abdul Kahir Chowdhury and my maternal uncle Mr. Bulbul Ahmed who readily accepted to bear the expenditures. I owe them a lot. Last but not the least my mentor Professor Dil Rowshan Zinnat ara Nazneen actively enthused me for publication of these essays and Professor Aka Firowz Ahmad of Department of Public Administration who agreed to publish this as a collection. As I leapt from one life to another, these essays are the reflections of my struggle to understand various dynamics of contemporary world. I hope the readers would enjoy the reading.

June 2010

Kawser Ahmed
Phd Student
Peace and Conflict Studies
University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada

Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	iv
<i>Preface</i>	v
1. Battle of ideologies - why Al-Qaeda Wins?	9
2. The City of Qom and Iran's new Uranium Enrichment Facility – a message to the West	25
3. Obama and Nobel peace prize – does he deserve this? An inconvenient controversy	33
4. The contours of present Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship – a perspective view	39
5. Whither Afghan-Pak strategy?	53
6. Is an Endgame imminent in Afghanistan?	59
7. Of war and anti-war, a New Year anti war agenda	65
8. A Bollywood film and relevant thoughts on higher education system of Bangladesh	71
9. A reflection on democratic peace theory and Indo-Bangladesh relationship	77
10. UK Iraq inquiry - is democracy a myth or reality?	85
11. The Chequered history of religious based politics in Bangladesh – lessons to be learnt	91
12. Can non-violence be adopted as a political creed in 21st Century?	99
13. Bearing the burden of Majoritarianism – is it our fait accompli?	107
14. The Turkish Dilemma!	121
15. Guns for breads? Present Maoist movement in India and aftermath	129
16. Guns for breads? Causes of rise of Indian Maoism and its objectives	135
17. Guns for breads? Achievements, comparison of Maoist movement in India with Nepal and aftermath	141
18. Freedom of speech and related matters	149
19. Defining national security matters and need for founding a national crisis management body and its functionalities	157
20. The coming of fourth generation warfare: is modernization of armour corps at stake?	175
21. Civil military relationship (CMR) – complementary or contradictory: a Bangladeshi perspective	193
22. The present and future of food security - an afterthought	213
Annexure	

1

Battle of Ideologies – Why Al-Qaeda Wins?

How superior the tactics of war, how potent the weapons, without gathering in the hearts of the people the sword edge will shatter, the spear will bend.

Let-We Thondra (c. 1723-99), Aung San Suu Kyi in Freedom from fear and other writings (1995)

Regardless if Osama is killed or survives, the awakening has started, praise to be God.

Osama bin Laden, videotaped speech, broadcast on 27 December 2001.

Have we ever pondered about a battle, which is more complex than a science fiction? A battle waged when our intelligence is manipulated, perception distorted, justice undelivered and above all our ideologies attacked. Do we believe that this tug of war relentlessly being pursued by some in establishing their ideologies over others? While we talk about ideologies, we generally mean, ‘the body of ideas reflecting the social needs and aspirations of an individual, group, class, or culture. It is a set of doctrines or beliefs that form the basis of a political, economic, or other system’. Thereby ideologies are so important to us. It is what we stand for and believe. Interestingly, it seems to be transcending faster, quicker and being enforced nowadays. Moreover, those who resist it are found to be eliminated violently. However, this phenomenon is not new at all and most of the conflicts in the history rather started with the effort of establishing ones ideologies over others.

If we only look back at recent two major conflicts in human histories; World War II and Cold War, we shall find elements of truth in it. WW-II started with the idea to postulate the supremacy of ‘Aryan race’ in European theater and the Japanese race over the Chinese in Asian theater. The rise of Third Reich and the Adolf Hitler’s political party are cases in point. In the 1920s, during which Hitler’s early political career began as he outlined his narratives in his momentous work ‘Mein Kampf’ (My Struggle). However, his writings and methods were heavily influenced by

Nietzsche's idea of 'Superman' but at the same time, he also adopted the theme from the prevailing circumstance. One of the ideas he postulated is quoted below:

'What history taught us about the policy followed by the House of Habsburg was corroborated by our own everyday experiences. In the north and in the south the poison of foreign races was eating into the body of our people and even Vienna was steadily becoming more and more a non-German city. The 'Imperial House' favoured the Czechs on every possible occasion. Indeed it was the hand of the goddess of eternal justice and inexorable retribution that caused the most deadly enemy of Germanism in Austria, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, to fall by the very bullets which he himself had helped to cast. Working from above downwards, he was the chief patron of the movement to make Austria a Slav state'.

Among other elements there were anti-Semitism, anti-communism, anti-parliamentarianism, German expansionism, belief in the superiority of an 'Aryan race' and an extreme form of German nationalism were ingrained in the themes. Hitler personally claimed he was fighting against Jewish Marxism. His views were more or less formed during the periods of his poverty stricken years as a young adult in Vienna and Munich prior to World War I. During this period, he turned to Nationalist-oriented political pamphlets and anti-Semitic tabloids and in the closing months of World War I, when Germany lost the war and Hitler is said to have developed his extreme nationalism and a desire to "save" Germany from both external enemies and internal ones who in his view betrayed it. For Japan, it used Fascism as an ideology, which perceived, '*the nation was more important than the individual, and a nation became great by expanding its territory and building its military*'. The Cold War, which started right after the capture of Berlin by Russians, came out with other facets of this game of ideologies-universal communism. The method preached by communists was systematic liquidation of bourgeois class through violent means and fostering universal equality in economic and social spheres. It was a powerful dose against the western liberalism and bourgeoisie culture, which grew rapid popularity in nook and corners of the poverty stricken, hapless population of the world.

The narratives of Lenin would further corroborate the importance of it. Lenin argued that, the proletariat could only achieve revolutionary consciousness through the efforts of a communist party that assumes the role of "revolutionary vanguard". Lenin further believed that such a party could only achieve its aims through a form of disciplined organization

known as democratic centralism. Other beliefs of Lenin included the need to spread the communist revolution to other countries, a belief that imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism and the exclusion of any compromise with the bourgeoisie. It was indeed a powerful dictum until 1990.

Therefore, any kind of ideology which basically underscores causes of poverty due to class difference, injustice due to manipulation is bound to persuade people to rally behind a cause where sacrificing their lives becomes a petty issue (e.g. suicide bombing of Palestinians and Al Qaeda). It works well for the poor and downtrodden, as their belief system is open to manipulation and hardly fortified then the rich. Now let me introduce the Super-Ideology; religion. Probably it is the single most ideology people always wanted to impose on others over the years of human history of conflict. To some extent, it blurs the line of reality and rationalization, which takes human to the next level from where he visualizes the life on earth trifling. It binds various sects, division to a single thread even if they are geographically isolated. It is similar to the effect of drugs, once it is high, anything is possible and heavens seem be much lower and attainable. This is the strength of ideologies, once put in the right time and right place it overtakes all other obstacles and tend to convert man to a superman (able to do anything for nothing!).

Whatever is the 'ideology,' it needs a carrier, which is called 'Narrative'. These are the stories, which are woven carefully keeping in view the ultimate objectives of a campaign. The stories are made in such a way that it firstly should be believable and later be actionable by the target audience. It is thus naturally based on ideologies of different kinds; religion, economy, xenophobia, as it suits a particular period and context. After the demise of Cold War, when the West was basking in the sun with superficial complacency of winning a war without fighting it, a new group was gradually regrouping based on a new narrative. Nevertheless, this time, the group appears to be far more creative and has chosen a different landscape to fight its war. They chose not to be geographically constrained rather wanted to be omnipresent. In the meantime, the West due its sophisticated complacency stripped off its intelligence gathering capabilities to a great extent and relied more on economic power to win over the hearts and minds of its enemies (?) but ironically, the enemies could not be differentiated in its classical term. Saddam Hussein as a credible target offered the first opportunity when he attacked oil rich neighbour- Kuwait. The west played down the card of liberator quickly and the rest of the world complied. The equation in first Gulf War was

pretty much simple; a visible enemy and a disproportionately superior coalition force to crush it militarily. The end result was thus obvious and a military victory was declared when ‘All quiet on the Kuwaiti front’ seemed obvious. U.S. being the sole superpower patted itself as it could perform as ‘liberator of tyranny and injustice’. The first phase went well. None noticed the pile of hatred being compiled elsewhere. A new enemy was on the offing with new strategy, novel weapon, new ideology and a brand new narrative.

The Beginning of Battle of Narrative and Its Evolution

To my understanding, the first clue of such civilizations are in conflict was narrated by Samuel P. Huntington fifteen years agoⁱⁱ. No doubt, this was a new idea, perhaps a thesis, which identified an upcoming conflict, referred to the clash between the Western civilization and the rest. Of the rest, he considered the greatest challenges to the West would come from the Islamic civilization and the Sinic, or Confucian civilization. These challenges would be very different because these civilizations were not identical. However, together they could become a monstrous combination, a dynamic duo that might raise very serious challenges to the West. Since Huntington published his thesis, these challenges have indeed occurred. We all know about the conflict that we have with at least the Islamic extremists (though a misnomer), the Islamists within the Islamic civilization - not only with Al Qaeda since 9/11, but then in Iraq and now in Afghanistan. There is also the clash with the Chinese civilization. This takes a very different form, being much more a competition over “smart power” and “soft power” than over “hard power”. But this is also a conflict that may become more intense in the next generation. As society shifted to information, so did conflict. This was all about the Western perception of a new battleground. This initiated the process for ‘the clever enemy’ to rally the anti Western forces under one umbrella. There is no such country or combination of countries or group of people, which can be grouped comfortably together as the ‘new enemy’ but here is the manifestation of the power of narrative, which made it possible. The new narrative bounded so called oppressed groups/people together proclaiming how the West has already dumped them. The rhetoric to confront West thus started gaining momentum. This enemy of the West collected the strings of injustices both domestic and international, mingled with the religious fervour and then propagated it in various societies. There is a paradox being visible here. Usually the call for religious extremism used to work well in the economically poor countries but this time it equally could draw attention in most of the rich

and western societies (e.g. London and Bali bombing). The feeling of isolation was tremendous and those who felt such could identify the common causes of how West perpetrated injustices to them. This was a strong binding force and could transcend the domestic boundaries with the help of technology. Aftermath of 9/11, when as a wounded bull, U.S. was bullying everybody; George Bush Junior further exacerbated this. His classification of world communities into two groups; ‘*those who are with us and those who are not*’ further sealed the fate of the success of ‘Global war on terror’. The term, ‘Axis of Evil’ and a wholesale branding of list of countries as a potent manufacturer of terrorists further strengthened the other bloc which was not only benefitted from the circumstances but also became more entrenched. These were the power of narratives; if you use it carelessly, it will aid your enemy.

Why War Requires a Narrative? Technology- the Bearer of Narrative

All wise Clausewitz once mentioned, “*Military institutions and the manner in which they employ violence depended on the economic, social and political conditions of their respective states.*”ⁱⁱⁱ Every war reflects society and it germinates within its own socio-political system. At times, despite of flimsy causes wars were waged, later on only to be justified through a stronger narrative. However, there are economic, political and social contexts on which narratives are drawn and technologies are always used to convey it to target audience. Due to rapid enhancement of communication ability in both electronic and print media, narratives can now travel faster. The text and graphics of the narrative are spread by using appropriate technology. Suitable technology with proper synchronization of time and place can play marvel as the case of Osama bin laden and Palestinian Intifada demonstrated number of times. There is a ‘catch’, which is sometimes overlooked by the West. It is the degree of sophistication of technology in use. When West thinks in terms of Internet, Blogs, Tweeter and Facebook, the AL Qaeda operatives use so called primitive tools for communication like; letters, weekly sermon in Mosques, wall writings, oral messages etc. We can argue on many issues about the ‘War on Terror’ but after eight years we have to agree that Al Qaeda is in the winning side in terms of death and destruction and waning of political will of the West. The essence thus lies not in type of technology but the effectiveness of it, which tends to be very local and grown within the culture of the population. Technology must talk in their language not ours. This blending of technology is of paramount importance and reaching out to the sympathizers of enemy depends on

this. For example, in the last year, an opinion poll showed that general Iraqis interpreted the multimillion dollar US project of winning hearts and minds of Iraqis as sheer propaganda. The reckoning came very late in the western quarters.

Successful and Unsuccessful Narratives in History

In this context, let's scrutinize some successful and relatively unsuccessful narratives in history, which could effectively generate conflicts. To begin with, it is probably Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam who first imitated and improved on Mao's revolutionary technique and translated it to his own. It fitted so well that during the US engagement in Vietnam, it used international networks to change the correlation of forces. It was also a first televised war where narratives were graphically transmitted which eroded public support in US homeland for the war itself. Though Tet Offensive was a disaster tactically, Ho Chi Minh won strategic victory. It used political power to negate US military power. The scenario on TV of US embassy evacuation in the final end of the campaign literally destroyed total support of US and its will power to continue the war.

Next appears the Sandinistas of Nicaragua. When the coalition of insurgent groups was defeated militarily five times, it found no other way other than shifting to information campaign. Their target was US Congress. Their channel was international media, celebrities, Christian churches (e.g. the philosophy of Liberation Theology - the idea that the Catholic Church should assist the poor in overthrowing repressive regimes) and lobbyists. Their strong media war especially with churches quickly eroded US support to sustain the conflict. Finally, there was no Phase III offensive by the Sandinistas as they won the war without resuming it at all.

Here is an interesting contradiction of the battle of narratives in Israel-Palestine conflict. During first Intifada, which was a spontaneous eruption of resistance by the Palestinians was organized within weeks through a "self organizing web". It never had a military aspect ingrained in it. The simple message was the resistance to be put up against Israeli occupation and sheer injustices since 1973. The context was for Palestinians 'we are holding our own'. International community watched the famous photograph where children vs. powerful Israeli army were juxtaposed. It became the most powerful lasting image that built world opinion against the Israelis. The Israelis considered Israel proper to be safe and occupied zone to be unsafe and went into ruthless suppression. Finally, it resulted into 1993 Oslo Accords. Nevertheless, for second Intifada, which is called Al Aqsa Intifada, we find reverse roles. Now

Israel went back as besieged and Palestinians turned out to be ruthless terrorists. These quickly built opinions against the Palestinians as US declared no negotiation until terror stops, supported Israeli security techniques which includes seizure of more territory in the West Bank. The most damaging part was the suicide bombers, which worked negatively.

During the US surge in Iraq in order to stop the Al Qaeda overreach, US shifted its narrative to help Sunnis defend themselves (e.g. the case of Al Anbar province). It separated warring parties and turned back civil war though the situation is “still fragile and reversible”. Lastly, in Swat Valley of Pakistan, the Taliban overreach of places close to Islamabad prompted government action. In the meantime, “Taliban Sharia” alienated population largely and expansion of Taliban influence region provoked government stern action in the region to get back the lost territory. However, the key issue remains to be the rehabilitation of refugees.

Most important lesson learnt in this section is *‘attack political will power of the adversary so that he is unwilling at some point of time to continue the war’*. Has Al Qaeda achieved it? Alternatively, are they close enough to achieve it? Only time will handover the verdict.

How Ignorance Builds a Narrative to Widen the Extremist Recruitment? The Chemistry of Suicide Bombers

Reacting to the spectacular and violent events of 11 September 2001 and the emergence of al-Qaeda as a defining terrorist threat, many Western observers and policy-makers have tended to group all forms of Islamism together, brand them as radical and treat them as hostile. However, this monolithic concept is both fundamentally misconceived and misleading in its policy prescriptions. Islamism – or Islamic activism (I treat these terms as synonymous) – has a number of very different streams, only a few of them violent and only a small minority justifying a confrontational response. Let us start to distinguish between Shiite and Sunni Islamism. Shiism is the minority variant of Islam (Sunnis constitute over 80 percent of Muslims) and the most widespread and natural form of Shiite activism has been communal. For this reason, and because of the leading political role played by scholars and religious authorities, Shiite Islamism has remained unified to a remarkable degree and has not fragmented into conflicting forms of activism, as has Sunni Islamism. Sunni Islamism – on which most Western emphasis is today placed, and about which most fears are held – is widely viewed as uniformly fundamentalist, radical, and threatening to Western interests. Yet it is not at all monolithic. On the

contrary, it has crystallized into three main distinctive types, each with its own worldview, *modus operandi* and characteristic actors:

- **Political:** Islamic political movements that generally accept the nation-state and operate within its constitutional framework, eschew violence (except under conditions of foreign occupation), articulate a reformist rather than revolutionary vision and invoke universal democratic norms. The characteristic actor is the party-political militant.
- **Missionary:** the Islamic missions of conversion (*al-da'wa*), exemplified by the highly structured Tablighi movement and the highly diffuse Salafiyya movement, whose overriding purpose is the preservation of the Muslim identity and the Islamic faith and moral order against the forces of unbelief. The characteristic actors are missionaries (*du'ah*) and the 'ulama.
- **Jihadi:** the Islamic armed struggle (*al-jihad*), which exists in three main variants: internal (combating nominally Muslim regimes considered impious); irredentist (fighting to redeem land ruled by non-Muslims or under occupation); and global (combating the West). The characteristic actor is, of course, the fighter (*al-mujahid*).

If we look closely in the Middle East, North Africa, Central, South and South East Asia, the role of Islamist movements in Muslim societies and the relationship between Islamism, violent conflict and pressure for reform, the above-mentioned grouping holds good. It is also true that both the differences and similarities, putting the current high visibility of Islamism into political, social and historical context varies from place to place depending on the regime in power and cultural alienation. Political Islam plays favorably in many societies and becomes an easy tool for suppression, which sometimes is misjudged by the West (e.g. the case of Pakistan).

Let us now scrutiny 'The Suicide Terrorism Database' in Flinders University in Australia which collated information on suicide bombings in Iraq, Palestine-Israel, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Srilanka, which together accounted for 90% of all suicide attacks between 1981 and 2006. Analysis of the information contained therein yields some interesting clues: it is politics more than religious fanaticism that has led terrorists to blow themselves up. The evidence from the database largely discredits the common wisdom that the personality of suicide bombers and their religion are the principal cause. It shows that though religions can play a vital role in recruiting and motivating potential future suicide bombers, the driving force is not religion but a cocktail of motivation including

politics, humiliation, revenge, retaliation and altruism. The configuration of these motivations is related to the specific circumstances of the political conflict behind the rise of suicide attacks in different countries^{iv}.

Here is a case study of a single town of 50,000 people along the Mediterranean coast of Libya, called Darnah. Of the 606 militants cataloged in the Sinjar records in Iraq, almost 19 percent had come from Libya. Indeed, the largest number of militants in the Sinjar records; 244 of them, were Saudi nationals. However, in per capita terms, Libyans represented a much higher percentage. Perhaps the most startling detail: of 112 Libyan fighters named in the papers, an astoundingly large number - 52 - had come from this city. There might be many reasons **that** need to be determined but economic desperation alone doesn't fully explain the readiness of Darnah's young men to join the insurgents in Iraq. There are tens of millions of impoverished Muslims in the world, but only a handful - perhaps a few hundred at any given time - traveled to Iraq to fight. There is little consensus about what ultimately motivates them, what changes someone from a disgruntled viewer of cable news into a suicide killer. "That's the big mystery," says Brian Fishman, a West Point counterterrorism expert who has extensively analyzed the Sinjar records. "The dynamics are very, very local"^v. For the individual, participating in a suicide mission is not about dying and killing alone but has a broader significance for achieving multiple purposes- from personal to communal. These include gaining community approval and political success; liberating the homeland; achieving personal redemption or honour; refusing to accept subjugation; seeking revenge for personal and collective humiliation; conveying religious or nationalistic convictions; expressing guilt, shame, material and religious rewards; escaping from intolerable everyday degradation of life under occupation etc. The narratives are carefully woven around these local issues, which capitalize it to a far wider degree where causes become universal and precious life is motivated to seek redemption.

Broad Themes of Al Qaeda Narratives

Followings are the main theme based on religion that Al Qaeda exemplifies:

- Jihad (holy war) by the fearless warriors
- Mujahideen (holy warriors) the chosen ones
- Shuhada (martyrs) destined for a promised 72-virgins
- Jannah (Paradise) as reward for killing us alleged
- Kuffr (infidels) and, in time, the alleged
- Shaitan al-Kabir (the Great Satan, America)

There is an interesting similarity with the Soviets' and Fidel Castro's communist narrative of so-called:

People's Democracy as a reward for killing all of us
 Fascists and for defeating the evils of
 American Imperialism
 Wars of National Liberation by alleged
 Progressive Movements
 Patriotic Fronts on their way to heaven-on-earth

As mentioned before, religion serves the purpose of unity more than anything does if this card is played cleverly. It is a fact that, when propagation, opinion building by using religious rhetoric is far simpler to achieve, it becomes a multibillion dollar high tech project for West to counter it. Think about a small village in the hinterland of Bangladesh. When Saddam Hussein captured Kuwait and coalition forces went into defeating them, he instantly became a local hero who was supposedly fighting the infidels. Many families named their newborns after his name. A simple mechanism works behind constructing such popularity through the preaching of religious sermons and doctrines. In Bangladesh (similarly in Pakistan, Afganistan), there are thousands of Madrasas and mosques which portrayed Saddam Hussein as an icon of fighting the enemies of Allah. The words of the religious leaders, teachers were good enough to build opinions quickly with amazing tempo. It is called religious zeal. The weekly gathering in mosques, congregations and religious schools are powerful motivating stations from where indoctrinations can be done far more cheaply and effectively than that of internet, blog and tweeter. Thus, it is cheaper and more personal which lasts long in the mind of youths – a prime target for religious indoctrination.

The Narratives of Al Qaeda

Lets first scrutiny the text of this creative and dynamic group which first appeared with its opening narrative probably somewhere in 1999, emphasizing, “It is obvious that the media war in this century is one of the strongest methods; in fact its ratio may reach 90 percent of the total preparation for the battles”- Osama bin Laden. Who knew this could be so deadly correct. Later the deputies of Osama bin Laden appeared on 9 July 2005 and declared, “I say to you: that we are in a battle and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. And that we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our Ummah.” Ayman al-Zawahiri, Letter to Al-Zarqawi. Al Qaida opened up the campaign in media, drew adequate strategy based on prevalent double

standard of west and went on rallying the Muslim Ummah. The concept and perception of Muslim Ummah is little misleading though it still superficially represents a supra national identity. The west quickly fell into the trap and declared war against whole Muslim communities thereby solidifying the Ummah which was not so strong before ideologically. Interestingly during this period, U.S. due to its overconfidence started dismantling its overseas outreach centers named USIS largely. Now that ushered the initial phase of U.S. and western demise in the battle of narratives.

Competition of Narratives, Government vs. Terrorists/Extremists

Extremists / terrorists enjoy a relative advantage in competing with Government. The Government is always reactive to events while they enjoy the superiority of time and space. They can act proactively. Usually most of the Governments do not keep any prepared narratives off the shelf to counter such scenarios prior. Extremists / terrorists know their message can play wonder if they can only highlight the perceived injustices. The promises are initial step and never have to be fulfilled. Even the promises are super natural and due to be fulfilled in afterlife only. Whereas Government must deliver security first, promise for a better future, devise strategy of backlash to insurgent rule and have to prove the narratives false to the populace. Here lies a technical difficulty (!) in respect to 'young democracies'. In such cases, one of the ruling party's has to share power with one of the religion based political parties (e.g. Bangladesh and Pakistan), which will take advantage of its power sharing relationship. Implementing rules, which will contravene or hurt the religious sensitivity of the populace is still a taboo and might be a source of popular upheavals compelling Governments to compromise (e.g. the Women Act of Bangladesh during the caretaker government).

Terror is a method not an enemy, the "war on terror" catch line has seemed to validate the jihadi claim of a clash of civilizations between Islam and the west. That in turn assists al-Qaeda and its affiliates in drawing the myriad conflicts in the Middle East into a single narrative of western oppression. Thus US policy has provided a unifying thread for groups across the region that have otherwise wholly different objectives and perspectives on Islam. The idea of one struggle encourages Shia terrorists to make common cause with Sunni, secular Muslims with fundamentalists. Thus, al-Qaeda has had considerable success in establishing an overarching ideological "order", tapping into Islamist and other terrorist groups across the region.

Why Western Narratives Fail?

What fundamentally goes wrong with western narrative is aptly summarized by Conn Hallinan, on November 27, 2007 in an issue of *Foreign Policy in Focus*^{vi}. This is quoted below:

Reporter Chris Hedges, who talked with soldiers, officers, and medical personnel in Iraq, said his interviews “revealed disturbing patterns of behavior by American troops: innocents terrorized during midnight raids, civilian cars fired upon when they got too close to supply columns. The campaign against a mostly invisible enemy, many veterans said, has given rise to a culture of fear and even hatred among U.S. forces, many of whom, losing ground and beleaguered, have, in effect, declared war on all Iraqis.” Sgt. Camilo Mejia told Hedges that, as far as the deaths of Iraqis at checkpoints, “This sort of killing of civilians has long ceased to arouse much interest or even comment.”

Except among the survivors and relatives, of course, who now know who their enemy is. “Our children are being killed. Our homes are being destroyed. We are bombed. What should we do?” asks Abdul Qader, who lost seven family members in a June 29 U.S. air strike that killed 60 people in southern Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

“The Americans are killing and destroying a village just in pursuit of one person [Osama bin-Ladin],” one man told The New York Times. “So now we have understood that the Americans are a curse on us, and they are here just to destroy Afghanistan.”

Israeli psychologist Nofer Ishai-Karen and psychology professor Joel Elitzur interviewed 21 Israeli soldiers who served in the Occupied Territories. They found that the soldiers routinely engaged in murder, assault, threats and humiliation, and many of them enjoyed it.

“The truth is that I love this mess—I enjoy it. It is like being on drugs,” one soldier told them. Another said, “What is great is that you don’t have to follow any law or rule. You feel you are the law, you decide. Once you go into the Occupied Territories, you are God.”

One soldier told a story about seeing a four-year-old boy playing in the sand in his front yard during a curfew in Rafah. The soldier says his officer “grabbed the boy. He broke his hand here at the wrist, broke his leg here. And started to stomp on his stomach, three times, and left. We are all there, jaws dropping, looking at him in shock...the next day I go out with him on another patrol, and the soldiers are already starting to do the same thing.”

A few hours with the works of Goya will give one an idea of how the French army behaved in Spain.

When U.S. helicopter gunships killed 16 people October 23 in a small northern Iraqi village near Tikrit, military officials said the dead were insurgents, because many of them were “military-age males,” a category that embraces about one-third of the population. Not many “hearts and minds” were won this past October near Tikrit.

Whatever the good intention is mentioned in the initial phases of campaign it soon loses ground. It keeps on deviating from the truth and the truth is very hard to reconcile. Western narratives thus likely to fall flat because it overlooks the core issue of constructing a believable narrative. If the trajectory of words and deeds are ever diverging than it is impossible to make your narrative acceptable. Until today we continuously see the death of civil population both in Iraq and Afghanistan in the name of collateral damage to such a horrendous degree that every piece of good intention of the western narrative is being ridiculed. The above-mentioned psychology of the occupiers can never be translated as liberators whatever amount of money and good will is put therein. The west has to surmise this in due course of time.

In the concluding part of this essay, let us share one common theme in the battle of narratives. Middle East correspondent Robert Fisk has cited T.E. Lawrence to this effect^{vii}: “Rebellion must have an unassailable base...it must have a sophisticated alien enemy, in the form a disciplined army of occupation too small to dominate the whole area effectively from fortified posts. It must have a friendly population, not actively friendly, but sympathetic to the point of not betraying rebel movements to the enemy. Rebellions can be made by 2 percent active in a striking force, and 98 percent passive sympathy. Granted mobility, security...time and doctrine...victory will rest with the insurgents, for the algebraical factors are in the end decisive.” Thus it is really difficult to occupy without a proper narrative. There is more to this than words, of course. Language has driven policy. Terrorism in the Middle East is not monolithic. Even within avowedly violent groups there are often leaders ready to consider political accommodation. Hamas is one example. If we put everyone in the same jihadi box and an opportunity will be lost to isolate irredentist Islamists. There have been moments when the Bush administration might have recognised this. Two years ago, under the guidance of former state department official Robert Zelikow, there was a move to drop "war on terror". Officials began experimenting with alternatives such as "the global struggle against violent extremism". This is working fine and Obama administration is trying desperately to rein the situation. Barak Obama's June 4th speech in Al Azhar University in Cairo is definitely a

memorable narrative which touched millions of Muslims around the world. His eloquence and use of rhetoric is a piece of art in some sense. Again, the corner stone is 'Deeds not Words'. Few important parts of the speech are quoted below:

"We meet at a time of tension between the United States and Muslims around the world – tension rooted in historical forces that go beyond any current policy debate. The relationship between Islam and the west includes centuries of co-existence and co-operation, but also conflict and religious wars. More recently, tension has been fed by colonialism that denied rights and opportunities to many Muslims, and a cold war in which Muslim-majority countries were too often treated as proxies without regard to their own aspirations. Moreover, the sweeping change brought by modernity and globalisation led many Muslims to view the west as hostile to the traditions of Islam.

So long as our relationship is defined by our differences, we will empower those who sow hatred rather than peace, and who promote conflict rather than the co-operation that can help all of our people achieve justice and prosperity. This cycle of suspicion and discord must end.

I do so recognising that change cannot happen overnight. No single speech can eradicate years of mistrust, nor can I answer in the time that I have all the complex questions that brought us to this point. But I am convinced that in order to move forward, we must say openly the things we hold in our hearts, and that too often are said only behind closed doors. There must be a sustained effort to listen to each other; to learn from each other; to respect one another; and to seek common ground. As the Holy Koran tells us: "Be conscious of God and speak always the truth." That is what I will try to do – to speak the truth as best I can, humbled by the task before us, and firm in my belief that the interests we share as human beings are far more powerful than the forces that drive us apart."

I hope that the conviction, which is reiterated in the above narrative, would work towards mutual fulfillment of hopes and aspirations of all the civilizations already embroiled into conflict.

End Notes:

- i. Adolf Hitler, *Main Campf*, page 28.
- ii. Samuel P. Huntington published, first an article ("The Real Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993) and then as a book (*The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon and Schuster, 1996).
- iii. *On War*, Clausewitz, Paret translation, page 6.
- iv. Riaz Hassan, an ARC professional fellow and emeritus professor in the department of sociology at Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia.
- v. Cover Story: The Jihadist, Destination Martyrdom, what drove so many Libyans to volunteer as suicide bombers for the war in Iraq? A visit to their hometown—the dead-end city of Darnah. By Kevin Peraino, NEWSWEEK. From the magazine issue dated Apr 28, 2008.
- vi. Published by Foreign Policy in Focus (FPIF), a project of the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS, online at www.ips-dc.org). Conn Hallinan, "The Algebra of Occupation" (Washington, DC: Foreign Policy In Focus, November 27, 2007).
- vii. Robert Fisk is an English writer and journalist and Middle East correspondent of the 'The Independent', who has been based mainly in Beirut for more than 30 years. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Edward Lawrence CB, DSO, known professionally as T. E. Lawrence, was a British military officer renowned especially for his liaison role during the Arab Revolt of 1916-18. His vivid writings, along with the extraordinary breadth and variety of his activities and associations, have made him the object of fascination throughout the world as Lawrence of Arabia, a title popularised by the 1962 film *Lawrence of Arabia* based on his life.

(This essay was adapted by Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies-NESA, National Defence University, Washington D.C, U.S. and translated into French and Arabic for publication in one of their white papers. Volume-1, Number-5, April-2010.)

2

The City of Qom and Iran's New Uranium Enrichment Facility-a Message to the West

'The Qom is a place that, excepting on the subject of religion and settling who are worthy of salvation and who to be damned, no one opens his lips. Every man you meet is either a descendant of the Prophet or a man of law... Perhaps, friend Hajji, you do not know that this is the residence of the celebrated Mirza Abdul Cossim, the first mushtehed (divine) of Persia; a man who, if he were to give himself sufficient stir, would make the people believe any doctrine that he might choose to promulgate. Such is his influence, that many believe he could even subvert the authority of Shah himself and make his subjects look upon his firmans as worthless, as so much waste paper'.

James Morier: The adventures of Hajji Baba of Isphana (1824).

The city of Qom (about 160 kilometers southwest of Tehran) has once again made a headline in media. It is a city which houses a famous shrine, the tomb of the sister (Fatima ibn Musa) of the eighth Shiite Imam (Imam Reza, 765 AD). For thousand years it had been a place for pilgrimage. It also had a number of theological schools. Khomeni had taught and lectured at Qom and on his return to Iran after the fall of the Shah, he had made Qom his headquarters. He was surrounded there by Ayatollahs, people of distinction in their own right. In this very holy place, Iran decided and emphatically announced their second uranium enrichment facility (UEF). On 2nd October, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said that Teheran wrote to the agency on September 21, disclosing that it is building a new UEF. The announcement came just days before an October 1 meeting in Geneva between Iran and six world powers (The US, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany-known as the "P5+1"), with an Iranian representative for some preliminary talks. They would insist on a moratorium on further addition to its enrichment capabilities - including freezing the on-going construction of its Qom

UEF and to discuss disputed atomic programme. Western intelligence believes that this new UEF, has 3,000 centrifuges that could be operational by next year. The existence of its first UEF at Natanz -- a 4,600 active centrifuge facility -- and a heavy water reactor (HWR) at Arak was first reported in August 2002.

There is a '**quadruple significance**' of this apparently peaceful declaration of Iran's enhanced capability which is elucidated subsequently.

Firstly, Iran is not going to bow down under Western pressure but the timing of declaration seems quite interesting (it came within three months of general election in June 09). It is able to withstand all possible threats and resilient enough to sustain it. As Iran continually denied developing nuclear weapons, its failure to declare all nuclear facilities and materials in time has led to heightened concerns. Those concerns are now reinforced with the disclosure of its covertly installed second UEF. It rang the bell in western world. Iran was already under UN and its allies' stern sanction over few years for its first plant at Natanz. When US and in particular Israel, were building pressure for exerting force to abandon Iran from its enrichment possibility, it defiantly continued opposing. Furthermore, 'Iran wants to be clear about its intentions as it goes into the meeting,' said Amir Mohebian, Iranian journalist and independent analyst. 'By declaring this new site, Iran is sending a clear message that enrichment will continue for its domestic peaceful needs.' Ali Akbar Salehi, head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, called the new plant a 'guarantee' that Tehran's nuclear work will continue but said the facility will operate within the rules of the IAEA. 'Considering the threats (to the existing nuclear sites), our organization decided to do what is necessary to preserve and continue our nuclear activities,' he told state television. 'So we decided to build new installations which will guarantee the continuation of our nuclear activities which will never stop at any cost.' This announcement by Iranian officials reiterated Iran's will and determination for safeguarding its future nuclear energy. This would work well for the anti West sentiment among the ordinary Iranian citizens. The city of Qom is a holy place in Iran as mentioned earlier and any military attack on this would also destroy the holy shrines and surrounding establishments. It would have a cumulative effect and reinforce anti-west hatred and the theory of 'War on Islam'. Nevertheless any external military aggression will bind forces within the Iranian society and its determination might be a cause of concern in the West. It will also prove that sanctions cannot alter Iran like Myanmar.

Secondly, internally Iran is going through certain turmoil which is detrimental to the stability of recently elected government. The incumbent government is still seeking some sorts of legitimacy from its people to wipe out suspicion and dubious claims of rigged election. As quickly as it gains ground, it is better for president Ahmadinejad to consolidate his influence as well as the ruling Mullahs. Iranian election on 12 June 2009 and its subsequent fall out (green revolution) is a cause of western elation dwelling in a relative complacency to see their prognosis coming about Iran's oppressive Ayatollah regime. The European Union, United Kingdom and several western countries expressed concern over alleged irregularities during the vote, and many analysts and journalists from the United States, Europe and other western based media voiced doubts about the authenticity of the results. On the contrary, many OIC member states, as well as Russia, China, India, and Brazil, have congratulated Ahmadinejad on his victory. The President of Iran is the highest official elected by direct popular vote, but does not control foreign policy or the armed forces. Candidates have to be vetted by the Guardian Council, a twelve member body consisting of six clerics (selected by Iran's Supreme Leader) and six lawyers (proposed by the head of Iran's judicial system and voted in by the Parliament). Probably Iran thought that 'Nuclear' factor would distract the world attention from its domestic affairs and domestic upheavals might be shifted to another direction. As a matter of fact on 28 September, it tested Shahab 3B missiles which can carry nuclear warhead as far as 1,300-2,000 kilometres and is capable of striking targets in Israel, most Arab states and parts of Europe – including much of Turkey. This seems to be Iran's new foreign policy cum defense policy move which raised concerns worldwide but aimed at producing 'wooing effect' on Iranian people and help the 'green revolution' fettered way. Tehran's declaration come right after US President Barack Obama scrapped his predecessor's plan to deploy missile interceptors in Poland and powerful tracking radar in the Czech Republic by 2013. U.S. said it had decided to replace the shield with a more mobile system using mainly sea-based interceptors. In taking the decision, US emphasized the threat of Iran's short-range and medium-range missiles instead of the potential danger of its longer-range weapons. The White House said the intelligence community now believed Iran was developing shorter-range missiles "*more rapidly than previously projected*," while progressing more slowly than expected with intercontinental missiles. The synchronization of time was nothing but extraordinary. It might have already achieved dual objectives; catching

the NATO allies off guard about missile defense and shifting domestic attention of public by rallying a nuclear cause of self defense.

Thirdly, there is a wider and more agreeable perception held in the outside world about a possible backlash in Iranian society that was percolated from post election crisis. Is there any crack in so called 'khomeni fortress'? Iran needs to take care or at least suppress this manifestation for the time being with something more credible. When the dying scene of Neda (an Iranian girl who was shot dead on the street by Basij militia) was flooding in our desktops, it was obvious that there is something wrong with the apparently honest protest by Iranians on the street of Tehran. The post election demonstration was biggest and more heated than the 1999 student protests. Al Jazeera English described the 13 June 09 situation as the "biggest unrest since the 1979 revolution." It also reported that protests seemed spontaneous without any formal organization. Two hundred people protested outside Iran's embassy in London on 13 June. Ynet (is one of the most popular Israeli news websites) has stated that "tens of thousands" protested on 13 June. Demonstrators are chanting phrases such as "Down with the dictator", "Death to the dictator", and "Give us our votes back". The defeated reformist Mousavi has urged for calm and asked his supporters to refrain from acts of violence. In response to the reformist protests, tens of thousands of people rallied in Tehran on 14 June to support the victory of Ahmadinejad. On 15 June, Mousavi rallied, with anywhere from hundreds of thousands to three million, of his supporters in Tehran. It was the largest in the Islamic Republic of Iran's 30-year history. Protests focused around Azadi Tower, around which lines of people stretched for more than nine kilometers. Gunshots were reported to have been fired at the rally, where Mousavi had spoke to his supporters saying, "The vote of the people is more important than Mousavi or any other person". All three opposition candidates appeared. Iranians believe willingly that foreigners are plotting against them honestly, since American and British intelligence agents did, in fact, conspire to overthrow Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953. More recently, Seymour Hersh reported just last year that the Bush administration was spending hundreds of millions of dollars on covert operations designed to destabilize the country's government. In last month a senior Democratic Congresswoman, Jane Harman, seemed to suggest that the US should be encouraging separatist movements inside Iran. While Ms. Harman apologized for her remarks, a spate of recent bombings and attacks in Iran, possibly carried out by separatists, has made Iranians wonder if the

Obama administration's policy towards them might involve bombs as well as chocolates. Keeping the dimension of anti west sentiments in view, it is obvious that, a rift in Iranian society has been surfaced. Former Prime Minister Mousavi appeals for reform and peaceful devolution of power and appears to be pro-west while Ahmedinijad represents rigid and traditional Iran which was a product of 1979 Islamic revolution. They represent ultimately two diametrically opposite ideals. Iran's televised presidential debates dramatized deep differences between the two candidates, particularly in the realm of foreign policy. It was Mousavi, decrying Iran's isolation, who turned to his opponent and asked: "*Tell me, who are our friends in the region?*" He censured Ahmadinijad for denying the Holocaust, a ploy, he averred, that had brought "shame" on Iran in the eyes of the world. Ahmadinijad came back with a perfect answer, as reported by the *Washington Post*:

"Ahmadinijad pointed out that the previous government, which temporarily suspended uranium enrichment from 2003 to 2005, received nothing in return for the gesture to the West. 'There was so much begging for having three centrifuges. Today more than 7,000 centrifuges are turning,' Ahmadinejad said of Iran's nuclear program. 'Which foreign policy was successful? Which one created degradation? Which one kept our independence more, which one gave away more concessions but got no results?' he asked."

Mousavi enjoys supports from youth, aristocrats, businessmen and Ahmdenijad from the poor. Though Khameni is not a balancing factor in the tug of war but the supreme leader ultimately backed Ahmedinijad for obvious reasons and interestingly it was for the first time that his influence was challenged. He had to appear in public and warned the protestors for dire consequence in one of the weekly congregations. The reformist and others expressed their dissents about the speech and some got arrested. This was unthinkable few years back. Even it is heard that there was hardly any consensus within Guardian Council about the trial of protestors and alleged mistreatment of prisoners arrested during the protest. There was also a new phenomenon noticed which Iranian *Diaspora* demonstrated around the world while expressing their dissent against the election fraud. The ban of western media and later the transmission of street protest via cell phone to YouTube challenged the temper of present regime very intensely. Though the visible spirit of the agitation has died down considerably but it gave a rehearsal for a larger movement in future. Many lessons must have been learnt by the opposition in due process which present regime ought to consider.

Fourthly, why USA and rest of the western countries are trying to force Iran to abandon its apparent peaceful NEF? Why the same could not be done with Israel when it has self declared weapon grade uranium for nuclear bombs? Why the question of self defense is always applicable for Israel and not for Iran? After the varied landscape of 9/11, Iran came out to be an important factor in Middle East more than any other time. It is close to Israel, it borders, Iraq, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan and most importantly it controls Hormuz strait. Apart from its geo-strategic importance, Iraq's obliteration after the Gulf war made it the single most dominant player within US sphere of influence in Middle East. US is engaged in two theaters of war bordering Iran; Iraq and Afghanistan and it is yet to taste the final victory. Pakistan is gradually being embroiled in the ever increasing war on terror with which Iran has a border. US should and might have genuine concerns about the UEF in Iran and which should be viewed in different perspective. Barack Obama's June 4 speech certainly alienated the AIPAC in US and further degraded hope as he abandoned missile shield in Poland and Czech Republic. But again abandonment of missile platform in Europe has wormed US-Russia relationship to a great extent and Russia is already mulling for joining other countries for pressuring Iran to allow access of the IAEA inspectors in UEF sites. Like Russia, China has invested heavily in Iranian oil and gas sectors. Although China considers sanctions as "not conducive to the current diplomatic efforts," there are signs, however, that it may not exercise its veto against fresh sanctions on Iran. Medvedev favoured incentives to divert Iran from enriching uranium for nuclear weapons. He argued for Russia and the US for setting an example on the nuclear disarmament front and added that sanctions, although often unproductive, may be the last resort. It is also a fact that the West opposes Iran having nuclear facility- not only because it is a Muslim country friendly with Hezbollah, Hamas, and Syria, and unfriendly to the West, but also because it is hostile to Israel, the single most ally of US in Middle East.

Using nuclear technology for peaceful purposes is not something new in history. Recent agreement of US with India to supply nuclear technology and fuel to India by US is a case in point. Germany, South Korea, and Japan like other developed countries in the world are trying to acquire nuclear energy for meeting up energy deficiency. Then why Iran should be barred? Is US is walking on a tight rope? May be it is, but that will make it more cautious in trading its path and help building its image as promised in Al Ajhar university. Barack Obama clearly mentioned

after the G-20 summit that, he meant a clear and meaningful engagement with Iran. He won't like 'talking for talking' sake. US isolation in the previous regime further made the suspicion true that it helped in brewing discontent and subversive actions in Iran following the Iranian election. Iran must be engaged if peace has to be endured in Middle East. In the past, Israel destroyed Iraq's Osirak reactor in 1981 and a Syrian reactor being built by North Koreans in 2007 almost at will. But not this time. For these and many other unforeseen eventualities, Israel is being restrained by the West now not to escalate the crisis by preemptive strikes on Iranian nuclear installations. Although I am against Iran possessing nuclear weapons, I see a nuclear Iran as a stabilizing Middle East power—a deterrent against nuclear warhead loaded Israel. It can very well be concluded that if Israel were to abandon its nuclear arsenal, it would immediately eliminate Iran's reason for acquiring its own nuclear deterrence. The notion of a nuclear arms race among the other Middle East countries is hyperbole given the level of technological knowhow of the people of these countries. Another pertinent question is; does Iran really pose an imminent threat to U.S. interests in the Middle East and Israel? If it does that would be not so close and might be twenty to thirty years down the line. Even it is a silly proposition for Iran to fire a nuclear missile on Israel or U.S. interest with the risk of being obliterated in retaliation. Acquiring technical knowhow of delivery system is also a vast capability which Iran has to manufacture indigenously and it will take time and money. So, it is not a Dan Brown plot where lots of conspiracy theories seem to be all plausible. Iran is a reality and it is better for U.S. and rest of the Western world to co-exist with nuclear Iran and act acknowledge Iran as a responsible actor. Look, nobody has abandoned their nuclear arsenals despite innumerable protests, so why should Iran under duress?

3

Obama and Nobel Peace Prize – An Inconvenient Controversy

I receive this honor with deep gratitude and great humility. It is an award that speaks to our highest aspirations - that for all the cruelty and hardship of our world, we are not mere prisoners of fate. Our actions matter and can bend history in the direction of justice.

Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, "A Just and Lasting Peace," 12 October 2009.

White house receiving a call in the early morning has definite reason to worry. It has to be either of two extremes; a terrorist attack again in US land or terrible good news. Though this is difficult to visualize what was going on in Obama's mind at this hour of the day but he expressed, 'surprised and deeply humbled'. So here he is, at 48, wins the award while still being the commander-in-chief of US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. No doubt he remains to be the most influential man in today's world who assumed office a little more than nine months ago with a slogan of 'Change'. I think this is the capstone of his movement towards achieving the ultimate goal of peace prize and the Nobel jury board rightly and very timely recognized it. Rightly because "*Only very rarely has a person to the same extent as Obama captured the world's attention and given its people hope for a better future*". And timely because even it could not be awarded to Mahatma Gandhi who epitomized non-violence and contributed so much for world peace. But this prize is not just like another mundane recognition of one's superior ability. Everyone focuses more on this prize than others as the effects of other branches of Nobel Prize remains out of reach of general mass and unless someone is keen to venture in that particular field, it remains obscured. To my understanding, there are 'five distinct reasons' for which Obama had to be nominated as Thorbjørn Jagland, the head of the Nobel committee said the decision was "unanimous" and came with ease. His diplomacy is founded in the concept that those who are to lead the world must do so on the basis of values and attitudes that are shared by the majority of the world's

population. "Obama has, as president, created a new climate in international politics. Multilateral diplomacy has regained a central position, with emphasis on the role that the United Nations and other international institutions can play."

Firstly, right after taking office he started with 'engagement' policy towards so called belligerent nations (Iran and North Korea) with which US had been at loggerhead during last eight years. He wished the newly elected Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmedinijad for Iran's New Year (Nowroj) through a video conference. It had definite effects on Iranians as we see them joining Geneva conference (P 5+1) on nuclear non proliferation. In the Hague, it was brief, unscheduled and it was not substantive, but such a meeting between Richard C. Holbrooke, a presidential envoy, and an Iranian diplomat marked the first face-to-face encounter between the Obama administration and the government of Iran. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton confirmed that Mr. Holbrooke, the administration's special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, greeted Iran's deputy foreign minister, Mohammad Mehdi Akhondzadeh, on the sidelines of a major conference here devoted to Afghanistan. "*It was cordial, unplanned and they agreed to stay in touch,*" Mrs. Clinton said to reporters at the end of the conference. "*I myself did not have any direct contact with the Iranian delegation.*" Mrs. Clinton also said the US handed the Iranian delegation a letter requesting its intercession in the cases of two American citizens who are being held in Iran and another who is missing. These two American contacts with Iran are another step in the Obama administration's policy of engagement. It is a tentative process, in which the White House makes symbolic gestures, to formulate its longer-term strategy.

Secondly, Obama wanted to engage the Muslim world in general and went on to deliver his master speech on 4th of June in Al Azhar University in Egypt. He squarely addressed the whole community and tried to close the gap. As he went on saying, "*I've come here to Cairo to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect, and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap and share common principles, principles of justice and progress, tolerance and the dignity of all human beings. I do so recognizing that change cannot happen overnight. I know there's been a lot of publicity about this speech, but no single speech can eradicate years of mistrust nor can I answer in the time that I have this*

afternoon all the complex questions that brought us to this point. But I am convinced that in order to move forward, we must say openly to each other the things we hold in our hearts and that too often are said only behind closed doors. There must be a sustained effort to listen to each other, to learn from each other, to respect one another, and to seek common ground”.

Thirdly, his effort towards the conflict resolution in Middle East has applied a break in Israeli expansionist attitude so far. As a first afro-American president he could bring both the parties into a dialogue. Obama's envoy to the Middle East, George Mitchell, has returned to the region to advocate for peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. Mitchell met with Israeli President Shimon Peres in last week. He plans to meet with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu before talking with Palestinian leaders in the West Bank and said in clear terms that America wants an immediate stop in the expansion of the settlements in the West Bank and Gaza without which the whole peace process would again stumble. In a speech at the White House, Obama said he would accept the award as a "call to action" in many areas, including pursuing Middle East peace. “We must all do our part to resolve those conflicts that have caused so much pain and hardship over so many years, and that effort must include an unwavering commitment that finally realizes that the rights of all Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace and security in nations of their own," said Obama.

Fourthly, and most importantly, Obama dismantled the Bush plan of theater based missile defence in Poland and Czech Republic which has wooed Russians and warmed up relations with U.S. As secretary of state Hillary Clinton started a six-day trip to Russia and Europe last week, she was expected to discuss the next steps on Iran and North Korea and international efforts to have the two countries end their nuclear programs. The centerpiece of the trip will be her visit to Moscow, where she will work toward an agreement to take the place of the Start II arms control pact, which expires December 5. She also will address the new bilateral presidential commission that is working on a broad range of issues, from arms control to health. Obama in his speech in UN general assembly outlined the right path of nuclearization, as he went to say, “*The existence of thousands of nuclear weapons is the most dangerous legacy of the Cold War. No nuclear war was fought between the United States and the Soviet Union, but generations lived with the knowledge that their world could be erased in a single flash of light. Cities like Prague that existed*

for centuries, that embodied the beauty and the talent of so much of humanity, would have ceased to exist. Today, the Cold War has disappeared but thousands of those weapons have not. In a strange turn of history, the threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up. More nations have acquired these weapons. Testing has continued. Black market trade in nuclear secrets and nuclear materials abound. The technology to build a bomb has spread. Terrorists are determined to buy, build or steal one. The main efforts to contain these dangers are centered on a global non-proliferation regime, but as more people and nations break the rules, this could reach a point where the center cannot hold. This matters to people everywhere. One nuclear weapon exploded in one city – be it New York or Moscow, Islamabad or Mumbai, Tokyo or Tel Aviv, Paris or Prague – could kill hundreds of thousands of people. And no matter where it happens, there is no end to what the consequences might be. Some argue that the spread of these weapons cannot be stopped, cannot be checked – that we are destined to live in a world where more nations and more people possess the ultimate tools of destruction. Such fatalism is a deadly adversary, for if we believe that the spread of nuclear weapons is inevitable, then in some way we are admitting to ourselves that the use of nuclear weapons is inevitable”.

And last but not the least; he might be pushing US for getting into a commitment to reduce global climate chaos. In a day of high international rhetoric, chief US negotiator Jonathan Pershing said the US had moved significantly in the last year. *"There has been a startling change in the US position. There is now engagement. We have had a tenfold increase finance from the US. We have put \$80bn into a green economic stimulus package. One year ago there was no commitment to a global agreement."* But he forcefully outlined America's opposition to the Kyoto protocol. *"We are not going to be in the Kyoto protocol. We are not going to be part of an agreement that we cannot meet. We say a new agreement has to [be signed] by all countries. Things have changed since Kyoto. Where countries were in 1990 and today are very different. We cannot be stuck with an agreement 20 years old. We want action from all countries."*

There are controversies rising against this declaration and these are not difficult to fathom. Many people are skeptical about the delivery of the promises that he is going to make. Right now, he is heading a series of high profile strategic meeting with his top national security advisers to find out probable right strategy for conduct of the Afghan war. He is

pressurized by the field commanders in the Afghanistan as well as Republicans to commit troops as demanded. But unlike the previous administration, he has not so far committed troops instantly, rather he is trying to figure out which way would assist US achieving their objectives economically. So far, it is the eighth year that US is engaged in this theater of war without any visible victory in horizon. This prize not only humbled him but also put him in a difficult position from where he has to steer a safe course and reach to the shore as envisioned. He is the third US president in history as a sitting commander in chief of American forces who earned 'peace prize' especially amidst US's controversial roles of last eight years. The first one was Roosevelt whose contribution to the negotiations led to the 'Treaty of Portsmouth' which ended the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 and second one was Woodrow Wilson in 1919 for his part in founding the League of Nations. John Bolton, a U.N. ambassador in the Bush administration, told FOX News that the award will give leverage to Obama advisers opposed to sending more troops to Afghanistan at the request of commanders. And this is the exact challenge that Obama is facing now in home front. He has proved to be superbly popular outside US but his acceptability within US is yet to be acknowledged. Bolton keeps on saying, "I think those who don't want a massive increase in troops will now be saying, 'But Mr. President, you just won the Nobel Peace Prize, how can you agree to 40,000 more troops on the ground,'" he said. But some analysts don't believe the award will make much difference. "I don't expect that we'll see any major changes in the negotiations over how to deal with the Afghanistan war," said Kristin Lord, an expert on international diplomacy at the Center for a New American Security, a left-leaning think tank. She added that difficulties on the ground, not America's reputation, are preventing the U.S. from achieving its solution. "Domestically, it's not going to help him because people are beginning to form strong opinions about him," she said. "Internationally, it's hard to see how the president could have a higher profile." The award, she added, is a "validation of his approach" by the Nobel committee, "but I'm not sure we'll see any tangible changes" in his ability to carry out foreign policy. Obama has been put into a gamble by Nobel committee in a manner that, if he can bring tangible changes in those five above mentioned spheres, then the prize is justified but if he cannot, then his opponents in the US administration will win by unleashing their prophecies that a black president cannot run US presidency even with the Nobel peace prize. The crucial decision approaching to him now is how to draw a policy on Afghan war. Slowly

and gradually it is taking a turn like Vietnam War in '70s which US never want to recall. Leading Islamic scholar Imam Zaid Shakir of the Zaytuna Institute, a non-profit, educational religious institute and school based in Berkeley, California said, "It's an unwinnable war, it has nothing to do with stopping terrorists, in fact, if anything, it is going to create more animosity towards this country and it is going to create more people who have reasons to seek revenge against this country," said Imam Shakir. President Obama should not be deterred by the possibility of being called weak by the right-wing, he added. "It takes more strength to do the right thing. Sometimes it takes more strength to walk away from a fight you shouldn't be involved in than to display a false sense of macho and a false sense of courage by engaging in that fight. It takes more courage to defy the warmongers, it takes more courage to defy the militarists, it takes more courage to stand up to admit that you made a mistake," said Imam Shakir. I also unequivocally express my support to the anti war philosophy which is getting so near to be seen and only Obama can translate it into action. Mahatma Gandhi always used to say that Ahimsa is not the weapon of the weak, it is better that the powerful practices Ahimsa which will bring peace in to this world. Long live Nobel peace prize and of course Obama.

4

The contours of present Bangladesh- Myanmar Relationship – A Perspective View

As I travel through my country, people often ask me how it feels to have been imprisoned in my home --first for six years, then for 19 months. How could I stand the separation from family and friends? It is ironic, I say, that in an authoritarian state it is only the prisoner of conscience who is genuinely free. Yes, we have given up our right to a normal life. But we have stayed true to that most precious part of our humanity--our conscience.

Aung San Suu Kyi, All We Want is Our Freedom, speech published in Parade Magazine 2003

In one of the recent photographs which framed Bangladeshi Border Guards officers playing golf with their Nasaka counterparts in the nearest Myanmar outpost close to Teknaf, was a pleasant scene, reminiscing of a German General visiting Russian Aeroplane factories prior to German invasion of USSR in 1941. Germany and the USSR were friendly countries at that time due to a Treaty of Non-Aggression in 1939 which pledged neutrality by either party if the other were attacked by a third party. This gave rise to relative complacency on the part of Russian.

I am not being too skeptical about the latest development along our southeastern front but it's a worrisome posture when everything seems all quiet and peaceful. Is there something to worry about? May be not. But let's put things in perspective. Bangladesh and Myanmar share a 320 km border, partly demarcated by the Naf River. Since independence, Myanmar was low in our foreign relation priority. This relationship nosedived first in 1991 when Myanmar attacked and ransacked bordering Rejupara Border Observation Post (BOP) and Bangladesh was put on a high military alert. Both the countries reached in a boiling point, and both reached close to a 'Limited War', one headed by military Junta and other with rejuvenated democratic polity. But somehow the tension did not escalate beyond a danger level. The second opportunity appeared on

November 1, 2008 when South Korean Company Daewoo started exploration work in AD-7 Block, fifty nautical miles south west Saint Martin Island in the Bay of Bengal. Nearly fifty people were found using four ships in that area, escorted by two Myanmar's naval warships. This area in Bay of Bengal is also claimed by Bangladesh (international law allows every country to have and use 200 nautical miles from its coast to the sea, however, this law gives rise to tricky situation as the coasts of India and Bangladesh and Myanmar follow a curve, which implies overlapping of territory). This time also a strong diplomatic overture by the then Care Taker Government of Bangladesh could successfully diffuse the tension as the danger could be avoided at a threshold level. So what could be the third attempt? An intelligent guess or conspiracy theory may produce many stories but the people in the helm of government should scrutiny all symptoms in order to remain proactive. Ultimately this is our national security matter which cannot be ignored.

Let's quickly revisit the path of history and how 'Burma' turned into 'Myanmar'. The conventional wisdom of the powerful Burmese Kings was to fight wars with dominant neighbours who invaded when Burmese kingdoms were weak. Out of these, Ayutthaya and Chiang-Mai of Siam (Thailand), Manipur, Assam and Kachar of India and Chittagong of present Bangladesh were important. Since the Pyu City-State in the 1st century BC, Burma was part of an overland trade route between China and India. Southeast Asia was at times under the control of Pagan Kingdom, which was finally flattened by Mongols in 1289. King Bayinnaung invaded Manipur in 1560 and Ayutthaya (Siam) in 1569. King Alaungpaya of the last dynasty also regained control of Manipur. King Hsinbyushin returned to Ayutthaya in 1766. Even China feared expansion of Burmese power and sent armies, but Burmese kings successfully held back four Chinese invasions between 1766 and 1769. Burmese general Bandula succeeded in conquering Assam, bringing Burma face to face with British interests in India. Consequently three Anglo-Burmese wars made Burma a province of British India in 1886. When the Suez Canal was put in operation, the demand for Burmese rice grew. By then it was heavily colonized and the jobs, power and wealth were concentrated into the hands of the Indian and Chinese migrants. General Ne Win was compelled to expel all foreigners in 1960s but China openly supported the communist revolt in Burma. During this turmoil, Aung San and his comrades got practical help from the ambitious Nippon (Japan). Burma did not join the British Commonwealth then and because of Kuomintang activities supported by

America, it also refused to join the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) though it joined with India and China at the Bandung Conference in 1955 with Non Aligned Movement (NAM). Democratic rule ended in that country in 1962 when General Ne Win led a military coup d'etat. He ruled for nearly 26 years and pursued policies under the guise of the 'Burmese Way to Socialism'. In 1988, unrest over economic mismanagement and political oppression by the government led to widespread pro-democracy demonstrations throughout the country. Security forces killed thousands of demonstrators and general Saw Maung staged a coup d'etat and formed the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). Since then Myanmar is a country ruled absolutely by military junta. The official English name was changed from "the Union of Burma" to "the Union of Myanmar" including its capital from Rangoon to Yangon, in 1989 amidst lots of controversy in western quarters but it suited the Junta's appetite.

So far our engagement in foreign, military and economic arena was focused mostly on India and far to the West. Myanmar used to be considered as a hinterland and posed least strategic value. So to say, military or some insurgent threat had never been anticipated. But when the first flight of Rohingyas arrived in the southern part of our shore in 1992, it rang the bell for our foreign policy makers to address the issue and with the recent turmoil over maritime border demarcation, it further established the necessity to contain Myanmar. Traditionally, serving military officers on deputation to Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) are being designated as ambassadors in Myanmar which somehow sent a signal that Myanmar is low on foreign policy priority (though some would justify that it was prudent to dispatch military officers to work with military junta). However, the recent changes need a closer scrutiny in a larger landscape as we need to know the factors that shaped and would be shaping our 'Strategic Contours' with Myanmar in future.

The Exploration of Maritime Resources and Border Demarcation Issue

Let's start with the recent incidents at hand. In last March, it was reported that Myanmar started barbed wire fencing on about 40 mile long border. While Bangladesh Foreign Ministry summoned the Myanmar ambassador in Dhaka Mr. Phae Thann on March 31, for a detailed explanation on the issue he came up with this, "*it is not a defence structure, and it is to prevent narcotics and human trafficking*". Again on April 24, Myanmar started constructing an embankment within 50 yards of the zero line rationalizing its requirement for agricultural purpose. Last year it was

with maritime border demarcation. Under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Myanmar has to delimit the border and file their claim to the UN on May 21, 2009 while Bangladesh has to do it before July 27, 2011. Earlier in 2004, the Bangladesh foreign ministry formed a committee with members from Petrobangla, Geological Survey of Bangladesh, the Navy, SPAARSO, Inland Water Transport Authority and Surveyor of Bangladesh. The purpose of this committee was to recommend a suitable way to mark the deep-sea territory fulfilling requirements of the UN and as per the law of the sea. However, the committee became dysfunctional within a year and could not produce result expected from it. Myanmar is asking for eco-distance system in East to West boundary while Bangladesh is asking to demarcate in equity basis North to South. The Bay of Bengal is supposed to be highly rich in hydrocarbon resources. It was proved by the Indian discoveries in the Krishna Godavari Basins and also by massive oil and gas fields in Myanmar. Two main basins in the Bay--Krishna-Godavari and Mahanadi --have shown a potential of nearly 18 billion barrels of oil equivalent gas in place. While official sources quote a figure of 100 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves in the region, unofficial estimates peg the reserves at 200 trillion cubic feet of gas. Myanmar had 21.19 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves, or 0.3 percent of the world's total, while Bangladesh had 13.77 trillion cubic feet, or 0.2 percent, at the end of 2007, according to BP Plc. Most of it is located in the Bay of Bengal. Given the daily consumption of existing gas it can be said that we are facing shortage of gas. The country currently produces 1,750 million cubic feet of gas a day (mmcf) and faces a shortage of nearly 200 mmcf in its daily domestic consumption. This situation exists despite the existence of hydrocarbon in Bangladesh. Early this year Bangladesh divided its sea territory into 28 blocks and auctioned off the area to international oil companies as part of its stepped-up move to end chronic gas shortages. This decision of Bangladesh was protested by both Myanmar and India who have disputes. The decision of exploring gas irked particularly Myanmar as this resource is a major source of income for the military junta, which had earlier entered into a deal with China to sell gas. Thus it prompted Myanmar to start exploration in the area right away without waiting for the resolution of dispute. Myanmar has discovered seven trillion cubic feet of gas in 2006 close to Bangladesh waters. Myanmar wants to continue this search further (as noted by Dr. Anand Kumar, on 21 Nov 2008).

Regional Grouping of Myanmar- Its Strength and Weakness

Ne Win's isolationist rule kept his country out of ASEAN establishment in 1967. ASEAN's policy on Myanmar was first derived from the policy

of "constructive engagement" initiated in 1991 by the Thai government of Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun. ASEAN's Myanmar policy, in other words, is a policy of Thailand. At the outset ASEAN has been responsible for encouraging this regime, since the early 90's when it was struggling, by offering the military junta friendship and credibility and eventually allowing Myanmar to become a member of the grouping in 1997. Events have since shown that admitting Myanmar to ASEAN was a mistake. The move not only impaired ASEAN's external links with the world, but it also resulted in bringing an extremely controversial actor from the periphery to the very center of the association's decision making. ASEAN has been carried away and was hopeful that there would be a "peaceful transition to democracy" in Myanmar because of the regular declarations of the junta of their "roadmap to democracy". Perhaps it would be more prudent to assume that at least some of the members of ASEAN have been looking the other way for their own vested interests and did business with Myanmar at the cost of other nations. The UN Security Council resolution in January 2007 on Myanmar for its poor record of human rights and continued detention of its political prisoners was vetoed by China and Russia. Indonesia the sole representative of ASEAN in the UN Security Council abstained. In July, 2007, the much publicized ASEAN foreign ministers meeting at Manila could not move Myanmar on its human right issues. For a long time, the military had a big role in the politics of two founder members of this grouping – Indonesia and Thailand. In fact Myanmar planned a new constitution on the erstwhile Indonesian model, where the military would have a sizeable number of seats in the parliament. Thus ASEAN seemed to be more at ease in dealing with the military junta in Myanmar, irrespective of how it runs the country. Thailand is Myanmar's biggest trade partner. Natural Gas from Myanmar generates 20% of all electricity in Thailand. It is the largest single export (costing \$ 2.8 billion) for Myanmar this year. Thailand is the third major importer of timber from Myanmar. A media report indicates that some regime leaders are thought to have bank accounts in Singapore. Thailand and Singapore are second and third behind China in supplying Myanmar. Singapore has reportedly sold military hardware in a big way to Myanmar which has its inventory full of obsolete weapons from China. Malaysia and Indonesia have also improved their trade relations with Myanmar over the years. Even Japan has become wary of its links with Myanmar. Since the latest detention of Suu Kyi, which invited a global uproar, Tokyo has decided to suspend its development aid to Myanmar. Being one of the few developed countries

in direct talks with the military government in Yangon, Tokyo gave it \$78 million in fiscal year 2001. Before 1988, Japan's grants to Myanmar made up 60 percent of all foreign aid and grants to the country. But even Japan's move, coupled with ASEAN's threat of expulsion, is not enough to force Myanmar to make sweeping and systemic changes. Furthermore, it is not at all clear that other ASEAN members want to expel Myanmar. Vietnam, a target of sanction and colonial intervention in the past, is said to be sympathetic to the country. Myanmar got its observer status in SAARC in Fifteenth SAARC Summit, Colombo that was held on 2-3 August 2008 with a strong support from India. It is yet to be seen how much SAARC would be able to influence Myanmar to improve its human rights record and policy on non-interference of sovereignty of nations. But at this moment it is being sandwiched between ASEAN and SAARC, the two emerging blocs having divergent aspirations for South Asia.

The Sino-Indian Factor

India's 'Look East' policy had Myanmar in mind from the very beginning as its policy was similar to ASEAN's approach of 'controversial constructive engagement'. In fact, the northeast insurgency of India was only an additional factor of the wider geopolitical consideration of India in their new approach to Burma. The Burmese Kachin organization had already been tamed and all North East groups have left the training camps. It has been more than 15 years and India is yet to dig up any substantial cooperation by the Myanmar regime to suppress Indian insurgency. After 50 years, the discarded 'Uncle Sam highway' (the Burma Road of World War II) has become one of strategic importance. China and Myanmar, having a common border of more than 2,000 kilometers, have had a long standing '*Paukphaw*' (fraternal) friendship. It is an irony that the military regime of Myanmar is so strong that it cannot be toppled by its own people but it is a weak government in the eyes of other nations. The weak government of Burma is unable to stand up to the growing influence of China in economy and politics. China always yearns for a weak government in Burma that has a cold relationship with the West. Myanmar's bilateral trade with China improved by 10 times in the last decade to reach \$500 million by 1999, a figure some believe to be a low estimate. What is in common is that China wants Yunnan province and India the northeast region to develop. But China looks for market to sell and India not for trade but to buy. But both have security interests, which could be uncomfortable to Myanmar. The regime of Myanmar craves for neither trade nor business but for money from both of them. Historically the two neighbours have made two different U-turns when it

comes to Burma. Chinese turn took more years and was forceful with – arms supplies and political support to Communist Party of Burma (CPB) and arms and political support to the military regime. India took less time and was different – psychological and service (All India Radio) to pro-democracy movement and arms sales and blind political support to the military regime.

Rohingya Refugee Issues

Discrimination, violence and forced labour practices by the Myanmar authorities triggered an exodus of more than 250,000 Rohingya Muslims between 1991 and 1992. Despite the unwillingness on the part of the majority of the refugees to return home for reasons of insecurity or lack of improvement in the situation in Myanmar, the UNHCR, with the direct consent of the Bangladesh, repatriated all but 21,117 refugees by April 1997. Since then, however, repatriation has been put on hold following the failure of the Myanmar to clear the reentry of 13,582 refugees out of the remaining total of 21,117. Only 7,535 got permission but those refused reentry blocked their repatriation. They live in two camps at Cox's Bazaar, called Kutupalong and Nayapara, but there are also an estimated 100,000 unregistered Rohingyas living in Bangladesh near the border. Bangladesh declared that no refugees would be allowed to settle in permanently and this position has been renewed time and again, and is still the current policy of the government. Dr. Tin Swe who is an elected member of Parliament from Myanmar from the NLD, now living in New Delhi, explained in one of his postings, 'Burma/Myanmar: Its Strategic Importance', *'the billion plus population of India and China do not care about the five digit number of refugees. But Thailand bears the refugee burden most. The immigrants from Bangladesh and Burma are of different kind. Burmese politicians once made use of them as vote banks. Burma is an 85% Buddhist country and religion was manipulated for good and bad purposes'*.

However, the Rohingya refugee issues have far more wider ramifications in terms of Myanmar-Bangladesh relations. Firstly, the so called stateless Rohingyas would by now become desperate due to constant pull and push of both the countries and we know much about the militancy of the 'Rohingya Solidarity Organization and/or the Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front'. Their radius of actions is ever expanding and now estimated to be well beyond Arakan region and into our country. In fact, much of the militancy in refugee camps has been blamed on them. It is alleged that within Bangladesh, forces sympathetic to the Rohingya cause, would not oppose the militancy, on the contrary could come

forward with arms and materials to help them fight against the security forces of both Myanmar and Bangladesh. The list of prospective militant supporters mainly includes the so-called Islamic political groups, namely the Rabita Al Alam Islami, the Jaamat-e-Islam, supporters of the Afghan-based Hizbe-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyer, and the like (commented by Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed in June 2001). Secondly, it is about the proliferation of small arms and chemical and biological weapons. As an example, when the Mong Tai Army of Golden Triangle drug lord Khun Sa surrendered to the Yangon authorities in 1996, it handed over assault rifles, machine guns, rocket launchers and even SA-7 surface-to-air missiles (SAM). More worrisome is the fact that despite repeated denials by Myanmar, accusations of chemical and biological weapon use by the Myanmar military against 'ethnic' insurgents have surfaced from time to time. There is no guarantee that such weapons would not be used to promote or contain militancy in the Bangladesh-Myanmar border.

The Drug Trafficking Issue

It is alleged that, the Myanmar military apparatus is aware of drug production within the country. Among the neighbours only China and Thailand took serious notice of narcotic drugs routed from Myanmar. Among other countries, only America took measures to eradicate drugs that originate from there. But like human rights violations, drug is not a strong force to pressurise the military junta. Quoting US Secretary of State, Ms Madeline Albright ('Myanmar abetting drug trafficking' 29/07/97), *"an alarming rise in drug abuse and AIDS infection had been noticed in Myanmar. Narcotics production has grown in Myanmar year after year, defying every international effort to solve the problem. As a result, drug traffickers who once spent their days leading mule trains down jungle tracks are now leading lights in Burma's new market economy and leading figures in its new political order."* She argued that it would be hard to imagine a lasting solution to the region's narcotics problem without a lasting solution to Myanmar's political crisis. Given the porous border and weak monitoring system in our bordering areas surrounding Myanmar, it is lot easier to use our land as a suitable route to transfer drugs. The availability of easy drugs is a looming danger in our country too and who knows what amount of drugs are really being transported through our border because of unavailability of data. We can never know the exact figures.

India-Bangladesh-Myanmar, Trio Conundrum

Indian home minister P. Chidambaram declared in last month that Maoists are acquiring weapons through Bangladesh, Myanmar and

possibly Nepal. *"In terms of the threat to security from Indian sources or internal sources, Naxalism remains the biggest threat. There is, of course, the other threat which is cross border terrorism but that is emanating from across the border,"* he said. *"There is no evidence of any money flowing in from abroad to the Maoists. But there is certainly evidence of weapons being smuggled from abroad through Myanmar or Bangladesh which reach the Maoists. We know now that the weapons are coming through Bangladesh and Myanmar and possibly Nepal. The border is very porous."* Such an open accusation from a responsible minister raised concern in many corners and will influence future India-Bangladesh-Myanmar relationship.

Myanmar Armed Force – Implications

Quoted from CIA factbook in 2005, Myanmar has a total armed forces of 564,250 (Ranked 26th), number of active troops 492,000 (Ranked 9th), Paramilitary 72,000 (Ranked 26th), conscription age 18 years of age, military expenditure is 7.07 billion US \$ (FY 2005), GDP expenditure is 2.1% (2005). Their armed force is called **Tatmadaw**. It claims a large place in the country's modern history. The central government in Yangon has continuously been war with numerous insurgent groups and private armies. It has been on active service for more than 50 years. Not only has it fulfilled this purely military function but it has also exercised a major influence on the political economic and social development of the country. This influence has been most evident since General Ne Wins coup d'état on 2 march 1962. The creation of the Naingngan-Daw Nyein Wut Pi Pya Yae (state law and order restoration council or SLORC) in September 1988 and its reincarnation as the Daw Aye Chan Tar Yar Yae Hint Phont Phyo Yae (state peace and development council or SPDC) in November 1997 saw the open reassertion of military power over the civilian population. *Tatmadaw's* operational command in the field is exercised through a framework of nine Regional Military Command, the boundaries of which usually correspond with those of the country's seven states and divisions (our closest is Western Command at Sittwe). Regional commanders also held senior positions in the ruling Burma Socialist Program Party, the organizational structure of which closely reflected that of armed forces. When the SLORC was created in September 1988, the structures of both the government and the defence command system changed dramatically. Initially consisting of 21 senior military officers, the council was Myanmar's supreme governing body. In addition, a cabinet was appointed with ministers drawn entirely from the armed forces. To manage the rapid expansion and modernisation of the

Tatmadaw, the SLORC also made a number significant adjustment to Myanmar's military command structure. The country's most senior army officer, a senior general, concurrently held the positions of SLORC chairman, prime minister and defence minister as well as being appointed Commander In Chief of the defence services. He thus formally exercised both political and operational control over the entire armed forces. As mentioned before, in November 1997, SLORC was abolished and SPDC was created with 19 officers. This has been promoted as a new structure with a new set of policies, namely, 'to ensure the emergence of an orderly and democratic system and to establish a peaceful and modern state'. The name change also opens the door to a longer term institutional function for the *Tatmadaw*, rather than supposedly 'temporary' law and order duties. In retrospect, let's trace back the development in Myanmar armed forces back in '80s. At that time, Myanmar high command set to devise a comprehensive and workable doctrine for the conduct of counter insurgency warfare and also the external attack. This was seen as coming either from 'an enemy of equal strength (presumably Thailand)' dubbed as First Strategy or 'a more powerful army (presumably China)', the Second Strategy. To meet the demand of these threats, the defence ministry recommended a standing army of one million, with another five million in the militias as reserves (quoted from Maung Aung Myoe, *Military doctrine and strategy in Myanmar*), which was over optimistic in some sense at that time. So the creation of SLORC in 1988 ushered a third phase of doctrinal development. Keeping this in view, Myanmar armed forces set to modernize, upgrade its armed forces and now it has a much larger army, better equipped, more mobile and with greater firepower. *Tatmadaw* then began to experiment with new approaches to counter insurgency which are both permitted by and make the most effective use of its new weapon system. Corollary to this, *Tatmadaw* thought it necessary also to devise a more modern conventional warfare doctrine. The years of 2005 and later saw an unprecedented rise in defence expenditure which resulted into rapid concentration of its arsenals. Never before this military leadership been required to manage such large numbers of troops or to integrate the supporting arms (mainly artillery and armour) into operations on such a scale. The acquisition of modern fighter interceptors has made it imperative for the *Tatmadaw* to devise a more sophisticated air defence doctrine and navy has been required to work out how best to manage its much larger fleet of new and more capable vessels. Before 2001 there had been several reports indicated that it began conducting joint military exercises, some on a

large scale. Exercises held in 1995, 1996 and a1997, for example, were reported to have involved over 30,000 troops, 100 field artillery pieces, nearly 300 armoured vehicles about six squadrons of aircraft and around 30 naval vessels (Interviews in Rangoon, November and December 1999). Member of the local militias, auxiliary forces had also been mobilized. (Adopted from Burma's Armed Forces; Power Without Glory, by Andrew Selth, 2001). According to one observer,

The exercises were designed to introduce strategic denial and counter offensive capabilities to the exiting people's war doctrine..the purpose of such a counter offensive was to counter low level foreign invasion and to turn the enemy country into battlefield..should the standing conventional force fail to defeat and invading force in the beachheads of landing zones resistance would be organized at villages, regional and national level to sap the will of the invading force” (quoted from Maung Aung Myoe, *Military doctrine and strategy in Myanmar*, p 16). However available data on arms transfer and imports to Myanmar 1987-1997 is stated below.

US	5
China	1160
Germany	25
Other western Europe	55
Eastern Europe	60
Other East Asia	35
Others	40
total	1380

Figure: 1 Arms transfer to Burma, 1987-1997 by major supplier (current US\$ million)

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
US \$ m	20	20	110	400	150
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
US \$ m	130	100	140	80	280

Figure: 2 Burma's arms imports, 1988-1997, by year (current US\$ million)

Disproportionate Developmental Engagement

Over last couple of years a relative rise of interest has been noticed in the developmental sector between Dhaka and Yangon. The two countries formally opened border trade in 1994. Bilateral trade between Myanmar and Bangladesh now stands at 140 million USD and a target of 500 million dollars for the next fiscal year 2009-2010 is being strived. Official statistics show that Myanmar exported 23,000 tons of marine

products to Bangladesh annually, standing as Bangladesh's fifth largest marine products importing country. On July 26, 2007 a six-member Myanmar delegation led by its construction minister arrived in Bangladesh to sign a pact regarding building up of a 25 km road connecting the two countries. The proposed road from Bangladesh's Gundhum frontier will be extended up to Tongoru, 23 kilometres inside the Myanmar territory. Later, on May 16, 2009 Foreign Minister Dr. DipuMoni, on an official visit held talks with her Myanmar counterpart U Nyan Win covering promotion of bilateral trade and mutually beneficial cooperation. Her visit came after a joint trade commission of Myanmar and Bangladesh met in Nay Pyi Taw on April to seek ways of boosting bilateral trade cooperation and extended export of Myanmar's agricultural produces. Previously, businessmen of Myanmar's Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Bangladesh Bank delegation also met in Yangon to seek ways of enhancing economic and trade cooperation between the two countries. The Myanmar side proposed to establish banking arrangements between the two countries to promote trade, stressing the need for Myanmar's Investment and Commercial Bank and the Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank to have corresponding banks in Bangladesh. Meanwhile, Myanmar has planned to add one more border trade point in the Rakhine state linking Bangladesh, according to the Directorate of Border Trade. An agreement on avoidance of double taxation was also signed during the Myanmar leader's Bangladesh trip. Communication Minister Syed Abul Hossain talked to the Chinese President and Prime Minister, in setting up railway net-work between Kunming city in Yunnan province and Chittagong via Myanmar. He also talked about Trans Asian Railway (TAR), a project of UNESCAP – which will, among others, will link Bangladesh with six East Asian countries: Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia and Singapore as well as European countries through Turkey. As part of the TAR agreement that Bangladesh signed on November 10, 2007, a railway track will be laid from Dohazari (Bangladesh) to Gundhum in the Arakan state of Myanmar via Ramu in Cox's Bazar. All the above mentioned initiatives less the TAR project are still lingering in various ministries pending a nod from present government as most of them were undertaken during the past caretaker government.

The Future of Oil and Gas Exploration and Bangladesh-Myanmar Relationship

Diplomatic and military lines of operation must be waged against Myanmar in a synchronized manner. But we are lacking of available data

on Myanmar armed forces due to many reasons out of which the most pronounced were the lack of interest and short sightedness. However the incidents in November, 2008 were promptly handled by sending three naval ships that went to the spot challenging the Myanmar's ships. However, a multi-pronged diplomatic effort was also ensued as Bangladesh raised the issue with China, a friend of both nations, and also urged Seoul to ask the South Korean-based company hired by Myanmar to stop activities in the disputed waters. China also promised to contribute in an appropriate manner as their friend. The weeklong standoff was diffused but Myanmar also stated that the move was technical, as the South Korean company undertaking the exploration work had completed its seismic survey in Block AD-7 and shifted to another offshore block, A-3. The state run New Light of Myanmar later stated that "*further tasks would be carried out according to the work programme and it was not in response to the request of Bangladesh*". Myanmar further alleged that "*Bangladesh lawlessly demanded the drilling should be suspended.*" A senior official from Myanmar's military government said they were open to talks, but insisted that oil and gas companies were operating inside their territory and far away from the disputed sea boundary. Myanmar also asserted that '*the drilling would carry on until it was concluded.*' Myanmar has also alleged that Bangladesh was acting at the instigation the US. It was hinted by a Myanmar official who said, "*The acts of Bangladesh have the signs of instigation by outsiders...a US warship is now in Bangladesh doing joint exercises. Bangladesh threatened us with no reason.*" The American embassy in Dhaka stated that a US Navy salvage ship had arrived in the southeastern Bangladesh port of Chittagong, but said it was there for a salvage and diving operation. It had nothing to do with the Bangladesh-Myanmar dispute and the US ship was nowhere near the disputed waters. Continuing with their diplomatic effort to resolve the crisis the top leaders of Myanmar and Bangladesh also met in New Delhi on the sidelines of BIMSTEC summit. The withdrawal of Myanmar is a temporary one. It has at best provided some time to both sides to solve the issue diplomatically. But in case they fail in this, a military flare up is not ruled out.

In conclusion, it cannot be overemphasized that it takes time to build a relationship which should depend on mutual trust and confidence. A considerable time has been elapsed by now where we could not do much in terms of our southern neighbor. It might be justified that the military junta was difficult to reconcile with resulting into slow build up of bilateral relations, there was not much trade, no cultural congruity, no

economic cooperation etc. Just for comparison sake, developing bilateral relationships with Myanmar which are mainly economic in nature, India's initiatives are at least 20 times more than that of the us. It may be mentioned here that the 160-kilometre Indo-Myanmar Friendship Road already connected the North Eastern states of India with central Myanmar in 2001. But we have not yet successfully completed "Left-Right, Right-Left" exercise to start the 27-kilometre road (Bangladesh-Myanmar) proposed to be constructed with total funding arrangements from the Bangladesh side. It is a pity that the decision makers in our country underestimate the mindset of Myanmar generals who cannot be compared with the generals from other regimes of Asia or Africa. Whatever may be the case, for the maritime resource preservation sake at least let's turn to Myanmar with a positive attitude.

5

Whither Af-Pak Strategy?

“We need to look at Afghanistan, Pakistan and India as one regional battlefield where the “other side” is coordinating strategically, acting methodically and for sure beating the international coalition in speed. If Washington and its allies fail to see the big picture in the fight against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, which unfortunately may be the case now, the rapidly deteriorating situation will soon exceed the northwestern provinces of Pakistan to spill over to both Afghanistan and India, if not beyond. That’s how I suggest “reading” the recent worrisome leaps achieved by the Taliban from the SWAT valley into the neighboring district of Buner. So what’s the story and why should we consider it as a crossing of the red lines?”

Walid Phares, The Taliban’s “AfPak” Strategy: A Jihadi Preemptive War

It is now over a year that Obama administration is charting its way through troubled water of “American Engagement” and trying to lift the American image to a newer height (so to say from drowning!). The challenge to this engagement strategy is bitterly felt more in oriental regions rather than occidental. Getting out of Iraqi imbroglio, now they have focused on Afghanistan. But Afghanistan does not stand alone as a frontier to fight terrorism or defeating Al-Qaeda. Its closest brother Pakistan also shares the burden if not equally but not less either. For some unpredictable reason, Americans sadly missed the priciest dictum, ‘*War is too costly to leave it to generals*’. Because, if you leave this war to the generals they will keep thinking about their needs only (the recent dichotomy of putting more troops by General Stanley McChrystal and US Ambassador in Afghanistan General (ret’d) Karl Eikenberry is a case in point). If such a campaign (in military parlance) to be waged, a number of ways (lines of operations) need to be planned to achieve the end state – victory. This victory need also to be just, economic and worthy of struggle. A careful balancing of ways and means thus remains to be most important exercise that had been missed out by such a modern band of

men and its machines of America. With the passage of time winning war in this theater is withering in thin air. Besides talking about military defeat, two more aspects of this losing battle are visible now; collateral damage and dubious nature of Afghan government (charged with rampant corruption). They are the newest menace obstructing to achieve the ultimate goal of this campaign. Now President Obama's National Security Advisor, General James Jones is reiterating the golden *'two basic rules, at least in my book, on how you fight and win against an insurgency is you don't do anything that's not good for the people and you don't make any more enemies than you already have...that if you lose the people, then you probably lose the struggle'*. But for any careful reader of military history, fighting insurgency or terrorism always demanded these basic tenets to be adhered and there is no novelty in it. So we all muse on this new realization of Americans though late but still in their language *'all options are on the table'*. Is it going to bring any qualitative change in the overall campaign? So, they came up with the newest Af-Pak strategy.

This strategy was unveiled in March 2009 by Barack Obama, in the backdrop of an "increasingly perilous," situation by sending of an additional 4,000 troops, bringing the US deployment to more than 6,000, and to increase economic aid to Pakistan to US\$1.5 billion a year for five years. Progress will be monitored with a series of benchmarks and metrics imposed on Pakistan, Afghanistan and US efforts. There will be no "blank cheques," and Afghanistan and Pakistan will be expected to demonstrate their commitment by ramping up their governance and rooting out extremists. This is a clear manifestation of US dominance in this campaign which marginalized NATO in its efforts to secure the two countries. It has also made an attempt to cast its net wider by incorporating regional states, most significantly Russia, China, Iran and India. Two major aspects of this strategy are; first, the idea that the Taliban can be divided into "good" and "bad" categories and the other strand is of re-orienting Pakistan's foreign policy so that India can somehow be persuaded to negotiate with Pakistan on Kashmir, allowing Islamabad to concentrate less on its feud with India and more on its turbulent western frontier. Both these aspects are self defeating because categorization of Taliban into good and bad groups is historically flawed. It might look appealing to outsiders, but to the regional powers such as India, Iran and Russia, such an approach is an anathema. Elements of the Taliban who might be willing to strike a deal with the West just to see the western forces leave the region will haunt the security of regional states

like India and Iran long after the western forces are gone, as they have done in the past. The idea of negotiating with less extremist elements in the Taliban in Afghanistan was based upon the experience of American and British forces in Iraq, where Sunni militias were paid and trained to fight their former Al Qaeda allies. The new differentiation between Al Qaeda and the Taliban aims to seek out what has been widely termed "moderate" Taliban. The earlier strategy of treating Al Qaeda and the Taliban as synonymous brought these two diverse entities closer together, both ideologically and practically. And to woo India for such a cause in Afghanistan is nothing but undermining and remaining unaware of regional balance of power sensitivities in this region. India and Pakistan were close to a deal on Kashmir in 2007, not because of any outside pressure but because India was confident of the support of the friendlier Bush administration. The present US administration's clumsy handling so far has put India once again on the defensive - and a defensive India is never going to give the US what it wants most. Though the cornerstone of this strategy dwells on its regional approach and for the first time, Afghanistan and Pakistan are treated as two countries, but one challenge in the region. US strategy focuses more intensively on Pakistan than in the past. This calls for more significant increases in US and international support, both economic and military, linked to performance against terror. Together in this trilateral format, US is working to enhance intelligence sharing, military cooperation along the border, and address common issues such as trade, energy and economic development. The strategy for the first time is resourcing US effort to train and support the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police. Every American unit in Afghanistan is partnered with an Afghan unit and additional trainers from allied countries are sought to ensure that every Afghan unit has a coalition partner.

Let's look back a little in the landscape of conflict to identify why this strategy has little chance to succeed. In the chronology of event, the most obvious is the shift in attention from Iraq to Afghanistan as new administration took over. Under George W. Bush, the US had an uncoordinated strategy in Afghanistan, enabling the Taliban, after being beaten back in 2001 and again in 2002, to recover and reemerge. Since 2004, the Taliban and two independent allied commanders Jalaluddin Haqqani and Gulbaddin Hekmatyar, have swept into large swaths of southern, eastern and northern Afghanistan. And since then Afghanistan turned into a re-conquered territory with reinvigorated zeal by Taleban. After independence, Federally Administered Tribal Area in Pakistan

(FATA - seven Pashtun administrative units as tribal agencies and six tribal areas known as Frontier Regions) has been tenuously governed because of deliberate isolationist policy, not because of Pashtun tribal traditions or resistance. The civilian government faces significant challenges in implementing even a modest reform agenda in FATA since the Pakistan military retains control over sensitive areas of domestic and security policy. General Ashfaq Pervez Kayani has continued former president General Pervez Musharraf's peace deal strategy, expanding it from North and South Waziristan agencies to Bajaur and Mohmand agencies in FATA's northern belt, with similarly detrimental results. Nor has this policy been limited to FATA, as evident in military-led negotiations that culminated in the imposition of Nizam-e-Adl 2009, which established Sharia (Islamic law) in Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP)'s. Instead of a sustained attempt to dismantle and destroy the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) network – led by Baitullah Mehsud until his death on 5 August 2009 and now by his deputy Hakimullah Mehsud – the military continues to rely on a two-pronged approach of sporadic strikes and negotiations with militant groups. Pakistani Taliban groups have gained significant power in the tribal agencies, seven administrative districts bordering on Afghanistan. Pakistan's fresh military offensive has a debilitating affect. More than a million FATA residents already have been displaced by the conflict, mostly from Bajaur agency in the north and Waziristan in the south. Ongoing military operations in Khyber agency have forced as many as 100,000 to flee to safer locations in NWFP. While the military restricts domestic and international humanitarian access to FATA's conflict zones, neither the Pakistan government nor the international community has addressed the full costs of the conflict to civilians. The dilemma for Pakistan's army with the new policy is thus two fold. First, it must cooperate with the Americans in its pursuit of Taliban in tribal areas to root out extremism and the militant threat in the area. Military and non-military aid to Pakistan promises to be more intricately tied to such cooperation than ever before. Second, if the army fails get hard on the Taliban, Pakistan risks international isolation. While Pakistan's infrastructure will surely get a makeover, it will be challenging to develop institutional and social capacity in Pakistan. Whether there will be a marked improvement in standards of living also remains to be seen. The UN Human Development Report for 2007-08 conservatively estimates that almost 33 percent of Pakistanis live in poverty. The most welcomed aspect of the new policy is the emphasis on Afghanistan and Pakistan's civil institutions over

individual leaders (the presidents). In what many have described as a "civilian surge," both countries will receive massive injections of cash, projects and experts. Development aid for new schools, roads and clinics has been targeted for Pakistan's tribal areas, around \$7.5 billion in non-military aid over five years (the Kerry-Lugar bill). "Reconstruction opportunity zones," aimed at facilitating development and foreign investment by offering reduced tariffs and other taxes, are also proposed for those areas along the Pak-Afghan border that are most afflicted by the Taliban. The hope is that by creating a free trade and industry zone, employment opportunities will draw young men away from the Taliban. The Af-Pak policy cannot succeed unless the poverty upon which the militants prey is addressed. Poverty poses the greatest challenge to Afghani and Pakistanis, and no promises made by Washington, Brussels or Islamabad will have bearing unless they address it. If faith is to be instilled in a better society based on pluralism, democracy and equal rights, the basic needs of these people need to be met.

Falling back to General James Jones' symbolic overture of a '*three-legged stool*' while referring to Af-Pak policy, he was hinting one leg as military or armed effort; others are humanitarian assistance and capacity building. Military actions for such conflicts are aimed at keeping the terrorists at bay while the humanitarian assistance is aimed at winning hearts and minds of local populace. The capacity building of war torn government and institutions need an equal attention *per se* (as the institutions will take over once the exit of external armed forces take place). For Afghanistan-Pakistan, that is how all the legs of the stool never been completely balanced. It's been tilted very heavily in favour of military and kinetic efforts. But ultimately in order to make the stool leveled off so that the capacity building -- turning more over the Afghans themselves, now becomes a reality and deserves adequate mentorship, guidance, support and the resources. So how long it will take to better coordinate both the military and the civilian effort and to incorporate and inculcate the very essence of Afghan governance in society as a fully contributing member to that effort? The question remains unanswered till now and we keep on seeing the spate of violence in Afghanistan and Pakistan spiraling up in a daily basis. Now days it is hardly discernible which country is being shown on television as the portrayal of violence, extent of damage are identical.

To draw a conclusion on Af-Pak strategy, I thought it is befitting to quote from M.J. Akbar (Director, Covert Publications) who once met the Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostum in Mazar-e-Sharif. In an interview

with Dean Nelson and Ben Farmer of the Daily Telegraph (published on 13 November) he mentioned couple of rugged points, those might be unsuitable in western strategic parlance but to my understanding valuable;

- *Not one Afghan officer of the rank of captain or major has been killed in battle in six years, since Afghans do not consider this their war;*
- *Western leaders are mistaken if they believe that Taliban soldiers will defect, or betray Osama;*
- *Western aid has not touched poverty, but only killed local initiative and enriched the political elite;*
- *Taliban can only be defeated by a pragmatic military strategy that avoids categories like "good" and "bad" and involves local communities.*

Dostum dismissed the anti-corruption sanctimoniousness in a classic sentence: "They are demanding unicorns in Kabul."

A just war may be waged initially but fighting a war justly is all that difficult and it remained to be same over few thousand years. No untimely deaths can be justified whatever rhetoric the Americans might use. The coffins covered with national flags flying out of Afghanistan are a painful scene to reconcile. The Russians did the same and so did the British far ago. I am marveled with one silly question; why can't we learn from history? I am optimistic, but are the Americans and their allies with their Af-Pak strategy?

6

Is an Endgame Imminent in Afghanistan?

The United States is preparing both to escalate its commitment and retool its strategy in Afghanistan. But the realities of war - and, crucially, the calculations of Pakistan's elite - mean that this will only postpone the moment of real decision.

Paul Rogers, 16 October 2009, AfPak: the unwinnable war.

Last Tuesday, Barack Obama, the U.S. president, went before the cadets at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point - and a national, worldwide television audience and announced his plan and strategy for Afghanistan. He has delivered what he had to deliver - 30,000 extra troops, once again are on their way to desolate rugged mountains of Afghanistan. He quoted, "*These additional American and international troops will allow us to accelerate handing over responsibly to Afghan forces, and allow us to begin the transfer of our forces out of Afghanistan in July of 2011*". Thereby he outlined a plan and a time frame for turning responsibility for the fight against the Taliban and al-Qaeda over to the shaky Afghan government, so that American forces can be brought home eventually. What remains to be seen at the end is how better Obama sold the last debris of 'War of Terror' (by now an old rhetoric). The debris are still in the air and it started when the first bomb was dropped from US airplanes on the soil of Afghanistan in search of an impoverished bearded man - Osama bin Laden. My concern of today's writing will involve few cardinal points of US's latest decision of troops surge and shade some lights on US's decision making conundrum finally justifying how much the end game is certain.

As one analyst puts it, the strategy is how you accomplish the mission - the mission is what you want to accomplish. So what is it? Americans were never thoughtful of the type of war they were embarking since 2001's opening of campaign. Most of the US's military schools from operational to strategic level envisaged the upcoming trans-continental wars as more of a mixture of conventional and counter insurgency

warfare where there would be an enemy clearly defined and thereby military objectives and end states attainable. In military parlance the term Center of Gravity (CoG) is used to express such objective/effort. The definition of CoG is "*the source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act.*" (Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, Washington, DC: 2008). In other terms, "*CoG is the characteristics, capabilities, or locations from which a military force derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight. On the strategic level, centers of gravity might include a military force, an alliance, a set of critical capabilities or functions, or national strategy itself.*" The Army tends to look for a single CoG, normally in the principal capability that stands in the way of the accomplishment of its own mission. In short, an opponent's CoG is that element that prevents friendly forces from accomplishing their objectives. Thus, the center of gravity is usually seen as the "source of strength". Identifying it in right time and space is easier said than done. The coherent mental exercise involved in finding out and rightly defining the CoG is always a monumental task which encompasses so many internal and external factors. What I feel, U.S. strategists have been mistaking in identifying this crucial aspect of planning and perhaps it is the outcome of domination of military hawks in the planning room. It is understandable that military would always calculate the ways and means in terms of armed conflict and thereby perforce narrow their efforts. This exercise of identifying and revising CoG turned out to be extremely critical for Afghanistan and the ground reality kept of baffling U.S. strategies for a considerable period of time. So to say; what was the CoG, U.S. strategists first thought out to secure in the beginning of the campaign in Afghanistan? Was it the personality (e.g. Osama bin Laden?), or Taliban (e.g. a group of people coming from different ethnic background ruling pre-invaded Afghanistan?) or Al-Qaeda (e.g. a group of ideologues?) or denying a particular geographic location (e.g. mountains of Afghanistan?) or it was a mixture of all these just mentioned? This came into my mind recently as I read a news quip; '*Bush administration could've captured terrorist Osama Bin Laden in December 2001: Senate report, 29 November 2009*'.

But war creates its own logic, and its own momentum. War doesn't go according to plan. War tends to beget more war. So even the most carefully worked out plans are only good until the first shot is fired. This is almost a truism and any student of military history is familiar with this

phenomenon. What we see here is a dichotomy; did US war strategists plan the Afghanistan war with some hidden agenda? Or a superpower imbued with superego turned blind of the ground reality? That is how the substance is overshadowed by the egoistical superfluous exercise. Afghanistan can devour any large amount of military might and this is nothing new as the former invaders (British and Russian) proved. Surprisingly the last superpower that is now rolling its fresh 30000 lives into this land seems to be totally oblivious to this fact. Here comes another phenomenal danger of 'Group Thinking' which I think is one of the reasons for such decision making conundrum. The groups like; discussion groups, focus groups, committees and task forces abound in any commercial organisation or for that matter throughout government and society. They exist to provide solutions to problems that are sometimes perceived as too difficult, too big or too ethically complex for an individual or to make decisions where inputs are required from several disciplines or stakeholder interests. When all tend to agree with a solution previously agreed, it is impossible to project the reality as the decision is predetermined. In this process a group will decide the objective first and then arrange the ways and means later (irrespective of expenses). There are several pitfalls of such an exercise:

- Belief in the invulnerability of the group.
- A tendency to discount evidence that suggests the groups thinking is adrift.
- A tendency to believe that "those who are not with us are against us."
- A belief in the moral superiority of the group, almost as if its very existence brought great importance with it.

With reality check, can we deduce that U.S. and UK suffered from Group Thinking? I hope the latest inquiry on Iraq war which is being unveiled in Queen Elizabeth hall in London would highlight this aspect and seriously question the UK's preemptive interpretation of intelligence to go to war. By this time even my son knows that Mr. Tony Blair went to Iraq war knowing fully well that there was no WMD and no links of Al Qaeda with Saddam Hussain. But the war was waged.

So to say, is this 'Surge Plan' workable? Presumably that means putting in more troops, and then pulling most them out sooner rather than later. Obama said the US's commitment to Afghanistan was not open-ended, while at the same time reassuring the Afghans and Pakistanis that the US will maintain some level of American presence in Afghanistan for a long time to come. It is a position and a plan that seems self-

contradictory on several levels. Firstly, troops surge in Iraq and Afghanistan is not synonymous. This strategy worked better in Iraq as the Sunnis were taken into confidence and sectarian violence could be brought down to an acceptable level due to a certain level of cooperation. Confidence grew between the allied troops and other factional parties so that joint operations could be planned and intelligence gathered in real time. In case of Afghanistan, with who International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) will be synchronizing or so long synchronized? By now other than making some token gestures of meeting with tribal heads (and there are so many) no credible progress could be made on ground to earmark and restore confidence on some party which will act as a partner. Afghan government and its so called security apparatus is being built from scratch and capacity building for many institutions like these will take years not even months. In Iraq, there were two sides exercising reconciliatory approaches with each other but look in here, only a single monologue, no dialogue is in progress. This is why the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan would fall victim to complacency.

Secondly, troops surge eventually will cause more collateral damage and mass exodus due to increased military operations. Pakistan was very right to declare that they were indeed skeptical about the visible success of the increasing US presence. It is the direct victim of the rise and fall of the security situation and it has all the good reasons to be apprehensive. Already it is fighting its homegrown terrorism and never in Pakistan's history such a rampant violence manifested right into their heart of security apparatus – Army and Naval headquarters. Whole of Pakistan seems to be unstable and it bears far wider connotation in terms of regional security environment coupled with the nuclear capability in the long run. Instead of India centric war fighting it is combating its own people now thus upsetting the basic fiber of Pakistani national life which is interwoven by so many tribes and traditions. As the U.S's AfPak policy eventually taking a backseat, it is just matter of time to witness another grand strategy falling flat.

There seems to be interesting groups propping up in U.S mainland opposing the views of Capitol's decision of conducting war. One such that drew my attention last week was, 'Veterans of rethinking Afghanistan (it consists of a growing number of veterans committed to showing Congress and the public the realities of the war. These vets have been traveling to Washington, D.C., testifying before Congress and meeting with Senators and Representatives. Their message: Rethink U.S

foreign policy to include non-military solutions for the problems in Afghanistan and Pakistan). One of their members juxtaposed two contradictory but relevant aspects aimed to achieve the endgame which seemed to me very realistic. In their view, the amount of money being spent to sustain the military operation is six times more than the investment made to build infrastructure, boost economy, enhance capacity building, curb poppy cultivation and educate the rural people of Afghanistan. This construct should put us confronting a basic question; is ego driving us more than reason? It is obvious that Gen Stanley McChrystal is content and Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry is not (though he later made a public statement saying that the strategy adopted would pay dividend).

I am not comfortable with one fact; did Mr. Obama want to show (once again) that he is the Anti-Bush? Instead of general expectations as a decider, he deliberated, discussed, and debated - for months to deliver the same thing that his predecessor did in one hour? Then what about the whole issue of "planning"? George Bush started the Iraq war without much of a plan other than to smash the regular Iraqi army and Republican Guard and chase Saddam Hussein out of power. The real war that developed afterwards was not part of anyone's plan. To me, the amount does not matter whether it is 5000 or 50000, the turning point is U.S's decision to stick on to this relentlessly. After eight long years of fighting and where no visible success is in sight still, how it is possible to close the campaign within next 18 months, is a matter to be decided in heaven only. We need to remember, the decrease of violence in Iraq is directly proportional to the lessening of occupying forces' presence, not the effect of great troops surge directly.

Some says Americans are good at marketing and they proved it many a time. Look at the setting of Bush's "Mission Accomplished" speech aboard an aircraft carrier? Like 'All quiet in the western front' declaration. He told U.S troops and the U.S public, the Iraq war was basically over and no-one really had to worry about getting killed in Iraq anymore. The sailors on board the USS Abraham Lincoln were used as a patriotic backdrop, a kind of human ornament perfectly set. Cynics - like me - would say that it is another futile exercise of drawing a lot of young men and women in uniform into the valley of deaths. It is also an interesting contrast that such speeches are not telecast now a days from the Oval Office, the way earlier TV-era presidents did. Is it because a

patriotic backdrop and cheering cadets make the job of marketing a war easier? It's the same old story, and somehow, we the people of earth wanted a better delivery from a commander in chief of such a mighty military machine who was just awarded with Nobel peace prize. Are the Americans convinced that they can get out of Afghanistan riding on this strategy within next 18 months? Are they sure that the scenes like 'escape from roof tops of Saigon' or 'long pensive trail of winding columns of Russians armoured vehicles' would not be replayed? Sadly again, the collateral damage would increase in terms of human beings. May be some of our thoughtful strategies could have allowed them a little more life time and joyful moments with their toddlers. Both the parties in this conflict will sacrifice needlessly in the altar of something (a superego?) which they are not sure of. Only time will say.

7

Of War and Anti-war, a New Year Anti-war Agenda

One is left with the horrible feeling now that war settles nothing; that to win a war is as disastrous as to lose one.
Agatha Christie

We used to wonder where war lived, what it was that made it so vile. And now we realize that we know where it lives...inside ourselves. Albert Camus

Probably getting embroiled into conflict is one of our primordial habits. In academic parlance, conflict is the resultant of incompatible goals set by an individual or group. This incompatibility gives rise to tension which in turn is responsible for our irrational behaviour. Though positive conflict gives birth to healthy competition that yields purposeful advancements but sometimes all the yields are not good. This trend of competition due to conflict is rather usual and it is the driving force of civilization. This phenomenon has never failed and that is how every 'next generation' lives in a prosperous life in terms of material gains. The problem occurs when this material advancement is juxtaposed with moral and ethical advancement and we ponder whether any tangible advanced is achieved in morality factor. The definition and standard of 'morality' for that matter never have altered; from Greeks to Romans and finally to modern time, we will notice the ethical teachings they preached remained same and we still use with some modifications their laws and rules for running states and control individual behaviour. So it can safely be deduced that, peripheral changes are obvious while the core remains unchanged, like the centre of the earth and its upper crust. This led me to another thesis; we tend to rationalize everything which stands in our path towards attaining a goal and the antithesis is; we become hypocrite while doing this. Since Herodotus started documenting history, I could visualize all the war councils held so far, the intellectual talks for justifications of war by war mongers and their opponent ultimately giving in. The list

would be populated with million reasons as they preferred war to peaceful settlement of conflicts thereby I am bypassing this obvious synthesis. Simply putting it, we preferred war always because we believed that it is the only way to impose our will onto others. This imposition has to be done by use of force as the recipient would not willingly subdue. This exercise of imposition has to be imbued with ego as the cause portrayed need to motivate all the members of the war council. For readers' reminder; First World War was initiated when on 28 June 1914, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand (heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne) took place by Serb nationalist Gavrilo Princip, while the Second one started as both the Germans and Japanese preached the theme 'Widening of Living Space', (Lebensraum) which served as a major motivation for their territorial aggression. Many such wars were initiated with trifling causes (!). I want to highlight few of the motivations that worked fine for waging wars so far including the latest ones by U.S.

The easiest tool that motivates for going to war is the sense of perceived **Religious Supremacy**. Over so many centuries, human beings fought with each other for establishing just cause based on religious dictums. Leaders rallied their people to bring justice defined in their respective religions. That is why you may notice, most of the 'war cries' are spelled in religious words. Bringing death and destructions to the infidels remain to be the most potent tool to wage war. Never in our history anti-war could be successful due to the fact that it lacked vigour, zeal and ecstasy which religions could provide abundantly. Taking examples of two of the greatest religions, we notice the expansion of Islam after the Prophet's (SM) death in 632 AD, took place keeping the central theme of bringing the infidels under the banner of Islam while the Crusades were a series of religiously-sanctioned military campaigns against the Islamist expansionisms waged by much of Latin Christian Europe, particularly the Franks of France and the Holy Roman Empire. The specific crusades to restore Christian control of the Holy Land were fought over a period of nearly 200 years, between 1095 and 1291. Still we find the themes of religious crusades hung in the air and used as rhetoric often. In this era of neo-liberalism there are no classic theocratic societies but the influence of theocracy did not diminish at all.

The second profound reason which if cleverly played can motivate to go for war is the perceived **Ideological Superiority**. This is though difficult but had been used intelligently by many. The Japanese imperial

army used to indoctrinate its recruits and motivate them to kill the Chinese by portraying them as subhuman. The Prussians were famous for their Arian aristocracy and ideology. Let's recast on the Battle of Kurukshetra (field of the Kurus) – a classic in Hindu religion (later on, BJP capitalized the issue of demolition Babri mosque for political advantage which is based on this place). In Mahabharata, there is an account of the life and deeds of several generations of a ruling dynasty called the Kuru clan. Central to the epic is an account of a great war that took place between two sibling families belonging to this clan. Kurukshetra, was the battleground on which this war was fought. Kurukshetra was also known as "Dharmakshetra" (field of Dharma), or field of righteousness. Mahabharata tells that this site was chosen for the war because a sin committed on this land was forgiven on account of the sanctity of this land. The two sides to the war were the families of Pandavas and the Kauravas. The dispute between the Kauravas and the Pandavas arose from a game of dice, which the Kauravas won by deceit, forcing their Pandava cousins to go into exile for thirteen years. The dispute escalated into a full scale war when Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kauravas, driven by jealousy, refused to restore the Pandavas their throne after the exile. When the battle was joined, Arjuna examines the ideology of a civil war in which he would have fought against his friends and relatives. He says that, those people for whose good they want kingdom, enjoyment and pleasures, they are here in struggle, relinquishing their lives and riches. He states that all the wealth contained in three worlds would not be ample to justify killing of friends and family gathered on the battle field. Initially Lord Krishna set out for a peace mission to persuade the Duryodhana to stop war. While the peace mission was rejected by Duryodhana, Krishna returned to Upaplavya to inform the Pandavas that the only course left to uphold the principles of virtue (!) and righteousness (!) was inevitable – so they must enjoin in a righteous war. However, despite the dichotomy of Arjuna, the war was waged for 18 days and remains to be an example of upholding ideology beyond everything. The expansion of communism in post Second World War is also viewed nothing but the expansion of a professed superior ideology over western liberalism.

Another infallible reason to go for war is **Perceived Injustice**. The classic example is Israel-Palestine conflict where both the nations are stuck in a vicious cycle of perceived injustice. Israel is revolving around

their legacy of injustices perpetrated upon them while they perpetuate same style injustice to the Palestinians. This is called 'A cycle of Vengeance'. Here 'teach them a lesson' psyche is at work. It is interesting to note a theory cited here; why Chengiz Khan and Halaku Khan attacked on Islamdom in the west after traversing such a long distance from Mongolia? Some opines that, it was a collective expression of resistance to Islam from the pre-Islamic Persians who had settled in China and Mongolia and the Turks who had been waging a struggle against Islam in the 8th to the 10th centuries. The Mongol counterattack on Islam was a result of historical wrongs committed by the Arab Muslims on the Zoroastrian Persians, and by the Arab Muslims along with the Islamized Persians on the Turks, and in turn, by the Arabs with the Islamized Persians and the Islamized Turks on non-Islamic Turks and Mongols and Chinese. It is this accumulation of grievances that led to the burst of the Mongol attack on Islamdom from 1200 that culminated in the sack and slaughter of Baghdad in 1258 under Halaku Khan who was forced on to this path by his Nestorian Persian Christian wife. There might be some element of truth ingrained in this theory having been unjustly treated but interestingly the Mongols embraced Islam in later centuries and continued their expansion to Indus valley.

Last but not the list is the so called, protection or securing of **Vital National Interest**, which U.S. and its allies are (dis)honestly pursuing. In Heritage lecture (Heritage Foundation) by Edwin J Feulner on February 6, 1996, such phenomenon was highlighted amply, *"My friends, first of all, the left-liberals in America need to get over this notion that it's somehow embarrassing or even immoral to have vital global interests. The isolationists need to get over the idea that, with Soviet communism gone, we no longer have global interests. The fact is, the United States is a global power. Responsibility as a global power requires us to behave like a global power. We can protect neither our interests nor our values unless we remain a global power. As we approach the 21st century, we must apply the lessons we learned in the 20th century: It is too dangerous for us to hide and to put our heads in the sand. I believe the world longs for America's leadership, the kind of leadership that led Ronald Reagan to stand there in Berlin in 1987 and demand, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" Each day we find out more and more from Soviet archives how it was U.S. strength that freed the people of the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe. I believe the world is a freer, safer, more stable place when the*

U.S. is actively pursuing its own vital national interests. Leadership that we have because we are the world's only remaining superpower". If this is the U.S. attitude anti-war will remain to be utopia.

I am a pacifist and a follower of Mahatma Gandhi, who always used to say, *'an eye for an eye would make the world blind eventually'*. 'Tit for tat' is an easier tactic but 'nothing for tat' is the difficult option. It is even difficult when you are asked to forget about your religious call, forsake your superior ideology, get away with the notion that you were wronged by the ancestors of the enemy and finally rationalizing what is your limit of responsibility. There are two parallel thoughts when we want to reason out for going to war; one is *Jus ad bellum* (Latin for "Justice to War") which are a set of criteria that are consulted before engaging in war, in order to determine whether entering into war is justifiable and the other is *Jus in bello*, which concerns whether a war is conducted justly (regardless of whether the initiation of hostilities was just). Though these seemed to be legal terms but could we interpret these truthfully so far? Despite of the three most notable examples; the **Kellogg-Briand Pact** outlawing war as an instrument of national policy, the **London Charter** (known also as the Nuremberg Charter) defining "crimes against peace" as one of three major categories of international crime to be prosecuted after World War II, and the **United Nations Charter**, which binds nations to seek resolution of disputes by peaceful means and requires authorization by the United Nations before a nation may initiate any use of force against another, beyond repulsing an immediate armed attack against its sovereign territory, which deplored initiation of war and its conduct aftermath, these remained to be instrument of inaction thus forcing to believe that humanity could not get out of its basic folly.

I want to draw conclusion on Barack Obama's Nobel acceptance lecture delivered in a gala ceremony amidst controversy. He said, *"We must begin by acknowledging the hard truth that we will not eradicate violent conflict in our lifetimes, there will be times when nations - acting individually or in concert - will find the use of force not only necessary but morally justified."* Wars are morally justified, he noted, if they are conducted in self-defense or as a last resort, if the force employed is proportional, and if, whenever possible, civilians are spared violence. When viewed with the latest U.S engagements in Afghanistan, the problem of interpretation of just-war theory is that, the issue that most threatens to undercut the legitimacy of his prize - doesn't fit well. It is

difficult to claim the war is still in self defense, not when the Taliban pose no threat to the U.S. and al-Qaeda has been reduced to a few fragments that could relocate elsewhere. The force is far from proportional, given that the most powerful country in the world is bombing one of the poorest and weakest. And civilians have surely not been spared violence. The U.S. has killed 12,000-32,000 civilians in Afghanistan since the war's outbreak. That compares to fewer than 1,000 U.S. casualties. How would we rationalize such wars in 21st century? I wonder what will be the justification of war in 2050 dubbed in a sci-fi thriller as intergalactic conflict. Will it be waged on the ground of total despair? Shall we witness more wars in coming year based on some bizarre ideologies? Should we perforce take the definition of peace is 'the absence of war'?

8

A Bollywood Film and Relevant Thoughts on Higher Education System of Bangladesh

If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and will never be.

Thomas Jefferson

What beguiled me for this episode of writing is a recent Bollywood film, titled ‘Three Idiots’ starring and directed by Aamir Khan. Though I am not a movie fan but my earlier experience with Aamir Khan’s ‘Tare Jamin Par’ led me to watch this with intent. I was not wrong. There were no doubts accumulated in my mind about its success worldwide (as it went on earning 100 crore rupees within first week). With his virtuoso approach, the director guided us in a world of magic reality where like all ‘Happy Ending Type’ story; the hero’s efforts were culminated into reuniting with his heroine and salvaging his two friends who almost lost their trails in conventional education system as they were torn between reality and idealism. Briefly the theme of the film was; follow your passion, pursue the education which satisfies your passion, teaching institutions must be reoriented to nurture the creative ones intimately rather than follow orthodox curricula. Students should be able to choose compatible education which will flourish their intellects and not others will choose it for them (in the film, one of them was born at 0515 hours and at 0516 hours it was decided by his parents that he would have to be an engineer by profession – a common paradox in this sub-continent).

I am also referring to one of the latest news on our education system where it was revealed that none of our universities are ranked within World’s top 500 and Asia’s best 100’s. The comment came from Prime Minister’s international affairs adviser Professor Gouhar Rizvi on the eve of celebration of the 58th anniversary of Asiatic Society on 4th January 2010. This does not come as a surprise to me at all, being a student myself and while seeking admission to universities in North America, I was told that my transcripts need to be verified by another agency. It is

not a very distant past that we had students from Malaysia, Nepal, Palestine and Afghanistan flocking in our universities and medical colleges. But the situation drastically reversed within such a short span of time that we now stand in a precipice. I am not ready to suggest some quick fixes in this sector at all. It is not the purview of today's attempt too. As I view, our higher education sector is in total shamble. Clearly there are absence of right strategy which produces right tactics to guide right action. Let me analyze where we went wrong since the beginning. Though the recent agility demonstrated by Education Minister enthused me to a great extent but that is the tip of the iceberg that he handled (even the tip was almost melting due to the last minute sabotage where the whole stock of book was set alight, this is what we are! A nation with deep passion for vengeance!)

My humble effort is directed today to diagnose the problems which is the first part of problem solving exercise. Let us trace back a little to understand how the strategy for education system was laid and how much we flouted it later. Provision of education is listed as one of the fundamental responsibilities of the state in our constitution. Education related directives are narrated in articles 15, 16, 17, 19, 28 and 41 of the constitution. We conform fully to the Education for All (EFA) objectives, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and international declarations. Article 17 of our constitution provides that all children between the ages of six and ten years receive a basic education free of charge (every year the government allocates its largest share in education sector boastfully). With this background, right after the liberation, a national education commission led by Dr. Muhammad Qudrat-i-Khuda was formed in 1972. The commission, popularly known as 'Qudrat-i-Khuda Education Commission-1972', produced a report in May, 1974. A committee was formed in 1976 for developing national curricula and syllabuses in conformance with the recommendations of the report. The second education commission was formed in 1979 with Dr. Mofiz Uddin as chair. 'Mofiz Uddin Education Commission' submitted a report in 1988. In 1997, a 56-member committee was formed to update the education system. This committee, known as 'Shamsul Haque Education Committee', submitted an education policy report to the National Assembly. This report took into consideration environment, globalization and gender issues for the first time. 'Mohammad Moniruzzaman Mia Commission-2003' submitted its report in March 2004 and made 880

recommendations (never really visualized how these to be implemented!) on all of the education sub-sectors. Thus the Government of Bangladesh acknowledged the need for developing an overall strategy for higher education. Subsequently the Ministry of Education decided to develop a Twenty-Year Strategic Plan (not taking into account of our diametrically opposite political masters who would take over alternately and irreversibly would review the policies) for the higher education sector. Under the guidance of the University Grants Commission (UGC), six expert groups comprising distinguished scholars and professionals of the country prepared the strategic plan. After a series of regional and national level consultative meetings, the UGC submitted the Strategic Plan to the Government of Bangladesh in May, 2006. Hereafter there is a lull. So this is all that we could do so far in pen and paper. It was a reality in text but not in spirit. May be we can bag some credit in achieving success about female education, raising literacy level through our primary education system, but as the secondary level and higher secondary level traverse into tertiary one, the spirit and energy are lost all at once. I emphasize here the quality of tertiary level education as this is suppose to produce future leaders and policymakers.

At present there are 80 universities in Bangladesh of which 53 are private and 27 are public. The demand for educational opportunities seems to have increased dramatically. As a result, the number of students in the private universities is on the steady rise. Private universities in Bangladesh recorded a phenomenal growth after the enactment of the Private University Act in 1992. According to statistics, whereas in 1998 these universities had 8,718 students, in 2001 the number increased to 35,968. In 2006, private universities had a combined enrolment of more than 100,000. On the other hand, the enrollment in public universities is kept on growing. At present, nearly two million students is receiving higher education in Bangladesh. The average student/teacher ratio in the public universities is 1:18 while in the National University the ratio is 1:25. This clearly underscores the rapid rise of demand for higher education in our country but does it speak for a volume of 'quality students' those are suppose to be recipients of this privilege? This trend has been set by job market where a rat race is ensured intensified by the economic downturn and competitive market economics. I am making a point here about 'Quality Education'. The basic denominators of quality education that must be imparted to students aimed at; *learning to know*,

learning to do, learning to live together with others and learning to be (Delors, 1996). One of the prime goals of quality education is to build knowledge, life skills, perspectives, attitudes and values of the students to transform the society into a more productive, sustainable one. Could this be done so far? If the answer reverberates profoundly with a big 'No' then what are the impediments? Higher education in Bangladesh ideally should have become more responsive to the needs of a major constituency: its students. Professor Dr. Salahuddin M. Aminuzzaman, of Department of Public Administration University of Dhaka highlights that; *'Quality in higher education is primarily an academic issue, but has also important crosscutting (social, political, economic and technological) implications. The quest for quality is attributed to a number of changing phenomena including: changing contexts (i.e., wider student profile, internationalization of higher education and labour market), increased market forces and competition, dissatisfaction from employers and students, expansion with limited funding and demand of accountability from institutions.*

No accreditation body exists that could ensure quality assurance and determine the strengths and deficiencies of programmes. Whatever system of quality assurance there is, is generally subjective. In the absence of a scientific mechanism to assess quality in a whole range of inter-related areas such as mission, vision, academic programmes, curriculum, teaching, research, teaching aids, facilities, leadership etc., attempts to measure quality are bound to be unsatisfactory and at best tentative. It is also difficult to set standards for accreditation, since the whole question of quality culture seems a matter of an institution's particular choice'.

Given this backdrop, let us try to address the core problem, what stops us from installing such accreditation body which will be the guardian for quality control? There might be plethora of reasons at play but let me identify few of them. Firstly, ignorance plays a vital role. The policies are not coherent as these are only chalked out without keeping in mind any meaningful probability of execution. Secondly, no feedback system is at work. Even if it is at work, it only submits the achievements to sooth the policy makers in power. Thirdly, too much commercialization is imposed on the delivery of the system. It starts right from the coaching for admission and ends up to a life time private coaching. The bi products of such commercialization are corruption in terms of forgery of certificates,

manipulating results and campus anarchy. Fourthly, futile assessment of demand and supply mechanism is perceived. In progressive countries, higher studies are earmarked only for the deserving ones screened through all levels and bear potentials to contribute into designated sectors. What we see in our case is an *en masse* attempt to be educated from Universities (simply speaking, manage a certificate for job interview, with multifarious educational track record). Finally, since the inception of private universities, the situation has been further compounded as these corporatized the total system now. Only the wealthy and nobles are accepted in the league while rest all are destined to be educated in state subsidized Universities. And it is expected that the education system will remain substandard in those institutions, as the teachers started filling the adhoc and regular vacancies in private universities as faculty members leaving aside their primary roles. With the help of many research results, we can earmark few variable factors to determine the present deteriorating higher education system, such as; teacher quality, method and content, peer quality, facilities and resources, the effectiveness of the administration, campus politics, gender, and year of graduation.

If we even talk about research, we stand nowhere. In Bangladesh, the higher education institutions show a less than satisfactory track record in research and extension work. There is a strong realization on the part of educators, educational policy planners, teachers and various professional groups that in the global and national contexts, institutions that perform poorly in research will not be able to get into the knowledge society of today. A denial of such entry will reflect adversely not only on the production and dissemination of new knowledge, but also on the goals of national and human development.

The forerunners of modern education system in England and later United States envisioned the necessity of founding quality institutions like; Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Yale and Columbia etc. much earlier. The 'Ivy League Universities' are well known in North America as a gateway to successful, prestigious life. It served them multiple purposes; they knew perfectly well that colonialism cannot be sustained by brute forces. It will require some sorts of soft force which will enable them to re-colonize their empires. They thought of making their higher education lucrative to draw the intellects from all around the globe. The brilliant but wretched students all over their poorer colonies will obviously throng in

such universities and with little sponsorship they can be retained in mainland. Subsequently their intelligence, hard work (by default) can be channeled to develop their own sectors. While the students would come over and adapt, they would be attracted to the facilities, amenities of modern life offered by these societies and it would be less likely that they would go back contributing their nations (except the lunatic like Mahatma Gandhi! or lately the Chinese). This is another face of neo-imperialism. Finally, I wonder; are we subjected to a grand conspiracy then? If not, why we are still revolving within a vicious circle; **too many policies - implement conundrum - resource scarcity- absence of monitoring authority- too many policies?**

9

A Reflection on Democratic Peace Theory and Indo-Bangladesh Relationship

Without a coherent state grounded in a consensus on which citizens will exercise self-determination, unfettered electoral politics often gives rise to nationalism and violence at home and abroad. [...] When authoritarian regimes collapse and countries begin the process of democratization, politicians of all stripes have an incentive to play the nationalist card. [...] The nationalist and ethnic politics that prevails in many newly democratizing states loads the dice in favor of international and civil war. [...] In all of these varied settings, the turbulent beginning phase of democratization contributed to violence in states with weak political institutions. Statistical studies show that countries with weak institutions undergoing an incomplete democratic transition are more than four times as likely to become involved in international wars than other states, and that incomplete democracies are more likely to experience civil wars than either pure autocracies or fully consolidated democracies.

Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War*.

Do democracies fight? This is quite a subjective question albeit seems to be ubiquitous since the beginning of an open ended war on terror – a virtual conflict played in reality that engulfed us since 9/11. But this was not what we thought right after the end of cold war when in February 5, 1992; Secretary of State James Baker was found quoting:

‘The Cold War has ended, and we now have a chance to forge a democratic peace, an enduring peace built on shared values—democracy and political and economic freedom. The strength of these values in Russia and the other new independent states will be the surest foundation for peace—and the strongest guarantee of our national

security—for decades to come'. So this decade was one of the most violent and did not proceed as envisaged and now we are in the midst of relentless hostility pioneered by so called bastions of democracies. What we witness now is all the popular democracies are embroiled in fighting either internally or externally.

Given this backdrop, even with a cursory look on our Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina's recent high profile state visit to India, we once again notice that, this society remains fragmented when it comes to the question of India-Bangladesh gain and loss debate. Frankly speaking, I was particularly moved by the volume of reports and banter that was made available by most of the print media which altruistically (!) portrayed various aspects of PM's visit. Most of our educated citizenry are served with technical aspects of the joint communiqué and I am sure it will take years to comprehend tangible gains. As usually our national psyche was again proved – we are a nation who realizes its existence in either of two extremities - the government declared the trip to be hundred percent successful while the opposition camp described it as a total 'sell off' of the country. My aim today is not to elaborate technical aspects of this loss and gain equation rather gesturing through a metaphorical way about the interactions of democracies (of two countries; India and Bangladesh) underscored by the visit, that might play a significant role in the long run shaping our bilateral relationship.

So, let's find out empirically and historically if the question, 'do democracies fight' is correct? While doing so, few correlated propositions will be tested so that the theme is relevant and comparable. Basically, the concept of 'Democratic Peace Theory' was coined back in the 1960s and 1970s, when referring to Emmanuel Kant's 'Perpetual Peace' by Dan Babst (who was a criminologist and carried out a statistical research and published the theory in 1964 in *Wisconsin Sociologist* and later in 1972, in the trade journal *Industrial Research*.) He claimed that, democracies were more peaceful than non democracies. Let's dwell little on Emmanuel Kant's seminal work, *Eternal Peace*, who laid down the tangible foundations of the democratic peace theory in 1795:

"If happy circumstances bring it about that a powerful and enlightened people form themselves into a republic,- which by its very nature must be disposed in favour of perpetual peace,-this will furnish a center of federative union for other States to attach themselves to, and

thus to secure the conditions of liberty among all States, according to the idea of the right of nations; and such a union would extend wider and wider, in the course of time, by the addition of further connections of this kind”.

Kant’s argument was theoretical rather than empirical, given that no mature democracy or republic existed at the end of the 18th century. However, it goes on to saying that, not only are the empirical findings for the democratic peace robust, but there are also three strong normative explanations for why the democratic peace is a reality, which are referred to as the three pillars of liberalism. The three factors embodied in the democratic peace proposition are *democratic rule*, the *“pacific” union between democracies*, and *the cosmopolitan law emanating from economic interdependence*. The first explanation maintains that, democratic institutions place limits upon leaders and governments because rulers want to be re-elected, they restrain from engaging in politically damaging actions and avoid wars, especially with other democracies. The second, cultural / normative explanation contends that, democracies externalize the norms of compromise and co-operation, which they practice within their territory. When a dispute with another democracy is likely to erupt, they are then more likely to negotiate a settlement than resort to violence. The third explanation focuses on economic interdependence. Democracies normally foster the free trade of goods and services; this creates economic inter connectivity, which should lead to cooperation in the social and political realm.

So here comes the **proposition one**; *Pairs of democracies are less likely to initiate and engage in minor conflict and warfare than other pairs of states*. We evaluate now both the countries in the scale of democratic track record. Undoubtedly, India boasts of enjoying a vibrant democracy and democratic norm in running state affairs, determining their foreign relationship. But can we claim same credentials? It is both yes and no, as we stumbled thrice (in 1975, 1981 and finally in 2007), while the ‘train of democracy’ was derailed. However, we claim to be at least a fledgling democracy in comparison with India. Therefore Bangladesh is not at par in this context and still we are not sure whether the democracy that we are practicing is congenial. Thus the hypothesis is difficult to prove as we are not even compatriots least we concede.

In the **second proposition**; *Democracies are less likely to participate in interstate conflicts and wars than other states*. If we review the situation of Indian subcontinent after 1947; we had two full fledged wars

(1965 and 1971) and few Low Intensity Conflicts (Kargil and Kashmir). India being a democratic country still draws its strengths of foreign policy in terms of coercion not mediation. In its long chequered history, it intervened forcibly in the Srilankan affair, retook Sikim and posed many problems for Nepal and Bhutan. Nepalese Maoist leader Prachanda lately alleged Indian clandestine involvement behind the palace killing where the whole family of King Birendra was eliminated. Many a times it mobilized its armed forces near the Pakistan border expecting a full blown third Indo-Pak war. So it is also empirically difficult to prove the proposition in favour of India once bilateral problem solving is concerned. It's a reality that India's ever expanding economic and military superiority in this region is second to China and both prefers coercion in determining and securing vital national interests.

The **next proposition** in the queue, *is democracy more oppressive within its border?* This aspect is the least researched element of the democratic peace and probably none want to do it having a fear of downplaying the existing regime they belong to. I was particularly bemused once following the series of decisions that U.S was taking while enacting 'patriotic act' and executing it through homeland security system. Though this is argumentative and may be justified once security and protection are threatened but I am hinting at potential collateral losses that are incurred using such systems and whether it tends to be oppressive or not. This aspect is of special importance, as Democide (democratic homicide) has caused six times as many deaths as wars between states in the post 1945 era. In the fifty years preceding the World War II, civil wars or intrastate conflicts caused more than twenty million fatalities and the displacement of more than sixty seven million people. Among other factors (e.g. economic development and the homogeneity/heterogeneity of the population), studies have found democracies to be moderately correlated with intrastate peace. It is argued that, democratic political systems grant civil and political liberties to people and approve minority rights. This should render the political system more inclusive, inviting different cohorts of the population to participate in the social and political life of a country. By definition a democracy should abstain from political bans, censorship, torture, disappearances and mass killing. But sometimes established democracies do these things in the name of security and protection, vital national interests, economic development and war on terror (recent formulae!). Let's equate India and Bangladesh in this field.

We are way behind in this aspect as we abrogated as many ways as possible the limits of Human Rights. India does the same in the name of anti terrorism act (POTA), stopping Naxalites to seize power in West Bengal, state orchestrated *democide* while siding with the perpetrators in Gujrat massacre. So there is an ascending trend noticed between these two countries proving this trend.

Next we discuss about another proposition which talks about, *Civil War or minor intra-state conflict is less likely to erupt in democracies than in non-democracies (adding some qualification to the type of democracies)*. Studies have cautioned the finding that, intrastate conflicts are less likely to erupt in democracies than in non-democracies. Instead, some scholars maintain that it is necessary to distinguish between durable, consolidated democracies and transitional democracies. In particular, they highlight that, protest, rebellion and other forms of civil violence are likely to erupt in semi-democracies or transitional democracies because the political institutions in these states are changing and weakened. This creates an environment which induces groups to take action and states to repress such actions. In a setting where institutions are weak, ethno-national or ideological leaders might also want to take their chances and organize rebellions. In light of this, we stand as a transitional democracy or semi-democracy with ghastly political fissures creating impediments for good governance. ‘One eleven’ was such an event that pushed us into a precipice and almost commenced a civil war. Though India hosts a mixture of ethnographically diversified populace but its robust democratic institution is quite resilient to absorb shocks arise from such circumstances. There exists a wider acceptance of Indian nationalism through the length and breadth of the country binding it tightly so far. Unfortunately we could not yet figure out what could be our ‘nationalism’ thus making us vulnerable to the effects of such manipulation in future.

What is important to mention lastly is, identifying the overall psyche of democratic country’s leadership which will act in the event of threat or intimidation. We can briefly term it as ‘leaders’ threat perception’ because it leads and guides them to take decisions causing monumental effect in the course of history. This phenomenon is crucial to understand and justify on the part of weaker neighbour like us, as it is germane to ‘powerful actors’, possessing adequate military, economy capabilities (which India is). The decision of the policy makers of democratic nations

might be proved absolutely autocratic (in case of Bush the junior and previous U.S regime). This begs a question; notionally do the democracies harbour a “presumption of enmity” toward non-democracies? I think this can be proved empirically. It is interesting to note that, some democratic leaders derive information which leads to their aggressive intentions basing on some indicators, while others do not, and it has something to do about different foreign policy processes of democratic states. As an example; president Franklin D. Roosevelt’s assessment of Hitler as a potential threat to American security in the aftermath of the Munich crisis (the Munich crisis unfolded in late September 1938 as the British and French attempted to deal with German pressure on Czechoslovakia while avoiding war and preserving at least the appearance of honouring their commitments to the latter. It ended with the signing of the Munich agreement on 30 September) is a curious case in point. It highlights the role of liberal-democratic norms in shaping the threat perceptions of democratic leaders. A critical factor in Roosevelt’s post-Munich expectation of future trouble for the U.S was his judgment that, Hitler’s contempt for democratic processes of accommodation forecasted unlimited aims. Moreover, Roosevelt’s response to the Munich crisis shows that, threat can be assessed primarily on the basis of intentions and suggests how democratic predispositions can provide indicators of intent. Applying an essentially democratic political standard, he took Hitler’s extreme disregard for the values and procedures associated with political accommodation to be a sign of unlimited aims which could never be satisfied by normal diplomatic means. Sooner or later, Germany was bound to threaten the U.S. Do we find similar echoes in Bush the junior’s decision making process and the then prevailing democratic processes reminiscing the Munich decision? Democratically elected leaders might enjoy unsurpassable allegiance in some point of time which will perforce them to take disastrous decisions. It was the same decision making conundrum – both U.S. and U.K. were found entangled into, doubting limitless aspirations and wishful capabilities of Al Qaeda and its cohorts.

The violation of norms as a catalyst of threat perception comes next which links between perception of such behaviour and the expectation of future aggressiveness. If the opponent had in some way betrayed a trust or undertaken an illegitimate and impermissible action that he had somehow infringed a norm of behaviour, he qualifies for retribution (in case of Iraq’s violation of UN embargo and Kurdish repression). While

anyone may see failure to accommodate as a reason for suspicion, usual definition of accommodation has little in common with one based on a “democratic culture of conflict resolution” which emphasizes “important procedural norms,” such as “reciprocal responsiveness, mutual adjustment, and joint gains,” and in which “the balance of power is replaced with reciprocal exchange”. Moreover, democracies value such processes for their own sake, treating them as ‘ends’. But ideally, these processes are not ends but means to be employed only so long as they are useful. There is something termed as ‘strategic maneuver’ used to gain an advantage, and this is rampant in international politics. Trust is limited and provisional, and the use of coercion or force is acceptable provided it is cost-effective. Thus, everything depends on how things are done (a realist point of view!). Furthermore this democratic emphasis on process is what links procedural norms of accommodation to threat perception. What triggered Roosevelt’s sense of threat at Munich was not simply that Germany made demands on Czechoslovakia but how those demands were made and how Hitler treated the other interested parties. For democracies, the expectation that agreements will be honoured is justified by a shared commitment to the rules hinting at, those who break the rules will also flout agreements. Forecasting unlimited aims, such violations suggest that, ultimately, promises will not be kept and deals will not be honoured. Reality tells us to believe that rules will in any case be obeyed only if it is in a state’s interest to do so, and nations must wait until promises are actually broken and deals violated. Does it resemble close to the concept of *Realpolitik* and Chanakya Nitishrashtro often quoted in the realm of foreign policy of India? Are the rules of convenience/expediency superior to international norms?

If the answer is even a meek yes, then it has a profound impact on the security paradigm of India and Bangladesh relationship. After taking over of Awami League, we witnessed a rapid round up of Ulfa leaders and extraditing them to Indian authorities except Anup Chetia. This has undermined earlier stance when it was vehemently denied the presence of separatists’ elements in our soil *per se* our involvement to harbour them to create unrest in seven sister states of India. In reciprocal terms prior to 1997 Peace Treaty in Chittagong Hill Tracts, so called *Shanti Bahinis* and their aspirations to secede was patronized covertly by India and it lends to the point that whether *Realpolitik* is the only method that India will recourse to in future is a matter to time. Thus democratic process has hardly anything to do when it comes to the matter of securing national

interest at all costs. PM's visit underscored the importance of few security related Memorandum of Understandings and she reiterated that the soil of Bangladesh would never be allowed to be used as a land for terrorists. The joint efforts directed towards intelligence gathering and sharing information by both the countries will have long terms effects which should be evaluated basing on the propositions made earlier. Though for weak player it is all about following the international norms and standard behavior, while for stronger, it is nothing but the preemption of securing national interests, it is needless to hope if democracy ever lessens the war waging tendency.

Democratic norms should be trend setter in democratic countries and these should be the guides to chart the path of bilateral relationship even if the actors are unequal in size. But it is neither a panacea nor the ultimate magic tool to define foreign policy priorities for both the countries. At the same time there is no alternate to democracy. Unless the democracy is fostered, rendered a solid foundation, on what basis our bilateral relationship would flourish?

10

UK Iraq Inquiry - is Democracy a Myth or Reality?

Regarding the role of regime change in the decision to go to war by Tony Blair:

"The Americans, in a sense, were saying, 'We're for regime change 'cause we don't trust he's ever going to give up his WMD ambitions.' We were saying, 'We have to deal with his WMD ambitions. If that means regime change, so be it.'"

Except few odd but necessary breaks I was following the most audacious *per se* capricious ordeal of recent democratic discourse that was unveiled in Queen Elizabeth II conference hall on 29 January 2010 titled – The Iraq Inquiry. The Guardian UK on their web version lamented heavily on the attitude of their former Prime Minister (PM) who revealed himself to be a species of different world (not the regular world that we belong!) and it was characteristic of a Manichean view; a fight between dark and light (hinting to a hope that ultimately light will be back to its source!). Tony Blair, the then PM of Great Britain (GB) was grilled in the witness box so was the democracy and its norms, values in front of us on that day. This was staged quite metaphorically though, keeping the witness in the middle, the victims and the truth seekers on two sides evoking the picture of universal scale of justice.

Few visible paradoxes of western liberal democracy are thereby put through the crucible so that those who are ardent preacher may become aware of their expectations. Could we really avoid being a victim to such devious use of language which rode on the ‘ism’ of ‘democracy’? As the powerful activist Arundhati Roy, mentioned so vividly in one of her essays (What Have We Done to Democracy?), *‘This theft of language, this technique of usurping words and deploying them like weapons, of using them to mask intent and to mean exactly the opposite of what they have traditionally meant, has been one of the most brilliant strategic victories of the tsars of the new dispensation’*. This event cannot merely be a manifestation of the art of language manipulation but must be treated as a caution against which the whole ‘Chilcot’ commission felt helpless and numb. History provides us with plenty of cases where such evidences

were displayed in public and it successfully swayed public opinions in favor of the manipulators; Hitler, Mussolini, Mao, Churchill, Bush the Junior and above all the flamboyant Mr. Blair. I think the whole exercise of 'Iraq Inquiry' was all about learning to identify a 'check and balance' in future within a framework of democratic system and this deserves tribute. At the least, this was an effort attempted at learning invaluable lessons out of a conflict which was waged democratically. During the process, many interesting but self contradictory facets of democratic norms were tested and questions were posed how these can be interpolated to the 'strategic decision making mechanism' used by the then decision makers.

The first one was about the 'the legality of the conflict' (Jus ad bellum, Latin for "Right to wage war"). As demonstrated during the hearing, Mr. Blair did not dwell much on this aspect rather predisposed the case amounting to commit British support well ahead. A number of times, the committee wanted to clear whether Blair irrevocably committed to the idea of using force for regime change. Mr. Blair's tactics was to dodge this issue but that draws our attention to one of the most important aspects of democratic system – war by consensus. This was a monumental decision costing lives and government exchequer. This must had been dovetailed with responsibility where establishing legality acts as a starting point. Democracy works within a myriad of tribulations and is always time bound. This is what all policy makers like Mr. Blair use as a shield to justify their actions during that time. If we look at the epoch making event of 9/11, which has been used by Mr. Blair blatantly before the commission to justify his action, *'I never regarded 11 September as an attack on America, I regarded it as an attack on us and before which our strategy towards Iraq was of containment'*. The process which was at work wanted to reap a short term gain and used it as a tool to justify the legality of the decision to go to war. Time and terrorist act were used as 'trigger events' which in turn was viewed as the point of departure towards legalizing the act. But how none of the members of the House of Commons (as public representatives) did not have any inkling about it during the debate, remains to be an enigma and proves the case. This short term gain transcended all other aspects of decision making and tailored the issue within a prefabricated legal environment. Mr. Blair blamed the attorney general impeccably and pillow passed the responsibility. The structure to justify the means to end was in position but how cleverly and clue fully this could be manipulated should become a matter of concern in democratic societies. This is a fallacy noticed in

the established, full flourished democracies and I wonder how someone expects the transitional democracies like us should be able to endure this. So, democratic decision making is subjected to manipulation by words and there must be some instrument placed to detect this well in time.

Another aspect deserves distinction here. In democracies do the decision making body operate far detached from their citizenry? If it is such, then how they are reflecting the aspirations of their electorates which put them into power? There had been oblique reference made during the deliberation and it seemed that that was the case. The street protests are meant to be ignored as unnecessary distractions and to secure vital national *per se* security interests, Mr. Blair and his cohorts concocted cock and bull story about transfer of enriched uranium leading to production of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). This also seems to be weaker side of democracy where subjects are ignored and not allowed to take part in the decision making process and purposely manipulators like Mr. Blair would take chance. Next aspect came out about the cost of the conflict and whether this was calculated before or not. In such circumstances, the leaders obviously highlight the relative cheap cost of the conflict to assuage the audience. We all are aware of the burden of the transcontinental military engagements that shattered not only home economy but the world together.

Most dreadful of all was the last episode of 29 January's drama where Mr. Blair appeared almost evangelical, a true believer, as committee chairman Sir John Chilcot asked Mr Blair if he had any regrets about the war. Blair said that although he was "sorry" it had been "divisive", he believed, it had been right to remove Saddam. *"It was better to deal with this threat, to remove him from office and I do genuinely believe the world is a safer place as a result."* He told the inquiry if Saddam had not been removed *"today we would have a situation where Iraq was competing with Iran"* both in terms of nuclear capability and *"in respect of support of terrorist groups"*. *"The decision I took - and frankly would take again."* This leads me to subsequent argument about democracy. There will be rogue leaders who will remain popular (so was Hitler during the campaign of Third Reich and Mahmud Ahmedinijad now) and might also be elected through a democratic process, but once their mental makeup metamorphoses causing a metastasis in the whole system, who will forewarn such disasters? Instead of impeding, we find present democracies rather concede, encourage undertaking such monstrous enterprises again (note Mr. Blair's prognosis about Iran). These leaders

turn out to be pathological demagogues under whose cloaks the truth becomes shrouded with mystery. They need anything to justify the means to the end. The commission was concise in their expression, whether 'regime change' was in the agenda from the very beginning or not, where superimposing the fiction of WMD came as a necessary make up. Misrepresentation of truth in the name of intelligence failure is a new style often crafted to validate the intention and this is a classic example which both U.S and GB used successfully and without any remorse till now. Notice the brilliant maneuver Mr. Blair adopted to defend such cause while extrapolating present situation (if Iraq was not deterred to manufacture WMD, now both Iran and Iraq would have landed in a nuclear arms race destabilizing whole of Middle East!) to the past by exaggerating perceived threat to such a magnitude that you perforce tend to believe the theory. This is the power of democracy where figure of speech is superior to rationality, reality is not measured in terms of cost, and collateral damage is insignificant to political and commercial expediency. This particular case clearly evidenced the aggressive attitude of some leaders who would concoct any suitable story to push the audience into a *cul-de-sac*. But my observation wonders about the maturity of democratic societies of which Britain and U.S are pioneers and how they fall victim to it. Is the more informed audience of the west overtaken by the rhetoric such as 'clash of civilization', 'war on terror' so far so that they submitted meekly to the law of the 'wild wild west'? Or the democracy that we mean has succumbed too much under the coin of 'representative democracy' -- too much representation and too little democracy? Too much representation is done by corporate actors, members of the power clubs, finally leading all of us to believe in Foucault's *Governmentality*. There is nothing left to be proved other than Foucault's proposition of 'organized practices'.

It is poignant to believe; democratically elected leaders sometimes may suffer from 'Pygmalion Effect' where a self fulfilled prophecy has to come true and all homework is done to establish it. Think about their psyche - they go on preaching their self defeating theories intermingled with religious fervors (religion with politics is the best explosive mixture ever found) and probably they fall in love with it as such it is imperative on their part to save it from destruction. But why can't we notice and detect them thus remains to be an enigma and I observed this phenomenon kept on repeating in history. No 'cracy/cracies' are good enough to filter out such actors as they are brilliant to push their points

through the ‘informed members of the parliament’ while they are not ready to listen and see the rational part. Again quoting Arundhati Roy here would make my point further down the corridors of our conscience, ‘*What have we turned it into? What happens once democracy has been used up? When it has been hollowed out and emptied of meaning? What happens when each of its institutions has metastasized into something dangerous? What happens now that democracy and the free market have fused into a single predatory organism with a thin, constricted imagination that revolves almost entirely around the idea of maximizing profit?*’ I think the total question of Regime Change is understandable in light of this statement where profit turned to be the only ‘end’. The commission was also probing to know whether the means to justify the ends were plausible and Mr. Blair was found emphatically boastful about it by using the same rhetoric of time and space. It was a futile effort by the commission as he made them dance with his tune. In the highest level of cabinet meeting Mr. Blair could sell his theory of going into war only because the members were overtaken by the idea of profit making out of this war. They did somewhat a crude cost-benefit analysis and could see only the short term benefits and most pronouncedly; they became greedy. Once democracy becomes greedy it is far more ghastly than that of autocracy in a sense that ‘democratic greed’ is multiplied by its participants. Then comes the dynamics of ‘group thinking’ and the influence of charismatic preacher like Mr. Blair (did he inherit it from Mr. Churchill?), who eventually coalesced the sentiments of the group effortlessly and submitted it to a superior profit making cause.

Finally, the committee pointed out the core effort of the whole Inquiry saga and that was to learn relevant lessons and learn it in public while Sir John Chilcot, at a news conference on, 30 July 2009, underscored it: ‘*We are determined to be thorough, rigorous, fair and frank to enable us to form impartial and evidence-based judgments on all aspects of the issues, including the arguments about I have already made clear that I consider that as much as possible of the Inquiry's hearings should be in public... sometimes that will be consistent with the need to protect national security, sometimes to ensure complete candour and openness from witnesses. But I repeat: the hearings will be held in public wherever possible...we recognise that our task – of identifying lessons for the future*’.

But an incongruity is noticed here. Some are already arguing if history will give a verdict on Mr. Blair’s war effort as a relevant one after 5 to 10

years when Iraq finds its democracy and rule of law dictates events there. In their view, had the Iraq war would not have been turned into a misadventure, instead, could have been accomplished decisively, then Mr. Blair would have not at all face this humane trial! This is how we commit the greatest folly by missing the original point meant to be learnt. The affiliated cost of this conflict is too much to bear but still there are few willing to justify the democratic process which waged the greatest of all wars (a war with no apparent cause; love, virtue, defending land, religion, ideology). I wish sanity prevails and the lessons can be learnt with lesser costs only. Mr. Blair and his entire accomplices did not have to pay any price in this war. Those who paid were the silent spectators sitting at the rear on that day and I am sure they were trying to tilt the Scale of Justice in their favor merely with their anguish.

11

The Chequered History of Religious Based Politics in Bangladesh – Lessons to be Learnt

We, the people of Bangladesh, having proclaimed our Independence on the 26th day of March, 1971 and through a historic struggle for national liberation, established the independent, sovereign People's Republic of Bangladesh; pledging that the high ideals of nationalism, secularity, democracy and socialism, which inspired our heroic people to dedicate themselves to, and our brave martyrs to sacrifice their lives in the struggle for national liberation, shall be fundamental principles of the Constitution;

The Preamble of Bangladesh constitution.

“...but on the condition that no person will have the right to participate in any activities of or to become member of any communal institution or association or any institution or association that has set up the process of forming political parties based on religious identity or of such association or institution that holds any symbolic or literal resemblance to any religion in its name or title.”

Article 38 of original 1972 Constitution
amended by 5th Amendment.

To put things in perspective, let me introduce the two most conjoined but argumentative aspects of our mind; faith and belief. These are neither synonymous nor interchangeable but usually we mingle these together. Apparently these are inseparable but given an insight you will notice a difference. To know something, to believe something, and to have faith in something are three different phenomena. They reflect degrees of self's involvement with knowledge which can vary from the most superficial awareness to the most profound perception of one's self. We can think of something with only the surface of ourselves, and we can know something with the totality of who we are. How we know, and at what depth we know, determines how we live. To begin with, let me ask: what is it to 'believe' and 'have faith' in something?

We believe things with our minds and these are nothing but ideas derived from cognition. They are basically concepts. They give us a picture of reality that others can agree or disagree with. Beliefs are thoughts that can be put into words and these words can be communicated to others. Beliefs, however, are not absolute truth. They are opinions about reality, not reality itself. Having faith in something is different than this. Faith, in a spiritual sense, does not have to do with relative truth but with absolute truth - truth that exist for all time based on firm conviction. Faith relates us to an unvarying reality. One that we assume exists whether we believe in it or not. Unlike beliefs which are of the mind, faith is not just of the mind but of the heart as well. Given this cursory background of our cognitive perception, let me relate these paradigms to politics of power based on either faith or belief system. As I watch our society is divisive and organized into groups basing on religious orientation, the recent government move to restore 1972 constitution by cancelling the 5th amendment rather reinforces this observation. There is a fear looming large in the minds of ruling regime and this disposition confounds the issue nonetheless.

I want to highlight this dualism of our mind by invoking a question; what do we mean by saying that, we want an Islamic society? Is it fundamentally based on 'Theocracy' (means, government of a state controlled by immediate divine guidance or by officials who are regarded as divinely guided) or 'Theocentric' (having God as the central interest and ultimate concern)? A broad distinction should clear our mind. In theocratic society, the religious institutions and the state are one, and the religion is a strict, austere form. Because of the theocratic nature of the society, moral laws and state laws are one and the same: sin and the status of an individual's soul are matters of public concern. There is no room for deviation from social norms, since any individual whose private life doesn't conform to the established moral laws represents a threat not only to the public good but also to the rule of God and true religion (sounds familiar?). While 'Theocentrism' (Greek word *theos*, meaning God and the English word 'center') refers to the view that, God's system of beliefs and values is morally superior to all. Simply stated, Theocentrism is God-centeredness rather than man-centeredness. The Christian Theocentric perspective is that, God requires us to obey the moral law revealed to us which proclaims that we must "*love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves.*" These Christian perspectives are similar to the Islamic point of view. The Qur'an states that the purpose of man's creation is the glorification and worship of Allah; thus worshipping, in Islam, means testifying to the oneness of God in His Lordship, Names and Attributes. This theme thus includes the diversification and

inclusiveness which is aptly summarized by Muslim Sufi Jelaluddin Rumi, “*The lamps are different but the light is the same; it comes from beyond.*” The Muslim philosopher Imam Ghazzali elaborates this spiritual state of mind when he explains the importance of nurturing *Taqwa* (fear and a sense of awe, obedience and worship and freeing the heart from sins). So, Theocentrism dwells mostly at individual level, thereby personal in nature and do not lead us conceptually to a collective form of actions. And perhaps this contrast draws its strength from our conflicting understanding of faith and belief. But then where is the point of departure? Is it the individual or collective perception of enforcing religion? And how does it make sense in the realm of theocracy? History will show us how we were overtaken by these two notionally exclusive phenomena now.

Political history of Bangladesh ought to be traced even before 1947 as the concept of creation of Pakistan was etched by poet Allama Iqbal in ‘30s, later realized by Muhammad Ali Jinnah and British Raj simply collaborated within a grand scheme. Despite of living in this ancient land harmoniously for over thousand years, it was the occupier British merchants who noticed the potential of discord in different faiths and they simply capitalized it to divide and rule. In 1885, seventy-three Indian delegates met in Bombay (now known as Mumbai) and founded the Indian National Congress. By 1900, although the Congress had emerged as an all-India political organization, its achievement was undermined by its singular failure to attract Muslims, who had by then begun to realize their inadequate education and underrepresentation in government service. Muslim leaders saw that their community had fallen behind the Hindus and sought recognition through the British raj. In 1906, The Muslim League was founded to promote loyalty to the British and to advance Muslim political rights. In those trying time of British raj, Sir Denzil Ibbetson, then lieutenant governor of the Punjab, wrote to Dunlop Smith on 10 August 1906: *‘I have heard from other quarters also what Mahsin ul Mulk says about the aspirations of the younger generations of Mohammedans. Their aspirations are perfectly natural. But it would be a calamity if they were to drive.....them into the arms of the Congress party; for at present the educated Mohammedan in the most conservative element in Indian society’*. During the time of British Raj, Lord Minto and Morley commission played instrumental role to bring the Muslim politics in the main stream anticipating the demise of future British rule and inevitably to throw a counterweight to Indian National Congress. Congress was visibly secular but Muslim League led by Jinnah was seeking a separate status for Indian Muslims (actually he was pushed into it); a special status *per se*. Eventually, Muslim League came out victorious in the game of vivisection championing the ideals of Poet Iqbal

and theocratic ideologue Moududi. Ultimately when the nations emerged after vivisection along religious fault line, naturally its citizen came up with convoluted identities constructed along the hazy alley of faith system. Even after considerable time had elapsed since all the three country's independence, we notice a steady rise of theocratic ideologies and it astonishingly kept on manipulating the psyche of mass people drawing a line in between. Theocracy expressing a collective will of a particular religious group is used as political expediency since then and will remain as such for a considerable period of time.

In 1947, Pakistan emerged as a country divided into its western and an eastern wing result in a shifting both ways between the two wings of India and Pakistan. Though Pakistan was created with a hope to run a state ruled by religious laws, it soon suffered heavily due to the premature death of Jinnah and thereafter successive military takeovers pending the constitution to be drafted in 1956. Pakistani body politics started corroding due to a futile combination of military junta and theocratic mullahs as both wielded their powers essentially from two different poles; threat in this life and the life hereafter. This trend also permeated in its eastern wing and all the democratic aspirations were subdued coercively by its ruling masters based in the west prior to 1971. A curious point to note here, the discord between its eastern and western wing was mostly based on cultural, linguistic and economic lines and never was on with religion as both housed a large Muslim populace. Eventually the war was waged on Bangladesh in 1971 and Pakistani soldiers were psychologically motivated to save Pakistan from possible Hindu takeover. Therefore, the religious card had been played to save the so called integrity of Pakistani nation.

During and prior to the nine months of liberation struggle, the support to Pakistani nationalism was demonstrated by Jamayeti Islami (JI). Their alleged indoctrination to save integrated Pakistan was achieved through faith in Islam – a perceived common denominator. As Bangladesh came out of the ashes of death and destruction, democracy could not gain ground and strings of events leading to the killing of the founder of the nation in 1975 plunged it back to uncertainty and paved the way to military rulers (reminiscing Pakistani style governance). This marks the take off point of religion based politics in Bangladesh. The style of governance was identical as military rulers co-opted religious groups for their sustenance as necessary evils and they started rehabilitating them in main stream politics *per se* within a broader scope of society.

Couple of factors shaped our political landscape since then allowing theocratic organizations thriving perniciously. We are the worlds' third largest Muslim country. It is only normal to assume that, since about 90

per cent of the population is Muslim, Islam plays an important role in molding its politics and the socio cultural norms and shape political culture of the bulk of the population. It is predominantly agrarian, and traditionally its people have been known for their unpredictability, their vacillating and non committal nature and they are prone to fractiousness-typical to most peasant societies. The 'peasant factor' has been an important ingredient and catalyst in all the major political movements not only in Bangladesh but in the region. They are easy to subvert and quickly acquiesce to religious dogma. Militant as well as non-militant Islamic groups and political parties have been mobilizing peasant support since the emergence of Bangladesh. The rise of (Jamayetul Mujahedin of Bangladesh-JMB) in Bagmara (one of the most desolate hinterland of Rajshahi district) is a case in point and it was nothing but a political counterweight of the then ruling regime to offset the influence of Sorbohara in the southern region.

Besides the 'peasant-factor', there is another ingredient, often catalytic, which plays important role in the politics of Islam; the exponential growth of poorly educated theocratic leaders/preachers. Due to absence of government schools in far flung areas, the vacuum was quickly filled by religious schools – Madrasas (organized into two main lines; Kaomi and Darul Ulm). These unaccountable religious schools mostly run on charity and funded by foreign NGOs with various ulterior motives. In our villages there are people who even aspire to sacrifice at least one of their sons in 'Allahs path' enrolling them free of cost in those schools (probably trying to secure their own salvation in the life hereafter!). It is evidenced that, violent extremism has been preached to these younger village students who find themselves stuck to perform collective religious duties incumbent to a society. The recruitment and indoctrination is done at grass root level and it produces a large number of 'Preachers' who cannot join the mainstream professions due to lack of vocational expertise (specially the Kaomi madrasas). Hence they are employed in local mosques; they lead the weekly congregation and perform religious rites in exchange of a small sum. They simply live on this. There is nothing wrong in it socially, but their growing up within a 'blanket theocratic system' shapes their mind with religious dogma perfectly suited for theocratic system. In most of the cases, they were found quoting texts from Holy Quran and Hadith motivating folks to abide the Shariya law. The recent rise of Hijbut Tahrir and Allahr Dol are examples (though some might argue about some of their members joining from educated lot but this is a minor exception). Once they join their hands together in the name of restoring religion it becomes almost impossible to counter their "Mephistophelean schemes" for a country like ours with meager law enforcing resources. Recent continuous violent campus

unrest orchestrated by one of the student fronts; Chattra League, simply proves this.

The power sharing equation is quite simple in our politics; the secular and pro-liberation party is Awami League (AL) which never sides with any religious based parties while Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) pairs with JI. The middle course is charted by Jatiyo Party (JP) acting always as a fair weather bird. JI being the forerunner of religion based party ideologically suffers from image crisis due to its collaboration of Pakistan army in 1971. But over the years it has grown politically very resilient. They command a considerable strong youth network (Chattra Shibir) that is dedicated and ready to take the lead. They oppose so called secularism, democracy and propose Shariya based theocratic society free of corruption and injustices (though they could not outline their proposed form of government and policies in public). There are few splinter groups those capitalize religion but ideologically they all come under the banner of JI. Though empirically it is difficult to prove whether JI is the primary sponsor of fanaticism in political arena but the rise of militancy to seize state power is quite discernible during the past two regimes' transition to neutral caretaker government prior to general election. Special mention to be made about the vacuum that was created during the power hand over by BNP-JI coalition in 2007 which paved way to military's 'soft intervention', or so called military backed caretaker governance for two long years. A rising apprehension is that, present democratic polity with its encumbrance, may not be able to sustain the increasing influence of religion-based parties in the future. This led the ruling regime's recent decision to declare through a Supreme Court verdict and necessary amendment of constitution to ban all religious based political parties to take part in future election. In this regard, a petition has already been moved to the Election Commission to find out necessary tools to outlaw them. There I notice an incongruity. Recently, some are trying to establish the fact that, the parties like; Australian Christian Democratic Party, Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Germany, Partido Demócrata Cristiano Christian Democratic Party (Argentina), and many more, are not subjected to such disparate treatment; so why them? But do these parties preach intolerance and oppose all progressive policies of government? Instead they simply cohabit with other political parties and contribute to democratic ethos of that society. We notice incidence of violence perpetrated by some religion-based parties and their various front and student organizations are steadily on the rise. It threatens good governance by instigating ruling regime to play heavy handed tarnishing its moderate identity. This situation has grave consequence for sustenance of democratic system in terms of the rights of political opponents, human

rights situation, political stability, and above all internal security. As such, barring such parties to reap political benefits is laudable.

While concluding, let me infer from the introduction part, as I went on explaining ‘Belief’ and ‘Faith’ and their mutual inclusiveness. The faith based political parties do not believe (to my understanding) in theocentric system rather want to establish a theocratic state. A dichotomy pervades their mind. Whereas theocentric system preaches tolerance, coexistence, inclusiveness and seeks unity through diversity; but still it is a near utopia. Common tactics of theocratic preachers are thus articulated through intimidation not mediation and in the process they fall victim to *realpolitik*. They are running short of ideas and it was amply proved in December 2008 election. But that does not end the story here, unless we take lesson from our erstwhile and estranged brother Pakistan. An unwanted political vacuum if created under any pretense will pave the way to third party intervention which is likely to pair up with theocratic groups. This trend has to be reversed with some constitutional check and above all awareness by secular political parties. Making the religious based parties more exposed to public would be congenial not detrimental in the long run. The bottom line is, break the nexus of politico-religious-military and rest will be assured. Let us give a chance to democracy and try to close the gap between faith and belief.

12

Can Non-violence be Adopted as a Political Creed in 21st Century?

“In his trial speech made at Ahmadabad Sessions court in March 1922, Gandhi put forward his philosophy with great eloquence, when he stated non-violence to be the 'first article of (his) faith' and the 'last article of (his) creed'. Non-violence had always been the founding principle of Gandhian spirituality, and his bedrock of his political philosophy. Gandhi's distrust of violence as a mode to assume political power and as a tool of revolution was ingrained in his world-view from the very early days of his political career. It is impossible to look at Gandhi's political activism in isolation. Springing deeply from his belief in truth, Gandhi's political goals were ultimately specific correlatives of higher commitments to humanity and world peace. Non-violence preaches world peace and brotherhood, whereas political movements naturally revel in polemics of difference and antagonism. Gandhi's greatness lies in bringing together these two apparently combative and incongruous ideas and putting them on a common platform, where they do not subtract, but support each other. Gandhi's significance in the world political scenario is two-fold. First, he retrieved non-violence as a powerful political tool, and secondly, he was the one of the chief promulgators of the theory that political goal is ultimately a manifestation of a higher spiritual and humanitarian goal, culminating in world peace. For Gandhi, the means were as important as the end, and there could be only one means - that of non-violence”.

Maps of India, Celebrating the 138th birth anniversary of Gandhiji in association with Gandhi Smriti.

Writing about non-violence might appear to be ludicrous and wishful thinking amidst a violent world. In the half-century following World War II, the number of war-related deaths in developing countries averaged 400,000 per year. These included innocents and combatants in coups and

insurrections against dictatorial regimes, as well as wars launched by such regimes and invasions by external powers.

To prove my point, the recent spate of violence in educational institutions and political arena bears the testimony and exhibit our moral jeopardy to such an extent that it left us numb. While our pacifist Home Minister evaluates these at her own term as 'stray incidents' but one cannot stop wondering about the future ramifications of these events. Is it too simplistic an idea and a minimalist deduction of a pessimist like me? Look how the Prime Minister emphatically declared that the 'Name Change' culture once started cannot be stopped and it was hightime to teach a lesson to opposition by undoing the wrong again. It palpably leads us to believe that we could not get out of the old vicious cycle yet. Inevitably it drew widespread criticism in the civil society for two reasons; the ruling regime is drifting away too much from their election manifesto of 'change' and now provoking the opposition to launch violent political movement which eventually would jeopardize the socio-political equilibrium that is desired for a poor country like us. The opposition's battle cry is now reverberating reminiscing of street violence that we thought, we left behind so many years ago(!) which traumatized our national life. That brings me to one vital question; is there no alternate available other than violence in our national psyche to achieve socio-political goals? Can non-violence be tried at some point of time to bring our political differences in fruition? I always wonder how little difference we have amongst us in comparison to other nations/societies around the world. We are a homogenous stock; there is no social absurdity in terms of race and ethnicity, color of skin, language, economic inequality. What divides us so immensely (a token was displayed on 14 February in Jatiyo Sangsad-JS session) is 'Attitude', as I notice. Dictionary says, '*An attitude is a hypothetical construct that represents an individual's degree of like or dislike for an item, it is someone's disposition or beliefs and how they act on them*'. Attitude is how you feel about a certain thing or situation. We cannot control how other people react or feel about us, but we can control how we feel about other people or situations. The attitude which was simply put on display in our last JS session was explained by none other than the speaker of the house. According to him, one party treats JS as a battlefield to impose their will onto others while other enters the JS with battling attitude and leaves JS battling. Both of them display attitudinal violence to further their respective political goals while remaining ambivalent about its ultimate outcome and relevance. Let me put some of the ingredients,

methods and historical dispositions of 'non-violence' both as a strategy and tactics in perspective for those who are too ignorant to learn. It might serve dual purpose; resist them so that they cannot bashfully manipulate public mind to secure narrow, inimical political advantage and also to warn about their treading in the path of violence which would eventually destroy all of us.

Non-violence, both as means to achieve political ends and as a philosophy, was made popular by Mahatma Gandhi as he rose to prominence by adopting it initially in South Africa and later to attain Swaraj of India from the British Raj in 20's and 30's. If we want to study his methodology of using it as a method, we need to discern two aspects intuitively. Its usage as a strategy demands thorough planning, outlining justifiable ends and attainable time frame as we see Gandhi himself postponed many political activities several times in order to gain strategic leverage. Then its usage as a tactic calls for rigid discipline in all ranks so that it does not produce violence. Both the factors are important to understand and then it will become clear, how it dissuaded the political differences to achieve Swaraj. Many critics evaluate Gandhi's non-violence was fraught with violence (though politically it is correct) as finally it bred animosity between Hindu and Muslims leading to partition. It could not hold the Indian subcontinent together as a potent political philosophy too. This statement is both true and untrue in its own merit. A little deliberation would help reader understand this debate fully. Attaining Swaraj through full non-violence could not see the light of reality as World War II descended and the whole Indian polity dived into a far wider sphere of violence coupled with the attention of British diverted to contain the spread of war in India. It is needless to mention here that, prior to Gandhi's emergence in Indian political arena and even during the Great War, personalities like Tilak Rai and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose preached active violent means to achieve Swaraj but both of them equally failed. Nevertheless, it was Gandhi's ideological movement (non-violent, non-co-operation) that drew world attention (even the Jews sought his co-operation to resolve the Palestine crisis by sending Kallenbach) helped gaining independence momentum and ultimately compelled the British to concede. Thus his efforts need to be assessed in a wider spectrum of political emancipation of mass people non-violently. He was perhaps the only Indian politician who was emblematic in getting the politics out of city based high society, to the villages and every nook and corner of Indian subcontinent. He was thus characteristics of his time who demonstrated the basic tenets of non-

violence leadership by setting personal example. Can our leaders emulate and display such characteristics now days? We all wonder.

A dichotomy always pervades in our mind each and every time as we think of waging social change. Can a society be transformed without violent means (contrary to popular concept of revolution)? The philosopher Hannah Arendt addressed such panacea while saying that "*much of the present glorification of violence is caused by severe frustration of the faculty of action in the modern world*". The cardinal question is why the ruling regime would concede power which they gained after so many struggles? Having all these social revolutions in the backdrop (famously the French and Bolshevik revolution) how non-violence even can be discussed as a means to bring social change? These are fundamental questions and must be explained with some fundamental precepts considering human nature and its complex relationship with power. Frederick Douglass (1817-1895), a former slave and leader of the American anti slavery and 'Abolitionist Movement', outlined, '*Power concedes nothing and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to, and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue until they are resisted...The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress.*' A half-century later, Leo Tolstoy predicted that 'public opinion' would change the 'whole structure of life' making violence 'superfluous'. An overwhelmed Gandhi adopted this in his famous non-violence non-co-operation movement against the British by using techniques like; mass marches/protests, refusal to pay taxes, boycotts, resignations, all summed up as 'Active Interference'. American 'Civil Rights Movement' is another epoch making event in the history of non-violence and we all are aware of American dreams more or less. Martin Luther King was an ardent follower of Gandhi in imitating non-violence struggle to obtain political leverage (though ironically he also succumbed in the hands of assassin like his mentor Gandhi) and he succeeded.

However, let me describe briefly few essential points about non-violence and how it is still in vogue least we are aware. The dynamics of non-violence lay within the paradigm of three broad precepts; when the people deprive an oppressor of their consent, it reduces his legitimacy, when enough people refuse to co-operate; they increase the cost of holding control and when the system's legitimacy drops and its costs rise, and its enforcers doubt its endurance. Though there are arguments about achieving ultimate victory using the same technique but there are

empirical proofs. For example; the movement of African-Americans (1960s), Malians (1991), Argentines (1980), Russians (1991), Chileans (1985-1988), South Africans (1992), Poles (1970s-1980s), Serbs (2000), Filipinos (1986), Georgians (2003), Czechs/Slovaks (1980s), East Germans (1989), Salvadorans (1944), Mongolians (1990) and Ukrainians (2004) are purely mass movements and they ushered monumental social changes in their respective societies without resorting to violence. In the 35 years between 1970 and 2005, there were 67 transitions from authoritarian to democratic governments. In 50 of 67 transitions, the key factor was non-violent force. The fall of Berlin wall eventually declaring the triumph of western liberalism is another instance where the iron curtain simply evaporated on the face of mass movement - a vivid demonstration of the strength of non-violence.

Let me dwell some bit on the issue of Civil Resistance – an essential tactics of non-violence. After practicing twenty long years of democracy (with an interval of two years of Military Backed Caretaker Government - MBCG), is it time to recast our thought entirely from a different plane? If so, it might be pertinent now to evaluate the circumstances leading to the intervention of MBCG; (nevertheless it initially enjoyed overwhelming popular support). It is rather an undeniable fact that, the political misadventure of the then ruling regime gave birth to a vacuum which was filled in by awaiting ‘Third Party’ – quite a common phenomenon in Bangladesh. Neither there was any option left to mass people to organize a civil resistance nor there was a leader to rise up and meet the demand of the day. That was the turning point in the history of our nation in recent times when such leadership was craved for. Unfortunately it was a big void and none were ready with an off the shelf plan to fit in. The situation was mired with conspiracy and counter conspiracies but due to the absence of civil resistance, ultimately a complicated power sharing game had been consented between Care Taker Government and Military. The nation was too divisive and if such a resistance could be organized it might have charted the course of nation’s history in a different track now. Vaclav Havel (the Czech dissident and later president) in his book, ‘Disturbing Peace’, outlines such a situation while mentioning, ‘How Resistance Changes’ everything, *‘by breaking the rules of the game, [the dissident] has disrupted the game...He has shattered the world of appearances...He has shown everyone that it is possible to live within the truth. Living within the lie can constitute the system only if it is universal... There are no terms whatsoever on which it can coexist with living within the truth, and therefore everyone who steps out of line*

denies it in principle and threatens it in its entirety'. Alas we could not seize it. As a nation we had been too skeptical on that day.

In order to prepare for such social resistance (I think there lies our ultimate liberty) evokes two fundamental questions of 'Choice of Identity'; "Who are you?" Are we the object of a ruling elite, submissive to threats of violence, intimidation, artificially constructed thereby submerging us in a social anesthesia? Or a citizen, able to resist the lie, believes in that injustice can be opposed, able to develop non-violent means to obtain power? This awareness will take time to build upon but is not impossible to build either. Such non-violent actions outline some emergent properties which are outlined here as future guideline. These are; **Consent** which confers legitimacy, recasts the idea of power and creates space to resist. **Reason** which *respects* the citizen's mind, stimulates creative thinking, persuasion (not coercion), signals honesty and credibility, instills "reasons to believe". **Self-rule** which underpins the ideology of Swaraj, engages in constructive work, produces self-organization which dwells on non-violent discipline. **Representation**, which ascertains and presents people's grievances, listens, delegates and invites participation, practices humility, not hierarchy, establishes solidarity of all, not heroism of the few. **Resilience** in tactical mobilization, strategic sustainability, momentum-driving action, and existential stakes: identifying with the cause and certitude of faith in eventual success. **Force**, equipped with strategic/tactical skills, understands target foe's capacities, disperse initiative of own and divide loyalty structure of the foe. **Transformation** which understands that there is no monolithic enemies, brings people from destruction to debate, preaches justice only by rule of law, treats everyone a stakeholder and finally derive policies where means reflected in ends. These are ground rules and not utopian scheme. A new study (Stephen & Chenoweth, "Why Civil Resistance Works", International Security, Summer 2008) finds that, using these rules, of 323 violent and nonviolent campaigns from 1900 to 2006, only 26% of cases in violent campaigns succeeded while in nonviolent campaigns 53% of cases succeeded. If others could do, why can't we?

The common wisdom of preaching political violence lay in the argument that it is necessary as means to an end (our main stream political parties justify on this ground) or virtuous, as redemption or apotheosis (our religion based political parties promptly follows this course). On both counts, it is futile and ends up in a zero sum game. In order to justify the means, the end is misperceived forcing it to wither

away into oblivion and that is exactly the scenario we are witnessing. If we ask our ruling law makers what is the end result of their vociferous strive, they probably cannot identify in clear terms, as most of them (both ruling and opposition) do not possess any moral supremacy to substantiate their actions to achieve a specific political goal. Thereby they engage in endless feuds in JS polluting the highest legislative organization. So here comes the justification of developing an invincible force as a 'Third Party' (not the usual convention which stands for military and its cohorts) but a 'Civil Group' imbued with the power of non-violent civil resistance outlined previously to redress all our injustices. It is also to ponder about our future leadership which will be resilient and hardy to take over. Otherwise there is no end in future. We are set in a pathetic psychological doldrums from where there is no escape till death. To conclude let me mention Abraham Lincoln who defined the elemental contest of two groups; one ruler and other ruled and I hope we might take lessons out of it.

"It is the eternal struggle between...two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time...The one is the common right of humanity and the other is the divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says, 'You work and toil and earn bread, and I'll eat it.' No matter in what shape it comes, whether from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his own race and live by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men as an apology for enslaving another race, it is the same tyrannical principle".

In this land there is no king and queen, no elite aristocracy, no Jamindars, but still we wander aimlessly to achieve true independence. Oh Seleucus what a pity!

13

Bearing the Burden of Majoritarianism— is It Our *Fait Accompli*?

The partisan, when he is engaged in a dispute, cares nothing about the rights of the question, but is anxious only to convince his hearers of his own assertions.

— Plato's - Dialogues, Phaedo.

Strings of recent events in our national life evoked an ancient philosophical concept of Eleatic philosopher Parmenides for today's essay. He was a pupil of Xenophanes and influenced by Pythagoras. What happens about early Greeks as that, they did not separate out disciplines in the way we do now. Philosophy literally means 'love of wisdom' and the topics that fell under this name covered what we now pick out and nominate all other branches of knowledge; logic, science, medicine, ethics etc. Philosophy was the initial starting point of our search for knowledge and the work of Parmenides is a turning point in the making of it. His work falls under two parts; 'way of truth' and 'way of seeming'. Breaking down this apparently simple idea through deductive reasoning leads me to believe that, what we see today in our national life falls under the category of latter part of Parmenides's inquiry and that is my point of departure. What we see today happening around us if is true, then they are the manifestations of a greater doom ahead. Underneath such seemingly contradictions, there must be a 'path of truth' which is desirable (whether majority of us desire it or not is a different question altogether). I want to contend the idea of 'searching for truth' by juxtaposing a democratic concept 'Majoritarianism' in light of few major events that came to pass within last two months; February and March 2010 (significant in respect to Bangladeshi nationalism also). These are; unrest in our Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT-Baghaichari), commemoration of a year of BDR mutiny, promised trial of '71 war criminals and a continuous cycle of defamation of our twin-princes cum political heirs. An existential threat looms large as political oppositions are ruthlessly marginalized, integrity of national institutions are contested, which lends to the fact that, we are moving faster towards a void. It posits few

questions; what makes the submission of a minority to a majority reasonable? Can we know that a majority decision is correct? How these recent events shed a long cast of majoritarianism and how to counter it? Let me first dwell substantially on the concept itself so as to clear readers mind.

Majoritarianism is a political philosophy or agenda which asserts that, a majority (sometimes categorized by religion, language, social class or some other identifying factor) of the population is entitled to a certain degree of primacy in society and has the right to make decisions. Ideally under a democratic majoritarian political structure, the majority would not exclude any minority from future participation in the democratic process. Majoritarianism is often referred to as majority rule, but which may be referring to a majority class ruling over a minority class, while not referring to the decision process called the majority rule. Two variations of majoritarianism can be found: the 'loose majoritarianism' that allows in some cases the exclusion of some individuals or minorities from future participation in the democratic process (by ostracizing them, killing them or taking their voting rights under certain conditions decided by a majority), and the 'strict majoritarianism' that prohibits totally the exclusion of a minority or of an individual from future participation in the democratic process. I believe the readers can relate our present democratic dispensations in light of these theoretical discourses which are well intended and is the premise of this essay.

There are relatively few instances of large scale majority rule in recorded history, most notably the majoritarian system of Athenian democracy and other ancient Greek city-states. However, some argue that, none of those Greek city-states were truly majority rule, particularly due to their exclusion of women, non-landowners, and slaves from decision-making processes. Most of the famous ancient philosophers staunchly opposed majoritarianism, because decisions based on the will of the uneducated and/or uninformed 'masses' are not necessarily wise or just (sounds justified!) Plato is a prime example with his Republic, which describes a societal model based on a tripartite class structure. Anthropologist David Graeber offers a reason as to why majority democratic government is so scarce in the historical record. Graeber argues that: *"Where egalitarian societies exist, it is also usually considered wrong to impose systematic coercion. Where a machinery of coercion did exist, it did not even occur to those wielding it, that they were enforcing any sort of popular will."* In contrast to this proposition,

Trevor Pateman, argues for the motion, that Majoritarianism is justified in the context of a search for truth, truth concerning the right way to order a society's affairs which is true of Rousseau's Social Contract (1762) and Condorcet's ideology elaborated in the 'Essay on the Application of Analysis to the Probability of Majority Decisions' (1785). Rousseau's central concern with human freedom is unequivocal when in the Social Contract he considers how, "*to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone and remain as free as before*". Rousseau, however, further clarified the difficulty and outlines it in the following passage:

"There is but one law which, from its nature, needs unanimous consent. This is the social compact, for civil association is the most voluntary of all acts. Every man being free and his own master, no one, under any pretext whatsoever; can make any man subject without his consent ... Apart from this primitive contract, the vote of the majority always binds all the rest... But it is asked how a man can be both free and forced to conform to wills that are not his own. How are the opponents at once free and subject to laws they have not agreed to? The citizen gives his consent to all the laws, including those which are passed in spite of his opposition, and even those which punish him when he dares to break any of them. The constant will of all the members of the state is the general will; by virtue of it they are citizens and free. When in the popular assembly a law is proposed, what the people is asked is not exactly whether it approves or rejects the proposal, but whether it is in conformity with the general will, which is their will. Each man, in giving his vote, states his opinion on that point, and the general will is found by counting votes".

Empirically there are flaws in 'majoritarianism', as L. Neil Smith argued in his essay, 'Majoritarianism vs. Unanimous Consent'; since it rests on two false assumptions. It first assumes that two people are smarter than one person. Strength is additive, as two people are stronger than one person. Even stupidity seems additive somehow, possibly it's a phenomenon of interference which would explain a lot of that history. People, in fact, do possess certain attributes which are additive and many which are not at all. If you've ever observed a committee, you know that the highest intelligence in a room isn't the sum of its occupants' IQs, but simply that of the brightest individual – divided by the number of other

people in the room. Rights aren't additive. Some claim that majoritarianism, despite its faults, is an alternative preferable to physical conflict. They're wrong: majoritarianism is physical conflict. Electoral process is a system of counting fists, rather than noses, and saying, "*We outnumber you – we could beat you up and kill you – you might as well give in and save everyone a lot of trouble.*" Majoritarianism, to put it straightforwardly, possesses the full measure of nobility manifested by any other form of extortion. Based in fallacy and threat, majoritarianism is troubled by certain characteristic malfunctions. Less becomes more. "Might" is transubstantiated into "must." Winning votes and losing votes turns friends into enemies. Political and personal feuds arise of their own accord.

Given this broad backdrop of theoretical approach of majoritarianism, let me analyze our society, which to my opinion, is gradually being absorbed in majoritarianism (suitably dubbed as Hyperdemocracy). Let me delve the issues one by one and endeavour to show the reader how the attitude of majoritarianism is corrupting our tolerance and social coexistence ultimately threatening our very existence as a nation state.

Firstly, the recent events of Baghaichari at CHT prove a point that, when an anthropologically 'minority' agitates in democratic societies, it is with the ostensible aim of seeking parity on cultural, economic terms with the majority population. Such movements are aimed at receiving state assurance that all citizens are equal regardless of their religious/cultural identities or provenance. When the secessionist movement in CHT started back in 1977, major effort was directed along two lines; strategic settlement of Bengali settlers to exert control over the ethnic demography and stringent control by military for ensuring security. An intermittent attempt was undertaken to alleviate the socio-economic conditions of the region through CHT Development Board and later CHT Regional Council. A social integration of the Tribals in the mainstream was tried. But the intriguing point is, as a claimant of liberal democracy practicing nation, presumably there was no need for anxieties regarding diverse ethnic/religious practices so long as these do not interfere with the fundamental rights that each individual has by virtue of being a citizen. This is such a foundational principle on which no democratic society can afford to compromise. Democratic politics believes on fraternity--which is so central to the idea of citizenship--is not difficult to figure out. But unfortunately the hill people got embroiled further in 'identity crisis' and in the myth of Bangladeshi nationalism as

time elapsed. Instead of including the hill people within the fold of citizenry it further marginalized them simultaneously making them susceptible to ethno-politics. Anthropologists have observed that human beings everywhere tend to differentiate spontaneously between their tightly bound communities and the broader cultures around them. It is this trait that underpins the hubris of majoritarians who claim to represent "the people" while characterizing minorities as "natural" enemies of the nation state. This seems to be the reality now and present situation is a victim of such proposition. Our democracy had to be perpetually on its guard because this unfortunate anthropological tendency to put up barriers between "us" and "them" is working hard and active today in CHT and the conspirators have been able to stoke it successfully. There are widespread allegation pointed towards international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) at work in the region and underneath of whose, a silent work of Christian missionaries is on steady rise both capitalizing on the issues of non-compliance of CHT peace treaty (1997). Just to prove this point, in his essay, *Sociology of Religion*, (Spring 2007), Dipankar Gupta, states that, there are, then, two possible scenarios in the contemporary nation state by which culture and politics can come together. The first arises from minority anxieties about their self-respect and their consequent demands for cultural equality. The second arises from majoritarian attacks on ethnic minorities in the name of protecting the nation state from enemies within. In the case of majoritarian excesses against minorities, the nation state, along with its territory and sovereignty, become critical variables. Majoritarian activists claim that no legalities or niceties of democracy should hold them back in setting right the targeted minorities, who are their enemies because the minorities' origins, heritages, and loyalties are rooted in some supra national identities. Thus, with minority inspired multicultural politics, the emphasis is clearly on inclusive citizenship, whereas with majoritarianism, there is the contrary emphasis on exclusivity as a "people." The militant secessionist movement of the Sikhs in 1980s is a case in point for India.

The tension clearly is between two identities; 'citizens' and 'people'. Under nationalism, being "a people" means more than an aggregation of citizens. In a liberal democracy, however, it is not the people but citizens that take precedence. A nation state is thus faced with two options: to be liberal democratic or nationalist. Either it looks into memories of blood and soil, or it moves on to a different form of national identity that is based on citizenship. In the latter case, the focus is on delivering

education, health, employment, and other essential public goods to citizens across social strata, classes, and communities. Affirmative action policies and developmental initiatives belong to this genre of interventions for creating substantive citizenship. Such considerations of citizenship do not emerge spontaneously; they are clearly outcomes of deliberate planning, goodwill and nurturing of government institutions. To realize citizenship, a nation state must move beyond the passions which were useful in dismantling the ancient regime; those passions are hindrances today. In contrast, the majoritarian alternative suggests a return to the conditions in which the nation state was born, reviving fears and prejudices of the past. Ancient enemies are recalled and memories of grief and purported injustices kept alive. Building a democracy, where individuals matter as citizens, is often delayed because ethnicists gain the upper hand by playing on these memories and anxieties.

The above held opinion is not very easy to gain as experienced in comparative perspective proving that there is no privileged route to such a formation. Each nation-state has unique characteristics and comes into being in its own special way as Bangladesh did. As Ernest Renan characteristically demonstrated, every victory that Turkey won "spelled doom for Turkey," and every defeat that Italy suffered contributed to the making of Italy. Therefore, instead of asking how a nation state comes into being, it is much better to be clear on what a nation state does once it has emerged. Thus, like the philosophers of the ancient Indian Samkhya tradition, it is often wise to seek answers in the causes and not in the effects. It is generally argued that the right to secession should be respected during the process of independence. But once separation happened, the right to secession was taken away and any advocacy of it became an act of high treason. From then on, ceding "not an inch of ground" and "not a blade of grass" became quite common phrases in our nationalist discourse. Once again Renan is relevant. He believed that it is grief more than joy that binds nationalist sentiments. Every nation state would be blessed if it had a grief of its own (e.g. India's grief is Pakistan, and Pakistan's grief is India). As grief of this sort thrives on continually renewed memory (like the traumatic years of CHT back in '80s), it pushes back the appreciation for secular citizenship. In the end, the majoritarians believe that the law is not enough to contain enemies of the nation-state. This is why their activism is in the name of "the people." Also, when the law fails to perform its role, it is very likely that the marginalized will become an encysted population and refer back to their respective cultural representation. If CHT was tranquil in the near past, it

was because there was a hope raised due to the peace treaty and Promised Land reform activities. A so called medieval peace characterized the CHT, but this peace was not based as much on tolerance or natural goodwill as on the fact that the ruling majority (including Army) and classes held undisputed sway over their land. This is now changing. Not only is the CHT less and less viable as an economic unit, hill people are also going in and out of their rural surroundings and bringing back other points of view from the city with much greater frequency. Further, the anthropological truism that human beings want to belong has not been met successfully by alternative governments awarding them with privilege citizenship. This leaves the door wide open for ethno majoritarians to work their way to the political center stage in the name of "the people" and further alienating the hill people. These struggles ultimately led to the incidents of Baghaichari, a perpetual struggle resulting from 'inclusionary majoritarianism'.

Secondly, it has been a year that we stand now from the dreadful few days of Pilkhana massacre. We see the justice takes its own turn and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unequivocally expressed her mind about her governments' determination to render justice through existing laws of the land. It is definitely her political sagacity which recounts and incidentally her declaration coincides with the end of trial of Bangabandhu's self proclaimed killers tried in the same line. So far so good. But apart from these, two things have yet to be determined regarding the incident; a wide scale failure in the chain of command of Army and failure of intelligence gathering/dissemination process. It is not readily understood how the commanders and the intelligence personnel failed coherently to realize the gravity of the conspiracy that by the most recent account claimed more than 60 lives. Bangladesh, however, from the days of the assassination of the Father of the Nation in 1975, assassinations of the four national leaders and of President Ziaur Rahman, is no stranger to bloody upheavals. But the BDR revolt on the heels of the free and fair election and formation of a popular government (that was not even two months old) raised suspicion whether recession of democracy, (as seen by Stanford Professor Larry Diamond in some parts of the world), is not being orchestrated by elements who are directly involved with the wave of extremism sweeping the world. This theory is still to be proved and we run short of available data and its analyses from all government machineries till now. Though it would be both premature and hinder the investigation process to speculate on why and how the BDR revolt took place but it is congenial to establish the rule of law and

restore the confidence of populace on this national institution (BDR) once transparency is adopted and due process is adhered to unearth the conspiracy. Still as a nation, we are grappled with the fact that, we could not arrive unanimously agreed upon a common understanding about, what can be construed of such a grand conspiracy. If the intelligence failure is visibly most pronounced then what steps government has undertaken is not known to informed citizenry yet. The phenomenon of intelligence and military command failure is seemingly repetitive since the birth of our nation. It started with '75s massacre, a total dissolve of military command structure in '81, a partly failed scenario again in '96 and finally a dual repetition in '07 and '09. There must be a way forward out of these issues which cannot be confined within party politics as it is a question of our national security hence survival (least we understand what it means and how to remain above partisanship on national security matters).

If we come to know the causes at least it would help to eradicate future threats. Out of many widespread conspiracy theories, the people of Bangladesh familiar with allegations of corruption, do not believe that, legal options being open to deal with corruption, massacre of such large number of army officers, was the sole recourse to resolve alleged corruption. The BDR revolt in some ways could reflect the asymmetry of income distribution in our society. But such a conclusion can only be reached after allegation of corruption against some army officers of the BDR is proved beyond all doubt, (which never took place). French Nobel laureate Albert Camus in his novel *La Peste*, his philosophical essay *L'homme Revolte*, used the concept of revolt outlining the absurdity of human existence because of human beings inability to create a world beyond the limitations implied in being human thus leaving the possibility of revolt. Another parallel was found of highlighting the complex personality of the Mexican people by celebrated Mexican writer Octavio Paz in his book '*Labyrinth of Solitude*' where, according to him, the Mexicans build around themselves a wall of solitude and indifference between reality and themselves and thus lives in solitude, alienated and a life in the abstract. In his essay, '*Winter in Spring- Reflections on the recent BDR Massacre*', columnist Kazi Anwarul Masud, wondered if the BDR revolt could have been generated from the perceived isolation of soldiers from the officers corps. According to him, former army officers hotly contested this thesis because they said the way BDR is structured it was not possible for a significant portion of the forces to remain discontent without getting redress. In that case the possibility of a

conspiracy to decimate a large portion of the officers' corps remains alive. Only time and enquiry into the massacre can answer these questions. The allegation leveled against some army officers of subaltern behaviour and the common soldiers in a binary relationship of inferior and superior groups can only be dismissed if a deliberate research is attempted to search for empirical and reasoned findings. This is so very necessary for future survival of two of our national institutions; Army and now Border Guards. Again a current majoritarian view postulates that, these issues do not have to be discussed in parliament or for that matter before a standing parliamentary body as their political sensitivity is paramount and national security will be endangered. Even to some extent once it was raised in the parliament, diatribes were rampant to confound the matter further disrespectfully. Here we notice ruling majority has politically toned such a horrendous event thus bringing down this national issues within petty party politics.

Thirdly, it appears in the horizon that government is in the fag end of holding trial of alleged war criminals of our liberation war. Recently the Law Minister announced that a new agency will be formed before the 26th of March to investigate war crimes. The agency will consist of 12 members with a former Inspector General of police as its chief. Another special court will also be formed to prosecute war crimes led by a Supreme Court justice. He also confirmed that the prosecution of these crimes will be held under the International Crimes Tribunals Act of 1973. In response to the Law Minister's announcement, Human Rights Watch wrote a letter to the Prime Minister saying the changes did not go far enough to bring the laws into line with current, international standards.

"The 1973 law was intended to get revenge on people who committed these atrocities, largely Pakistanis. Standards for fair trial, for victim and witness protection, for due process and independent judges are all quite different...it would be very easy for the Bangladeshi government to borrow from those principles to create a law that meets international standards and those of the Bangladeshi constitution."

Human Rights Watch Asia director Adam Brady observes that it's a highly political subject in Bangladesh and fears that at some point, the politics may outweigh the pursuit of justice. He thinks that the perpetrators could benefit from a procedure that isn't up to standard as that would make it easier to appeal against their convictions.

"The danger is that it could get so overheated and emotional that it becomes a question of revenge where the wrong people could be put on

trial and they could cut corners on things like evidence. The entire process could become so politicised that it loses credibility. Everyone denies vehemently their roles...and seeing as these crimes are nearly forty years old coming up with kind of evidence to convict people will be difficult...this is a very complicated process and requires extreme care."

Here again the role of majority is discernible pushing the merit of the trial into oblivion. For example, the recent war crime tribunal in Phnom Penh might serve as a reminder in carrying out such trials when it was found by human rights observers that, competing pressures in Cambodia's Khmer Rouge war crimes tribunal could work against the victims it is supposed to represent. Since its establishment in 2006, the UN-backed tribunal has sought to provide a greater voice to victims of the regime, while at the same time expediting a legal process bogged down by delays. As a result, the court decided last month to filter the representation of all victims through two lawyers because of the high number of applicants seeking to participate in the second case. Known as the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), the tribunal includes a "civil party" system designed to give lay people an official role to provide testimony, question suspects and request reparations. More than 4,000 people applied and about 250 had been accepted by the end of last year. By contrast, just 90 civil parties participated in the tribunal's first case. Reminiscing from the LGRD minister as a spokesperson of this majoritarian government, ours one would be a symbolic trial, not en masse conviction. Here lies the catch of majoritarian rule as it decides its own good without conforming and taking into account of the minority's assent or dissent at all. It has vied to fulfill the election manifesto by hook or by crook. A national consensus about its modus operandi and taking on board the civil society, intellectuals, are not ventured. That signals whether the ultimate justice can be awarded and if it could push the society close to a precipice and most importantly whether it is ready for possible backlash or not. Any intelligent guess should be able to connect the dots of recent upheavals in the ranks and files of Jamaat e Islami (JI) and government's decision to go 'head on' with this force. Due to majoritarian rule, the model of Truth and Reconciliation that worked so well in South Africa is entirely forgotten. In a small society like us, it is thus being reverberated, whether the promised trial would turn out to be a tool of vengeance further dividing the nation along a new fault line or not.

Fourthly, the culture of defamation in our body politic is corroding our social fabric so ghastly that there is hardly any new blood joining in to the politics. Unlike India's Congress party's iconic Rahul Gandhi who is

considered as the next Congress leader in offing, we don't have any one in the queue. The recent spate of defamation of both Joy and Tareque is a curious case in point which is another manifestation of our sheer malevolence of majoritarianism since both of them are the representatives of two major political parties. Despite of their varied background and work experiences, it remains as a fact, that they are the political heirs and the dynastic politics will revolve around them whether we like it or not. For the sake of establishing the majority wish we have kept on treading the path of relentless blames on them and I am sure, once they land in central scene, we would happily forget our earlier grudge and garland them back to our heart.

Now what all can constitute counter-majoritarianism strategy? In finding the answer, 'Judicial Intervention' by the Judiciary/courts might play an important role and it bears more significance ever since the separation of judiciary from legislative branch took place in our country. Though there remains a plethora of doubts (a case of the latest row to correct the Order of Precedence by court is an example) about the primacy of judiciary in curbing the excessive arbitration of majoritarian rule, but still it is 'something ia better than nothing' situation for us to remain content. The counter-majoritarian nature of the courts is a good thing, because courts are uniquely well situated to protect the rights of individuals or disadvantaged groups against an excessively powerful majority. Judicial intervention, on this more positive account, is not a "deviant" institution but one that upholds fundamental democratic values. Some scholars concluded that, judicial intervention could be legitimated because the courts could serve as a "forum of principle" that would inject higher constitutional values into the interest aggregation and horse-trading of legislative politics. Whether framed in positive or negative terms, however, theoretical assessments of judicial intervention that start from the premise that, the courts are counter-majoritarian, all make the same mistake of assuming that, institutions are engaging in zero-sum struggles for power. It assumed that when courts exercise judicial review, they are contravening the will of the political branches, and therefore by extension the will of the majority. While sometimes useful, this underlying assumption also distorts many aspects of the practice of judicial intervention. It is seen that the courts are often acting coherently with the interests of political actors, rather than opposing. Judiciary, more often than not, might tend to represent the values of the governing coalition for a country like us which also must be taken into account while finding a suitable counter-majoritarian strategy. To question the

usefulness of the “counter-majoritarian difficulty” as a way of conceptualizing judicial power, is not, however, to say that judicial intervention (and other forms of judicial policy making) is normatively unproblematic. The implications of a relational model of inter-branch dynamics suggest obvious potential concerns with judicial policy-making. The inapplicability of the counter-majoritarian difficulty cuts both ways. If courts are unlikely to successfully usurp legislative prerogatives on a consistent basis, they are also unlikely to consistently protect the rights of oppressed minorities. While courts are sometimes held up as institutions that can protect individual rights—especially in democratizing nations—any ability of the courts to increase rights protections for minorities is likely to be marginal. As Paula Newberg found in her study of constitutional jurisprudence in Pakistan, courts “*more often support than challenge state power...The judiciary has often objected to specific limitations on individual action while confirming the environment in which they exist; the sum of judicial decisions helps to reinforce existing patterns of power.*” To the extent that the counter-majoritarian nature of courts can be seen as a net benefit for liberal democracies. However, for us the judiciary remains as a last bastion to oppose majoritarian for better or worse.

In conclusion, let me draw another analogy from the lessons drawn from the recent Ukrainian election case. Although proportional systems can often cause a proliferation of parliamentary parties in developed democracies, majoritarian laws also allow a large number of parties to enter parliament when parties are weakly entrenched and geographically distinct, which is the case in many new democracies. Furthermore, majoritarian systems do little to help consolidate new party systems, because lack of widespread party identification encourages the election of independent candidates who can blur the balance of party strength in parliament and destabilize the legislative process. Majoritarian systems give a distinct advantage to those parties that do have established organizational and support bases, such as those found in the former one-party states of Africa, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union. In our case it is also true minus the practices/conducts which were visible within the parliament and outside in recent past.

To my understanding, democracy has never been easy. It is constantly threatened by impulses that predate it. Democracy does its best to contain such tendencies by putting in place a constitution that protects individuals as citizens, as no other identity is a safe guarantor of justice. Democracy very self-consciously distanced itself from communal and religious

affiliations, which are sources of major civic discord both in the past and present seen particularly within nascent democracy. Though there cannot be democracy without a nation-state, nation states are not always democratic by temperament. Because nation states begin as nations, the history of blood and soil, and the primeval grief that often accompanies their nativity, are always on recall. This facilitates the reversion from "citizens" to "people" that leads to the marginalization of targeted minority communities. Interestingly, under these circumstances, minorities often respond by demanding that the state respect their citizenship status and protect them from majoritarian passions, as in our case for CHT populace. The act of government in terms of promises must then be translated into visible actions. But as popular constructions of reality tend to naturalize cultural differences, democracies can never be at rest. We need to build a society based on majority rule but which simultaneously must include those who are vulnerable to cultural and ethnical marginalization as well. Citizenship becomes a viable project when the enforcement of law respects the individual as a citizen and does not make concessions to sentiments of "the people." Within the listed constraints of majoritarianism, it is an irrational practice where voters are unenlightened and more desirable the more enlightened they are. Where Condorcet came to see the enlightenment of future citizens as the central task of public education, Rousseau's citizens are competent to discharge their tasks because they live in a simple, egalitarian society. These are not utopia as enshrined by Thomas Moore but an idea which should be strived for.

I do not contradict totally the exercise of majoritarianism to be root of all evil. Rather I would suggest that, although one might not always want to defer the majority opinion, it should be the default position. Rather than starting with the assumption that, one's own opinion is right, and then looking to see if the majority has good reasons for holding some other view, one should instead start off by following the majority opinion; and then only adopt a different view for good and convincing reasons. If we accept the principle that "extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence", we should demand a high degree of justification for departing from the majority view. The mere fact that our own opinion seems sound would not be enough. This caution is especially important given that one of the strongest and most universal biases is overconfidence, causing us to be inherently likely to evaluate our own opinion as better justified than it is, compared to the majority opinion. Indeed, there are likely to be a number of biases which conspire together to warp our judgment on this matter. Giving in to the majority opinion

goes against much of our training. From childhood we are taught to think for ourselves and not to follow the crowd. Accepting majoritarianism can feel like an abdication of responsibility. If we are reduced to following the crowd, it may raise questions of what the point is of living, or whether we can make a contribution to society. Human rights are an aspect of natural law, a consequence of the way the universe works. The idea of self-ownership is the equivalent of Pythagoras' theorem, of evolution by natural selection, of general relativity, and of quantum theory. Where they are suppressed or disregarded today, people still suffer. When Pythagoras, Darwin, Einstein, each made his uniquely valuable discovery about the way the universe works, mankind took another step away from savagery, toward lasting safety, comfort, pleasure, and convenience with or without majoritarianism. The search for the 'way of truth' as identified by Parmenides is fraught with danger but still promising if we all shake our hands in goodwill, sympathy, tolerance and mutual respect to each other.

14

The Turkish Dilemma!

“When looking at this country as a product of its history, one quickly notices how important and valued the idea of secularism is here. Behind Turkish nationalism, I am certain that secularism and Islamism come in tied for second—secularism may even have a slight edge. The dualism existing in this country between secularism and Islam truly makes it difficult to write about the latter, especially because of what this country has done to compartmentalize religion”. Chris Salcedo, Secular Turkey, Where Nationalism Trumps Religion, Wednesday, April 28, 2010

I was in Turkey in my youth. It was a glossy and romantic time. I was assigned to undergo an exchange program which was sponsored by Turkish armed forces. I spent a reasonable period in that magnificent land and its splendor amazed me. Since then, I follow Turkish stories as it unfolds. The most fascinating part of my stay in Turkey was learning the language as it was the only vehicle through which I could travel the glorious path of their history. It was an intense effort as I aimed to understand the culture, history from which every Turk derives reasonable pride and hence their prejudices. The recent spate of events which made headline thus drew my attention and once again I was trying to connect the land and its people, partly as reminiscence.

The Turkish military society where I spent all my time inherits its pride from the Ottoman Army as it conquered the capital of eastern Roman Empire - Byzantium. It had a long tradition of conquering a huge land mass bordering in the east up to the Caucasus and in the west up to the bank of river Danube. The museum at Aya Sofia (the then palace of the kings) proudly presents the artifacts that had been collected over a period of thousand years and to most our ignorance, it houses the beard of our holy Prophet (SM) and the swords of four Caliphs. So, the Turks have definite reasons to boast of their parentage and it is quite legitimate since this pride was acquired through their military might. Military tradition is a part of Turkish national life and the recent chain of events thus bewildered me much as the ruling political party is in collision course

with their national Army. It is quite unusual in their psyche and that what is significant to understand as Turkey stands in the threshold of emerging as a regional power in Asia.

Military intervention is nothing bizarre in Turkish life. In 1908 the “Young Turks” mounted the first successful modern coup when they overthrew the tyrannical Sultan Abdulhamid II. The Army was hailed then as a force for modernisation. It also boosted the army to climb the social ladder. Unlike any other situation leading to military intervention which is quite familiar in Asia, Latin America and Africa, the previous reasons for intervention in Turkey was based on a high degree of political ineffectiveness and the failure of the civilian government to contain the army, creating a situation coined as ‘Praetorianism’ (a concept that is used to denote the self assuming function of the military to control civilian authority) by Perlmutter and well explained by Ilhan Uzgel. In fact, when Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic in 1923, included in the country's constitution the military's role as the sole “*defender and protector of the constitution and of republican and honest civilian rule,*” he basically legitimized the military's intervention in politics. Though he warned, back in 1909, through a speech to his fellow Young Turks. “*Our colleagues in the army should no longer dabble in politics,*” he said. “*They should direct all their efforts to strengthening the army instead.*” Over 100 years later, the message may at last seem to be of great consequence.

Turkey is a strategic pivot between Europe and the Middle East. It has a large and growing population of 72 million people half of which is below the age of 29. It is poised to become a main transit route for oil and gas from the east and it contains the only gateway from Black Sea to the west. It has NATO's second-largest army, after America. And it is a rare example of a secular democracy in a mainly Muslim country, closely watched by other emerging democracies, such as Pakistan and Indonesia, where the army is strong and influential. The events of an attempted coup in 2003 leading to the present inquisition, involving the Turkish Armed Forces (Turk Silahlı Kuvvetler – TSK) has exposed an old fault line along which the society is clearly alienated; nationalism (dubbed as *Kemalism*) vs. secularism. In today's episode, I would like to emphasize this relentless tug of war which pervades not only their society but as well in every Turks mind. There are many stakeholders trying to reap benefit from the emerging situation in Iraq and Kurdish struggle and thereby the evolving situation in Turkey deserves closer scrutiny. This piece of

writing is an attempt to explain the backdrop of such phenomenon with future ramifications.

Let me elaborate the recent event which made the TSK a news headline. There was an exercise named 'Operation Sledgehammer' organized by TSK in their War College in 2003. This is quite usual for the military to practice strategic games which simulate probable future scenarios to formulate/rehearse strategic plans. The scenario in the game was; 'bombs blasted in Istanbul's busiest mosques; a Turkish air force jet is shot down over the Aegean, provoking a war with Greece, chaos descends over Turkey, the Army steps in, overthrows the mildly Islamist Justice and Development (AK) Party and takes control'. This plan hidden among 5,000 pages of army documents was exposed by a small independent newspaper, *Taraf* causing a widespread storm. The Army said it was just a "simulation exercise". General Ilker Basbug, the chief of the general staff, expressed his exclamation how could Turkish soldiers, who are Muslim bomb a mosque? In fact this is a question which civilian and military prosecutors are now attempting to answer. "Sledgehammer" is only the latest in a string of alleged coup plots to have been exposed in recent years. That helps explain why, on February 4th, Turkey's government scrapped the controversial security and public order ("Emasya") protocol, which lets the army choose to take charge in the provinces when law and order breaks down.

This symbolizes a classic Turkish dilemma which probably dwells in the mind of almost all modern Turks; whether TSK as the guarantor of secularism (or nationalism) has a definitive role to curb rising Islamic influence or not. It has its root in the perceived concepts of present Turkish nationalism originates from Mostofa Kemal Atatürk's reform when he emerged as a national hero after the battle of Gallipoli. His reform was based on three important aspects of nationalism. First, Republicanism (Turkish: *Cumhuriyetçilik*), which replaced the absolutism of the monarchy (Ottoman Dynasty) with the rule of law, popular sovereignty and the civic virtue with an emphasis on liberty practiced by citizens. Second, Populism (Turkish: *Halkçılık*) is defined as a social revolution in terms of its goals. The Kemalist reforms brought about a revolutionary change in the status of women. This ideology was, in fact, based on the supreme value of Turkish citizenship (*ne mutlu Türküm diyene*). A sense of pride associated with this citizenship would give the needed psychological spur for people to work harder and achieve a sense of unity and national identity. Third, secularism (Turkish: *Laiklik*) of

Kemalist ideology aims to banish religious interference in government affairs, emphasized in public education and legal affairs. It is a rationalist, anti-clerical secularism and it was widely alleged that Kemalists carried out a purge to secure secularism. It aimed at separation of state and religion pursued the replacement of a complete set of institutions, interest groups (such as political parties, unions, lobby groups), the relationships between those institutions and the political norms and rules that govern their functions. In the Kemalist political perspective, politicians cannot claim to be the protector of any religion or religious sect, and such claims constitute sufficient legal grounds for the permanent banning of political parties. The current Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, while mayor of Istanbul, was once jailed for reciting poetry laced with aggressively religious terms, which was deemed by the judiciary to advocate separatism among the Turkish people, into camps of "believers" and "non-believers".

So, these concepts of nationalism set the backdrop of recent turmoil in Turkey. No one with any knowledge of recent Turkish history could have had any doubt about the nature of the threat contained in the recent event. As we saw when the military staged a full-blooded coup in September 1980, it cited Article 35 of the armed forces internal services law, which mandates it to *"preserve and protect the Turkish homeland and the Turkish republic as defined in the constitution"*. It led to the toppling of the Islamist-led government in 1997 again. After Kemal's death Turkey was ruled almost with an iron hand (till 1950) and its armed forces emerged as one of the strongest in Asia and the bastion of secularism. It also adopted compulsory military service for all able bodied youth and a conscript system for its standing army. It is organized in line with NATO doctrine and it has quite a resourceful defense industries. It is evident that TSK has a chequered history when it comes to the question of toppling elected governments. Almost periodically (10 years interval, May 27, 1960, March 12, 1971, September 12, 1980, thrice full intervention and twice shadow intervention - 1997, 2008) it intervened in the democratic process since '50s. In early June 1997, the "soft coup" occurred, and that was the ousting of Erbakan from his office with the charges of *"undermining the secular basis of Turkey's modern republic and its pro-Western stance in foreign and military affairs."* Fifty eight members of the armed forces were dismissed for being *"involved in illegal activities with fundamentalist organizations"*. The Generals in the army were also infuriated when Erbakan would not reduce the number of religious

schools and private Quran teaching schools. In order to safeguard the Army's role, a Presidential Council/or National Security Council - NSC (comprising armed forces members) was created to exist for six years, and advise the President after the intervention in 1997. The NSC was given the power to virtually form laws:

The Council of Ministers shall give priority consideration to the decisions of the National Security Council concerning the measures that it deems necessary for the preservation of the existence and independence of the State, the integrity of the country and the peace and security of society (Turkish Constitution, Part 3, Section III, Paragraph B).

The NSC is run by the Prime Minister, the Chief of the General Staff, the Commanders of the Army, Navy, and the Air Force, the General Commander of the Gendarmerie, the Ministers of National Defense, Internal Affairs, and Foreign Affairs "under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic" (Turkish Constitution, Part 3, Section III, Paragraph B).

The NSC used not to hold press conferences, and basically was not accountable to anyone. The Chief of the General Staff outranks civil ministers including the Minister of Defense. The TSK also extended its influence in judiciary by setting up "special military style courts," and conducted its own foreign policy by approaching, for instance, Israel while Erbakan visited Iran, Iraq and Libya. The events of 1997, namely the removal of Necmettin Erbakan first from the premiership and then from the political scene for the next five years, and the ban on his Welfare Party (Refah), the military has adhered to a recurring pattern of behaviour to be traced throughout the four preceding decades. The Generals intervene when there is a political crisis, then withdraw, and re-intervene if another crisis emerges. The grounds of this behaviour are to be found in the self assumed role of the TSK (Pretorianism!).

I contend and shall dwell little bit on this particular issue as it intertwines two dimension of TSK's perceived intervention in the constitution. One aspect is about remaining staunchly secular which the West obviously desires and heavily invests and with it comes the Turkey's long cherished dream of becoming an EU member. Turkey hosts one of the largest air bases of US and it is strategically significant for them to continue using it. During the campaign of 'Iraqi Freedom', thousands of air sorties were flown from these places and its geo-strategic importance is quite understandable.

The other aspect is of traditional way of Turkey's lamentation of glorious Ottoman past. It was indeed glorious but for some peculiar reason was marginalized. When Orhan Pamuk won the Nobel Prize in literature for his outstanding story of Istanbul, it at least made an effort to portray such dichotomy of Turkish society. In his story, he portrayed his longing of past Ottoman Empire while Turkey was blissful. This I think also connects the threads of present dilemma. The stark contradiction is noticed about West's double standard in dealing with Turkey. After the defeat in World War – I, it was the West which quickly moved in concert to dismantle the Ottoman structure of the empire. The then Kemal's reform suited their scheme and his alleged persecution of the Islamic scholars and language revolution all coincided with the great yearn towards embracing western ethos and way of life. It also spoke the minds of the Young Turks desiring to be free from the burdens of dilapidated empire. After almost 100 years, the question is still echoing in their hearts, whether they could overcome it? Could it become westernized by shredding off its thousand years tradition and culture? They are trying to find the answer so do we, as an outsider.

Since 1990, the absence of TSK's visible absence in state affair paved the way of Islamic oriented political parties to consolidate their gains in grass root level. Their momentum gradually outmaneuvered other western oriented parties to such an extent that in 1995 all the municipal electorates had Islamic parties as their directors. It speaks of the society's visible orientation along a specific fault line; religion. Within TSK any Islamic practice more than necessary is seen as a probable instigation towards the institution. It is a painful and self defeating scenario which could not be realized by the senior echelons of commanders. As the gradual rise of Islamic parties in the state politics became prominent and while it reached the zenith by AK party securing landslide victory and forming government, the divide became more pronounced.

Turkey's constitution was drafted by the TSK 30 years ago; it urgently needs a rewrite to address the recent dichotomy. The issues on which the TSK is most recalcitrant are precisely those that most bedevil Turkey's chances of joining the EU. This "post-modern coup" came after a sustained campaign orchestrated by the generals and their friends in the media and business. In 2007 they threatened to intervene again, this time through a web posting on the defence staff's website objecting to Abdullah Gul, then Turkey's foreign minister, becoming the country's president. They were unhappy that Mr. Gul's wife chose to wear a

headscarf, which is banned in state institutions as a symbol of Islamic fundamentalism. This “e-coup” proved a huge miscalculation. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the prime minister, called a snap election, AK won a second term with a greater share of the vote (47%), and Mr Gul duly became president. *“The army tried to dictate its will and the people said no—and what’s happened since shows that the army is losing its power,”* notes an EU diplomat in Ankara. Undeterred, in 2008 the Generals tacitly backed the country’s chief prosecutor, Abdurrahman Yalcinkaya, when he tried to persuade the constitutional court to ban the AK party on the flimsy charge that it was seeking to reverse secular rule. The constitutional court ruled against the ban, though by a narrow margin.

Over the past two years the public has been bombarded with revelations of the TSK’s alleged tricks. Scores of officers, including retired generals, have been interrogated or arrested in connection with the so-called ‘Ergenekon Case’, named after an alleged shadowy network of rogue security officers, academics, journalists and businessmen. Prosecutors accuse the network of planning to foment chaos through a series of bloody provocations, thus justifying a coup against AK. But the evidence has not always been convincing, and some innocent people have been caught up; many have been detained for months without charge. The Generals insist that Ergenekon is part of a smear campaign led by Fethullah Gulen, a moderate Islamic cleric who heads Turkey’s richest and most influential Islamic brotherhood. This movement, which abhors violence and embraces capitalism, is acknowledged to have kept Turkish Islam tame. But the Generals believe Mr. Gulen and his followers are steering Turkey towards Islamic rule. One of the TSK’s alleged coup plots involved the planting of weapons in the homes of Gulenists in an attempt to discredit them.

The reforms began in 2002, when AK formed Turkey’s first single-party government in 11 years. In January 2004 the NSC was shrunk to an advisory body. In one of its boldest moves, the AK government passed a constitutional amendment last year paving the way for officers to be tried in civilian courts. The Generals may be down, but they are by no means out. The civilian-trials amendment was struck down by the constitutional court in January. To say that the TSK’s power is declining indicates *“a comfortable assumption of linear progress, where democracy and the politicians are gaining ground,”* comments William Hale, a British analyst; that is not entirely accurate, he says. I still wonder in the era of Globalization and economic progress how the modern Turks would

encounter such a dilemma. In a post in the AlAhram weekly (3-9 May 2007), with near perfection this had been highlighted:

"I just don't want to live in a country where half the people hate the other half," said Abdullah, a 41-year-old taxi driver. "My wife wears a headscarf. So does my mother. But other women choose not to. That's their decision. What's the problem? Why can't we just live together? I'm so fed up that I've applied to emigrate to New Zealand. Somebody told me that there are more sheep there than people. I'm sure that the sheep have got more brains than a lot of people here."

15

Guns for Breads? Rise of Maoist Movement in India

Lal lal salaam, lal lal salaam, aane vaaley saathiyon ko lal lal salaam. (Red salute to the comrades who have arrived.)

Arundhati Roy: Walking with the Comrades
(March 22, 2010)

Two incidents must have baffled Mao ze Dong in his grave; once in 2006 when Maoist in Nepal ceased state power and now when on last week Indian Premiere Manmohon Singh attributed left wing Maoist uprising to be the single most internal security threat in India since Independence. When Mao's birth place China modified his dictum to achieve economic emancipation and now heading for a double digit growth rate, it is outlandish even for China to reiterate the old proletariat methodology to eliminate class struggle. So, when Charu Mazumdar, (founder of the Naxalite movement) famously said, "*China's Chairman is our Chairman and China's Path is Our Path*" he possibly wanted to epitomize the rhetoric which worked well at that period in China. But he could not survive to see the rest of the metamorphism of Mao's ideologies in Nepal and India. Even the champions of those concepts could not possibly foresee the turn of their 'wheel of fortune' so rapidly but they more or less perceived common facts - economic emancipation is a must to redress class grievances and maintaining a healthy margin of equitable distribution of wealth is the linchpin to arrest social disorder. It was a daunting task even for China; nevertheless, we all agree that they have done well.

After the death of Stalin, Mao was the leader of the world communist movement. He contributed much in the development of Marxism-Leninism. In sum, the major contributions of Mao could be summarized under three headings; a New Democratic Revolution, a Struggle against Modern Revisionism and Continuing the Revolution under the Dictatorship of proletariat and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR). The GPCR is the most important theoretical part of Mao's thought and although it was developed in the particular historical situation of China during the course of building socialism, it has universal

character. Its importance lays not only for backward, colonial and semi (neo) colonial countries, but also to the whole world. Likewise, its importance lies in the question of strengthening GPCR, struggle against the danger of restoration of capitalism in a socialist country and struggle against modern revisionism and to foster revolution ahead. It has given a new light to the organizational concept of the party. It emphasizes on building proletarian outlook on all questions pertaining to life, society, family, party organization, politics, culture and on necessity of uncompromising struggle against all kind of opportunists and breaks off relations with them. The GPCR in a way, was a lesson learned from the negative experience of the Soviet Union where, as Mao pointed out, Stalin could not understand properly the necessity of continuing struggle even after all means of production were socialized and classes in their old form had disappeared.

Mao also laid the foundation of armed revolution as a tactic in the 'road to power'. But it is quite appalling that India being a close follower of communism (West Bengal is still ruled by Communist Party), has come all out to suppress it. The age old adage, 'one man's terrorist is another man's patriot' is celebrated now as India is reeling from a secessionist threat from within. Its own people have vowed to implement a just society following Maoism. The news of military/paramilitary intervention on Maoist armed group is slowly pervading to outside world and Indian intellectuals those who remained ambivalent so long with the 'India Shining' concept and were heavily dosing due to 'opium effect' of Bollywood and Bangalore, are little nervous now. These so called 'wretched ideologues' have achieved too much within too short a time (since 2005) by leveraging from constant ignorance of central government and probably want to replicate the success of Nepalese Maoists who could topple the central government within a span of just ten years. This episode will describe the background of rise and present situation of Maoist movement in India, relevant causes, its method of operation, why they succeed and finally extrapolating its effects on Bangladesh. A short perspective view will also be cast to identify the similarities between Nepali and Indian Maoism. There were forewarning about this phenomenon in India but by now it has crossed the threshold level and Bangladesh will be unwittingly involved in the events unfolding within a reasonable distance. As a matter of fact, we had been alleged too many times to harbor insurgents for stoking insurgency in India. Does the present scenario prove the fact of the matter, inter alia, is left to the reader's judgement only.

On 6 April 2010, in a well-prepared and well executed attack of unprecedented precision, a large number of Maoists ambushed a combined party of over 80 members of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) of India and the District Police returning from road security duty and managed to kill 72 members of the CRPF and one member of the District police force. The ambush took place in the thick Mukrana forests of Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district. This is the latest of armed conflict and Maoists have been waging a People's War in 13 States of the Indian Union now. They are convinced that, what worked in China before 1976 can be made to work again in India and that they could make the India-Nepal region the beacon of Maoism to guide the toiling masses in the rest of South Asia and then the world. While they certainly control vast forest areas like the Dandakaranya (DK) region that encompasses areas of Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, and Orissa, and other forest areas in Orissa, Jharkhand and West Bengal, in other areas they operate with less impunity. They are gradually spreading their influence in the non-forested areas of Vidarbha and Marathwada in Maharashtra, industrial hotspots in Orissa, the plains of West Bengal, plantation areas of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala, and even in the agricultural hotspots in Punjab and Haryana.

Now while officially the military/paramilitary 'Operation Green Hunt' (the nickname of Indian government counter insurgency operation) is combined with a policy that's affectionately called WHAM (Winning Hearts and Minds), let me familiarize you with the phenomenon of Indian Maoism first. It is little misnomer if we coin the movement flatly as 'left wing Maoism'. It has both an ideological aspect (Mao's dictum) while it was nourished through a wider historical linkage of uprisings originated in the Naxalbari of West Bengal. The famous chieftain of this movement, Charu Majumdar, the founder and chief theoretician of the Naxalite Movement whose motivation was in the line of violence, blood and martyrdom and who often employed language so coarse as to be almost genocidal, has profound impact on the present day Maos. Writer activist Arundhati Roy, being the only journalist interviewed the Maoist in the DK, in her 'Walking with the Comrades' episode, passed them as almost a band of 'Gandhiwalas with Gun' who are so removed from the original emotion and texture vital to the structure of Charu Majumdar's revolution, that it was difficult to reconcile them as terrorists. As she witnessed them celebrating 'Bhumkal Day' (commemorating the centenary of the 1910 Bhumkal - means earthquake, rebellion in which the Koyas rose up against the British) she was left wondering about the

practicality of Charu Majumdar's quote, '*an annihilation campaign*' could produce "*the new man who will defy death and be free from all thought of self-interest*".

It's convenient to construe that the war in the Indian forests is a war between the Government of India and the Maoists, who underscores elections a façade (are they overwhelmingly wrong?), parliamentary democracy a pity, while they demand an egalitarian Society. This is also true that tribal people in Central India have a history of resistance that pre-dates Mao by centuries. The Ho, the Oraon, the Kols, the Saotals, the Mundas and the Gonds have all rebelled several times, against the British, against Zamindars and moneylenders. As usually these rebellions were brutally crushed, many thousands killed, but the people were never conquered. Even after Indian independence, tribal people were at the heart of the first uprising that could be described as Maoist, in Naxalbari village in West Bengal. Since then Naxalite politics has been inextricably entwined with tribal uprisings, which says as much about the tribal's as it does about Naxalite's. Let me delve now with the hierarchy of the organization that is engaged in the revolution. The core group of today's Maoist Group had seven armed squads (the forty-niners) who crossed the Godavari from Andhra Pradesh and entered the DK Forest in June 1980. They belonged to Peoples War Group (PWG), a faction of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) CPI (ML), the original Naxalites. PWG was formally announced as separate, independent party in April, 1980, under Kondapalli Seetharamiah. DK was called by the British, 'Gondwana', land of the Gonds. Today the state boundaries of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra have a slice of the forest each. Though the Gonds (divided between the Koya and Dorla tribes) are by far the biggest majority, there are small settlements of other tribal communities too. The non-advansi communities, traders and settlers, live on the edges of the forest, near the roads and markets.

DK was used as the base, and those first squads were sent in to survey the area and began the process of building guerilla zones. It followed the same precepts of revolutionary army or 'People's Army' of Mao. The decision to build an army arose from its experience in Andhra Pradesh, where its 'Land to the Tiller' campaign led to a direct clash with the landlords and resulted in the kind of police repression that the Party found impossible to withstand. By 2004, PWG had merged with the other CPI (ML) factions, Party Unity (PU) and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC)—which functions for the most part out of Bihar and Jharkhand, to

become what it is now, the Communist Party of India-CPI (Maoist). A statement issued by the CPI (Maoist) on October 14, 2004, said: "*We hereby declare that the two guerilla armies of the CPI (ML and PW) and MCCI—the PGA (People's Guerilla Army) and the PLGA—have been merged into the unified PLGA/PWG (Peoples' Liberation Guerrilla Army/Peoples war group). Hereafter, the most urgent task of the party is to develop the unified PLGA into a full-fledged People's Liberation Army (PLA) and transforming the existing Guerrilla Zones into Base Areas, thereby advancing wave upon wave towards completing the New Democratic Revolution.*"

After that the seven-squad team had come a long way. It's influence now ranged across a 60,000 sq kilometer stretch of forest, thousands of villages and millions of people. Today, DK is administered by an elaborate structure of Jantana Sarkars (people's governments). The organizing principles came from the Chinese revolution and the Vietnam War. Each Jantana Sarkar is elected by a cluster of villages whose combined population can range from 500 to 5000. It has nine departments: Krishi (agriculture), Vyapar-Udyog (trade and industry) Arthik (economic), Nyay (justice), Raksha (defense), Hospital (health), Jan Sampark (public relations), School-Riti Rivaj (education and culture), and Jungle. A group of Janatana Sarkars come under an Area Committee. Three Area Committees make up a Division. There are ten Divisions in DK now (excerpted from Arundhoti Roy).

16

Guns for Breads? Causes of Rise of Indian Maoism and Its Objectives

Present day Maoist movement did not arrive in such a landmark for paltry reasons. Think about a person (in most cases woman) who is motivated to take up a fugitive life for good. It is no wonder that Maoists will find favorable environment in a country where at least 40 percent of the population live below the poverty line and in a country. Even for an out looker, to point out the discordant development scenario in opulent India and so called insurgent infested areas is plain and simple. It is a fact that development cannot go in even pace in a country like India but the ever widening gap must have been monitored so that it could not have gone beyond remedy. Among other reasons, the Indian politics are still centre biased and the entire developmental activities still hover around Delhi. Though there are examples of some regional parties emerging stronger whereby some kind of developments happen elsewhere in states like Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu due to sheer bargaining power of the political alignments, but it did not happen for the states in the North East and Centre as it continuously remains ignored.

It is a manifested phenomenon that the disintegration of communist parties in India is almost epidemic though fragmentation is a common feature in the communist parties all over the world. The first great fragmentation of the Indian communists occurred in 1964 when Communist Party of India -CPI (Marxist) was formed after a split in the undivided Communist Party of India. Within a short time CPIM experienced its first splitting. And the new party formed in 1969 came to be known as CPI (Marxist-Leninist). This party also experienced several disintegration in its infancy. A faction of this CPI (ML) after many changes became known as CPI (Maoist). But these varieties of communists engaged in endless bloody feuds among themselves in order to acquire supremacy over other. By this time CPI (M) have built up a left front with a few left-minded and weaker political parties and have succeeded in capturing power in the Indian states of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura. The tragedy of the people is augmented when they, living under a communist rule, face the atrocities of their communist

representatives. Just this has recently happened in the life of the people of Nandigram of West Bengal (where CPI (M) has been in power for more than three decades). They, in the name of industrialization in the state, have been desperate in dislodging thousands of farmers from densely populated region of Nandigram which they have selected for the site of a chemical hub to be blessed by the infamous DuPont and Salim group of Indonesia. The CPI (Marxist) brand has also failed miserably in land-snatching operation in Singur of the same state. Their blunt operations and different misdeeds in other parts of the state have been regularly highlighted by the media. So here come the Maoists who by default became the greatest and fiercest competitors of the official lefts. Official lefts demand that they are the messiah of the toiling millions. But people find that their lifestyle is more or less similar to those who are in the opposite side of the fence. Maoists live a humble life and mere their presence among the wretched people earned the name of real heroes of the day.

'Maoist Ideologies' being used for such revolutions are not bizarre. In Nepal it had been the same also. The so called class struggle and snatching ones right forcefully can be traced back to the fundamental injustices perpetrated on the adivasis in Indian and Nepali cases. In an interview, with Karan Thapar on CNN-IBN's show *Devil's Advocate* Oct 25, 2009, Arundhoti Roy simply puts it:

"If I was a person who is being dispossessed, whose wife has been raped, who is being pushed off their land and who is being faced with this 'police force', I would say that I am justified in taking up arms. If that is the only way I have to defend myself. We should stop thinking about who is justified. You have an army of very poor people being faced down by an army of rich that are corporate-backed...so you can't extract morality from the heinous act of violence that each commits against the other".

Here is an excerpt from their manifesto which underscores their motivation though identical to communist rhetoric but demands a closer scrutiny. It reveals their justification to take up arms. Salient points are quoted below:

*"It will pay special attention to mobilizing and organizing the **women masses** as a mighty force of the revolution and will fight against all other forms of social oppression, particularly **untouchability** (my observation: the Dalits) and **casteism** (my observation: the Brahmins). It will continue to expose, isolate and defeat the more dangerous **Hindu fascist forces**, (my observation: the BJP and their cohorts) ...it will continue to do so*

*while keeping the edge of the people's struggles directed against the new **Congress rulers in Delhi** along with the **CPI (Communist Party of India)/CPM (Communist Party Marxist)** and their imperialist chieftains.*

*"It will continue to expose and resist ... particularly the **US imperialists**. It will more actively stand by the side of the Nepali people led by the **CPN (Maoist)** and vehemently oppose the **Indian expansionists** and **US imperialists** from intervening in Nepal. It will also continue to support the people's war led by the Maoist parties in Peru, the Philippines, Turkey and elsewhere. It will continue to support all people's struggles directed against **imperialism**. It will also support the working class movement and other people's movements the world over. It will continue to stand by the side of the Iraqi and Afghan people in their mighty struggle against the **US imperialist-led aggression and occupation**".*

*"The character of Indian society is **semi-colonial, semi-feudal**. The task of the first stage of revolution is to change the semi-colonial semi-feudal society into an **independent new democratic society**. The targets of the revolution would be the **imperialists, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie** and the **big landlord classes**. The immediate basic programme is to overthrow the semi-colonial, semi-feudal rule of the big landlord bureaucratic bourgeoisie classes and imperialism that backs them, through armed struggle".*

*"The new democratic revolution is to be achieved through the path of **protracted people's war**. the basic, principal and the immediate task of the present stage of the revolution would be to arouse and organize the people for an **agrarian revolutionary guerrilla war** in the countryside - specially in the remote countryside. In India the parliamentary system was imposed by British imperialism from above. **Actually, no viable solution of the fundamental problems of the people can be sought through using any parliamentary institution**. The three weapons of the revolution will be the **Party, the Army and the United Front**."*

It is imperative to ponder over the psychological aspects of such perpetration notable to Indian case. These adivasis (tribal) are a closely knit anthropologically distinct population group who are always die hard and remain loyal to their leadership and cause. CPI has rightly chosen such a backdrop. The cost of Indian booming economy is realized in terms of forced displacement of these people who inherited the lands, rely on basic lifestyle and are culturally linked to it. And there is no other way to rehabilitate them. However following are few of the discernible causes taken up by Maoists for Indian example;

Multi National Company's widespread capture of lands (the BJP Government in Chhattisgarh signed two MOUs to set up integrated steel plants with Essar Steel in Bailadila, and the other with Tata Steel in Lohandiguda. A company called Vedanta has further earmarked on bauxite deposits (3 million tons) at Keshkal Ghats near Kanker) to extract mineral resources for raw material and it is going on unabated. Constructions of dams are also causing repercussions like; the Bodhghat Dam, which will submerge the entire surrounding area and 100 villages. It will drown people, so that the integrated steel plant in Lohandiguda and the bauxite mine and aluminum refinery in the Keshkal ghats can use the water. These activities caused massive internal displacement and rehabilitation to such a grand scale has not been envisaged by India. So as usually the adivasis will defy; *'We will drown, but we won't move'*.

It is generally viewed that India is practicing widespread violence by terming it as an insurgency problem. The state not only practicing violence but also 'privileging it' (amply explained by Sudeep Chakravarti - the writer of Red Sun). Unless a person shouts, screams, burns, and kills, rulers do not listen. Violence is used both by the state and rebels and is ingrained in Indian politics as justification for their own ends. All political parties have a record of practicing it and encouraging it. CPI thus rightly underscored the need for armed struggle from the beginning.

Public humiliation is a manifested phenomenon in the lower strata of the society exercised both by security forces and local landlords, government officials. For example; when the security forces carry out operation, they abuse the local populace which psychologically motivates them for subsequent revenge. In one such cases (excerpted from Arundhati Roy), Chamri a mother of a comrade Dilip who was shot on 6 July 2009, says that, after they killed him, the police tied her son's body to a pole, like an animal and carried it with them. Chamri ran behind them all the way to the police station. By the time they reached, the body did not have a scrap of clothing on it. On the way, Chamri says, they left the body by the roadside while they stopped at a dhaba to have tea and biscuits. They did not let her have her son's body back so she could give him a proper funeral. They only let her throw a fistful of earth in the pit in which they buried the others they had killed that day. The example of another lady called Sabita Kumari, a tribal from Jharkhand state. She went to the local police to register a complaint about her sister being raped. The police asked her instead to provide sex. Sabita went into the jungle, was recruited by Maoists, and has sworn to kill "at least 100

policemen” unless she is killed first. Poverty did not drive her something else. (Excerpted from Arundhati Roy’s *Walking with comrades*)

Out of many short term wrong strategies, ‘Salwa Judum’ (the Purification Hunt) – a classic isolation technique, termed in military parlance, ‘Strategic Hamleting’ (General Sir Harold Briggs’s 1950 technique to contain communist insurgents in Malaya) was adopted by government which backfired and posited as a massive government failure. Unlike the Jan Jagran Abhiyan, the Salwa Judum was a ground-clearing operation, meant to move people out of their villages into roadside camps, where they could be policed and controlled. This has been replicated in Nagaland, Mizoram and in Telengana. The BJP Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, Raman Singh announced that as far as his government was concerned, villagers who did not move into camps would be considered Maoists. So, for an ordinary villager, just staying at home, living an ordinary life became the equivalent of indulging in dangerous terrorist activity. The first victim of the Salwa Judum (on 18th June 2005) was village Ambeli. Between June and December 2005, it used its coercive methods in hundreds of villages of South Dantewara. The centre of its operations was the districts of Bijapur and Bhairamgarh, near Bailadila, where Essar Steel’s new plant was proposed. Watching this, the Maoist counter-offensive started and finally broke the carpet security and gave people breathing space. The police and the Salwa Judum retreated into their camps. Gradually, except local collaborators and their families, the rest of the people in the Salwa Judum camps began to return to their villages. Young people began to flock to the PLGA. (Over the last thirty years, its armed squads had very gradually expanded into sections, sections had grown into platoons, and platoons into companies. But after the Salwa Judum’s depredations, the PLGA was rapidly able to declare battalion strength.) (Excerpted from Arundhati Roy’s *Walking with comrades*)

17

Guns for Breads? Achievements, Comparison of Maoist Movement in India with Nepal and Aftermath

Indian Maoism came a long way since '80s. Given the background of Maoist uprising, its objectives, perceived modus operandi and causes in earlier episodes, let me narrate what all Indian Maoists have achieved by now and why these are important. Here are important five highlights;

First: interestingly I note a visible discord between the CPI (Marxist), albeit the ruling party in West Bengal which supports the Congress (I) led Government and CPI (Mao). CPI (Marxist) accused the Maoists of trying to create an atmosphere of terror to make their existence felt and described them as anti-development and anti-people. It alleged that the Maoists were worried that the development of tourism would improve the standard of living of the people and thereby prevent the flow of unemployed youth to the ranks of the Maoists. Ridiculing its contention, the CPI (Mao) replied: *"The so-called 'terror', which the CPM deploras, is in response to the white terror of the State machinery and the CPM party that have spread in the countryside. It is the revolutionary Red Terror to counter the counter-revolutionary white terror"*.

Second: to press home their communist ideologies, it started with essential task of land redistribution both from Forest Department and Landlords adopting Robin Hood style. The Party first decided to confront the feudal Forest Department which ousted adivasis from their lands. The Party encouraged and organized people to take over their ancestral land and cultivate it. The Forest Department retaliated by burning new villages that came up in forest areas e.g. in 1986 it announced a National Park in Bijapur, which meant the eviction of 60 villages. More than half of them had already been moved out and construction of National Park infrastructure had begun when the Party moved in. It demolished the construction and stopped the eviction of the remaining villages. Eventually the Forest Department fled. Between 1986 and 2000, the Party re-distributed 300,000 acres of forestland. Today, it demands, there are no landless peasants in DK. Intermittently various groups had been organized as states effort to counter the Maos like; in 1990, Mahendra

Karma (a member of the CPI-Marxist and one of the biggest landlords in the region) rallied a group of Mukhiyas and landlords and started a campaign called the Jan Jagran Abhiyan (Public Awakening Campaign). Their way of ‘awakening’ the ‘public’ was to form a hunting party and intimidate local populace using all possible means to subdue them. In Maharashtra, something similar, called ‘Democratic Front’ began its assault. PWG responded to all of this in true Peoples’ War style, by killing a few of the most notorious landlords. In a few months the Jan Jagran Abhiyan faded. In June 2005, Mahendra Karma also led the Salwa Judum which fizzled out subsequently.

Third: it started empowering women. Generally women in Dalits and other low castes become the subject of abject and ruthless suppression both within their families and societies. As the fable goes, the party first took up a cause to address Maadiya women (among whom it was customary to remove their blouses and remain bare-breasted after they were married. This tradition was abused by the landlords and traders and became sensational). In 1986 it set up the Adivasi Mahila Sanghathana (AMS) which evolved into the Krantikari Adivasi Mahila Sangathan (KAMS) and now has 90,000 enrolled members. It could well be the largest women’s organization in the country. The KAMS campaigns against the adivasi traditions of forced marriage, abduction, the custom of making menstruating women live outside the village in a hut in the forest, bigamy and domestic violence. In DK even today, women are not allowed to sow seeds. But the Party decided that women would sow seeds on common lands, which belongs to the Jantana Sarkar. On that land they sow seed, grow vegetables, and build check dams. As police repression has grown in Bastar, the women of KAMS have become a formidable force and rally in their hundreds, sometimes thousands to physically confront the police. For many young women, joining the PLGA became a way of escaping the suffocation of their own society. A lot of the rape and bestial sexual mutilation was directed at members of the KAMS. Many young women who witnessed the savagery then joined the PLGA and now women make up 45% of its cadre.

Fourth: it has set up Jono Adalat (Peoples’ Courts) to dispense justice. Though a primitive way but it has its own merit. Once a situation demands a trial, the Area Committee calls a Jan Adalat and in one of such courts, four thousand people once attended. They listened to the whole story. The people decided the way of justice. Like in the case of informers and collaborators, people listen to the case, the stories, the confessions and say “Iska hum risk nahin le sakte” (We’re not prepared

to take the risk of trusting this person) or, “Iska risk hum lenge” (We are prepared to take the risk of trusting this person.) so it’s not about revenge, it’s about survival and saving future lives. At least in such cases of the Jan Adalat, the ‘Collective’ was physically present to make its own decision.

Fifth: it has a powerful Cultural Wing which is responsible for propagation of ideologies and cover media. The radical cultural organization Jan Natya Manch (JNM) was founded in 1972. Eventually JNM became a formal part of the PWG and in Andhra Pradesh could draw audiences numbering in the tens of thousands. When the PWG decided to start a cultural organization in DK in 1998, Chetana Natya Manch (CNM) was founded which stages local fables and highlights the struggles of adivasis. There are 10,000 members in CNM now; it has 500 songs, in Hindi, Gondi, Chhattisgarhi and Halbi and a book with 140 of their songs.

There are certain common characteristics of the Maoist movements in India and Nepal, which are:

- An educated leadership (Dr. Binayak Sen for Maoist in India), not necessarily coming from the deprived classes and often motivated by the ambition to achieve political power through the barrel of the gun.
- A cadre largely drawn from the deprived classes-many little educated-motivated by genuine economic and social grievances, but without any political ambitions.
- Networking to achieve their political ambitions.
- The continuing influence of Mao Zedong's Thoughts on the thinking of the leadership.

For Nepali Maoist cases, it was a manifestation of ideology intertwined with old age grievances resulting from inequalities embedded in the Nepali social structure. The inequality stemmed from the poverty, caste/ethnic/gender – based discrimination, political/ social oppression and corruption in public office. The main grievances, all closely related to each other, are inequitable socio-economic and political access, bad governance/corruption and poverty. The principle reasons for its fast propagation and rapid success hinged upon the spread of rebel influence on the involvement and support of excluded groups – mainly women, nationalities and the Dalits. Sometimes it was attributed to a renewal of an old confrontation between the Thakuri Raj and the radical left. The Thakuris (descendants of the rulers of the old principalities) and their clients had long dominated this area and the nature of their rule at local

level was repressive. As politics was concentrated at the center in the game of government making and unmaking the parliamentary parties grossly ignored the need for the party building at the grassroots level. This was the most appropriate time where a long drawn-out people's war thrived.

Another notable characteristic of Maoist movement in Nepal is the degree of women's participation in guerrilla ranks. Ideologically, the Maoist claim to favor an end to the patriarchal organization of the society. In Nepali context, it appears that this position is exemplified by their demands for equal rights for women to inherit ancestral property. However, the full liberation of women and gender equality is to be achieved only in a classless or communist society. Such a position is widely explained by the Maoist to the women through political classes, cultural program, the party media and mass print media.

Some Indian experts are empirically trying to find out external linkages of Maoist uprising. Of the five states, which recorded an increase, Bihar, Jharkand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal are in the proximity of India's international border with Nepal/Bangladesh. Only Chattisgarh is away from the border, but the increase there was marginal as contrasted with the steep increase in the remaining four. Of these five States, the general public perception is that the level of economic development, economic and social justice and the quality of governance are weaker in Bihar, Jharkand and Chattisgarh than in the other states of India. Being surrounded by India in three sides, Bangladesh had been accused many a times for its imaginary involvement of training, arming and sheltering secessionist insurgents in collaboration with ISI of Pakistan. It becomes more pronounced when the political parties in the helm of power in Bangladesh is other than India's favoured. Even if there is any state sponsoring of such activities really exists, it remains to be state secret and falls within the paradigm of national security and for such reason it is not prudent to comment intuitively but the arrest and deportation of ULFA leaders from our soil proves the case to some extent. But it can safely be said that there is no indication of Maoism present in Bangladesh. Simply consider two facts; the political poverty of communist party of Bangladesh (e.g. CPB and other splinter groups who have already become stake holders of present regime) and the prevailing stable law and order situation in our western part. Except the intermittent activities of Sorbohara (though some of the left leaning intellectuals tend to align them with the Naxalites) there is no evidential proof of activities or ideological presence of Maoism in

Bangladesh. It is a small country and thus it poses enormous difficulty for any such groups to thrive undetected. The state intelligence agencies have reasonable sources to forewarn and even in the distant future, Maoism even as an ideology, has poor success rate in Bangladesh. What will happen next - is a question India is earnestly searching a solution and so do we. The current state of situation in India marks the Stage-4. This comes after Stage-1 in the 1960s across West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh; Stage-2 in the '80s primarily in Andhra and Bihar; Stage-3 in the '90s with the spread into present day Chhattisgarh. It is widely believed that in the days to come there might be further 'Stages', as Left-wing extremism morphs and adapts to the changing contours of socio-political and socio-economic India. In the realms of Indian intellectuals and some middle classes, Maoists are patriots by their own admission. Some analysts even call them 'extreme patriots.' This is worth pondering about, given that the legend of Bhagat Singh, (a hardcore left-wing revolutionary from the time of anti-British protests) has reasonable influence in Indian politics (even a bust of him is placed in Indian Parliament). Thus drawing a line between patriot and terrorist might turn out to be a difficult exercise. It requires political sagacity and a wider redefinition of terrorism vis a vis class struggle which might pay dividend at the end.

Sudeep Chakravarti (the writer of Red Sun: Travels in Naxalite Country) emphasized to mainstream the issue, shake 'middle India' out of its mall-stupor and diminish the delusions of grandeur of India's lawmakers. He was quoting a former Indian Chief of Army Staff;

"You describe the massive denial in India about the urgency of the Maoist issue. The Maoists are not entirely voiceless. Nearly a third of India, by some counts, is under their control, they do get some media coverage, and bureaucrats and politicians are profoundly aware of the problem. Yet there seems to be a refusal to squarely engage with the issue in all its complexity".

Many argue about engaging the Maoists in a political dialogue, instead of confronting them with arms and ammunition and make them take the parliamentary road to power. Though a workable idea, but how much practical, remains to be seen. Given the hatred and contemptuous attitude of the Maoists to parliamentary democracy, it is going to be difficult to reconcile as they believe:

"The experience of the last 55 years has amply confirmed the fact that whoever tried to participate in the elections in the name of tactics of using it, most of them got entrenched in the mire of the parliamentary

system and revisionism, sooner or later. In fact, the tactics of participation in the election in the name of using it is tantamount to abandoning the tasks of building and advancing the armed struggle”.

It is thus a matter of choice both at the CPI and Governments’ end to chalk out a strategy of ‘Talking Mediation’ which will give a tactical pause to both parties. Tribal India had always posed law and order problems. The tribal homelands in the North-East did so when Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi were Prime Ministers. They put down the Chinese and Pakistani supported tribal insurgency in the North-East with a firm hand. At the same time, they interacted vigorously with the tribal people and addressed their problems in an attempt to wean them away from violence. For any such crisis, there must be some medium and long-term strategies with a judicious mix of the law and order and hearts and minds dimensions. All new ideas on counter-insurgency coming up in India are about how to make the security forces more effective. It is important for them to be effective. But it is equally important for the political leadership to be seen by the adivasis as caring and sensitive to their anger and bitterness towards their exploiters. Whatever said and done, the single most important factor is to alleviate the socio-economic condition by undertaking various steps. Of which developing road and telecommunications infrastructure in entire tribal belt of Central India demand priority (the Chinese realised that without effective road and rail communications, the internal security will be weak. They poured billions of dollars into infrastructure development programmes in the areas with internal security vulnerabilities).

Can we accept, Vietnam redux, Afghanistan redux, Nagaland and Mizoram redux? This is nothing but a paradoxical ideological struggle for power sharing which was argued by Michael Foucaults in his ‘Power’ dynamics and I believe here lies one of the answers to address the crisis. He mentions the ‘form of ideology’ (in the essay Truth and Juridical Form) is very cumbersome.

“...in traditional Marxist’s analyses, ideology is a sort of negative element through which the fact is conveyed that the subjects’ relation to truth, or simply the knowledge relation, is clouded, obscured, violated by conditions of existence, social relations, or the political forms imposed on the subject of knowledge from the outside”.

For Indian politics and government facing insurgency is a déjà vu. So, in contrast to the tactics and techniques of Maoists that offered an alternative idea of governance by ‘Gram Swara’j with a Gun, how does and Indian Government retort matters most? There is already too much

hunger; too much sickness in tribal belts of central India which needs redressing and mere arms rattling will never bring a solution. The system of governance that CPI (Mao) has laid out is an alternative possibility for an alternative governing method that succeeded within a small part of Chattishgarh (for DK). Whether it is replicable is the original battle that both Indian Government and CPI (Mao) would join to prove or disprove. B. Raman in his 'India under the Carpet Hits Back' tersely puts it:

"...It has laid the foundations for an alternative to its own annihilation. It has defied history. Against the greatest odds it has forged a blueprint for its own survival. It needs help and imagination; it needs doctors, teachers, and farmers. It does not need war. But if war is all it gets, it will fight back. We don't want the Government of India and state governments of India should tailor history to their own requirements of expediency, whitewash, hagiography, and posterity. If we continue to dither as we are doing now, Mao Zedong may have his last laugh in India".

18

Freedom of Speech and Related Matters

Almost intuitively our government clamped down one of the electronic media channels while another print media moved up from queue to a full blown embargo (as I write today). A talk show was also suspended for an apparently ambiguous reason which earlier drew much attention by interviewing former President Yazuddin who needed a sanity check. Finally, the in-famous Facebook (FB) irked someone and took the brunt of the democratic blizzard. As a matter of fact, the policy makers resorted to all these just to prove their bipartisanship and a visible presence of a ‘Vibrant Media’! It is thought to be a preemption saving our vital national interests least we could grasp. Though to a commoner idling amidst entangled Dhaka traffic, it is nothing but a vicious cycle, tit for tat or a perfect déjà vu. For a quick recap which will reinforce my view, in August 2002, the then government shut down the operation of ETV. The last caretaker government shut down broadcasting of news channel CSB in September 2007. The present government suspended operation of Jamuna Television in November 2009 during test transmission. Interestingly, it did not stir much our day to day life including when on 16 May the High Court directly rejected the writ petition challenging the government action of shutting down the media Channel. We have more 15 private radio and TV channels so one or two disgruntles might have to be taught a lesson under a democratic cloak irrespective of human rights groups concerns about the suspensions might negatively affect press freedom and favour censorship – a favorite menu for the dictators. But how come we being a sophomore democracy could successfully join the lines with China, Pakistan and Iran? Only the wise might have the answer.

Of course we could feel the tremor brewing over last couple of months. It was signaling the withering of tolerance limit of the ruling party when too many dissents were in the air. You can dissent with your spouse at home but public dissensions must come with a cost and that was the lesson to be learnt. Let me interpret the whole turmoil through two paradigms; a technical paradigm and a scrupulous paradigm.

From the technical standpoint, the media channel which was banned was established on 1 June 2005; it began official broadcasting on 24 January 2006. It used to employ over 400 peoples and was launched by a controversial businessman involved in a number of criminal cases (the only indicted prince in town). The Channel in accusation, took a loan of Tk 24 crore from a bank in 2005 mortgaging the broadcasting equipment. The bank put it up for auction as the channel failed to pay back the loan. Later, a leasing company bought the equipment, but as per the Telecommunication Act 2001, radio equipment is not transferable to anyone who does not have a license issued by the BTRC. The act has a provision for sentencing anyone who violates the law to 10 years in prison or imposing a fine of Tk 10 lakh or both. The BTRC has found that the Channel authority paid off its bank loans by selling the equipment to another company through an auction arranged by the bank. The channel then rented the same equipment to air its programmes. He said the Bank recently informed the Channel management that the broadcasting equipment was not yet handed over to the bid winner as the payment was not made. This is quite perceivable and we should be happy about the effectiveness of telecommunication regulations at last. But what baffled us was the perfect timing when the scimitar came down. To many of us, the channel was involved in transmission of events which ran opposite to the interests of the ruling party in many occasions. Though later, the responsible state minister had to woo others by emphatically declaring, '*no more channels would be taken out of the air*' (even if they commit the same sin?) The authority seems to be rigorous in implementing the laws of the land but many of us are aware of such violators still moving with impunity amongst us while the noose was tightened for this media channel only.

Maintain state impartiality remains to be an uphill task for Bangladesh and handling media is always a case sensitive affair least the readers forget the tempest that was raised over BBC's role in broadcasting/differing with the ruling regime in Britain (does it offend Britain if I may use the word – Regime?). In March 2005, few reforms were called for reorganizing BBC, which was badly shaken by a row with the Government over the Iraq war and criticised in a subsequent review by Lord Hutton. The governors were singled out in that report for failing to respond to the complaints made by Downing Street and BBC chairman, Gavyn Davies, was forced to resign. It is oft quoting the comment of Blair government here:

"There is widespread consensus that the current model of Governance is unsustainable, the Governors' dual role as cheerleader and regulator does not sit easily in a public organisation of the size and complexity as the BBC. It lacks clarity and accountability."

A tug of war will invariably ensue between state and media but this war never undermines the democratic process where the inherent right to dissent is epitomized. Putting the things in perspective, however, BBC and our media are two diametrically different actors longing in two different spheres. This juxtaposition is attempted to display the rigor with which media has to confront the ruling regime even in Great Britain.

From the spiritual paradigm, in this case, the ever widening gulf of difference of deeds and words of our elected leaders once again pushed us to our age old ritual of lamentation and inaction till it affects us individually. Having said so, the absence of one media channel and print media out of many did not pose as a threat to democracy what to talk about one of the talk shows. What is repugnant here is noticing the ugly trend of a *carte blanche* with which our ruling majority stoops to enjoy in lambasting. It almost passes as a practice not an exception with repetitive nature. But is that all we voted for (here 'We' represent the conscious and semi-conscious part of our populace)? Or does democracy inherently contravene the freedom of speech? What if the democracy keeps on ignoring the basic precepts of securing the most inviolable rights – freedom of expression (interchangeably used here as 'speech')?

The State is obliged to take positive steps to promote diversity and pluralism, to promote equitable access to the means of communication and to guarantee the right of access to information (especially in this Digital Regime!). We voted so that the state can reaffirm the positive role in creating an enabling environment for freedom of expression and equality, while recognising that this brings potential for abuse. Ideally a strong democratic structure is able to endure such abuse and to realise more fully the goals of pluralism and equitable access, an editor of a daily newspaper cannot walk gallows. This is a shame to the institution. Although the State has an important role to play in case of abuse but self-regulation, where effective, remains the most appropriate way to address professional issues relating to the media. Pluralism and diversity are hallmarks of freedom of expression. Realisation of the right to freedom of expression enables vibrant, multi-faceted public interest debate giving voice to different perspectives and viewpoints. Inequality results in the

exclusion of certain voices, undermining this. The right of everyone to be heard, to speak and to participate in political, artistic and social life are, in turn, integral to the attainment and enjoyment of equality. When people are denied public participation and voice, their issues, experiences and concerns are rendered invisible, and they become more vulnerable to bigotry, prejudice and marginalisation. Have we forgotten these or these are best suited for intellectual discourses in the seminars or used metaphorically in Phd dissertations?

Let me walk you through the annals of history. It is quite steady on the question of freedom of speech. Starting with Socrates as he spoke to jury at his trial: *'If you offered to let me off this time on condition I am not any longer to speak my mind... I should say to you, Men of Athens, I shall obey the Gods rather than you'*. The Magna Carta in 1215 was signed despite the oppositions of the unwilling King John, by his rebellious barons. In 1633, Galileo Galilei hauled before the Inquisition after claiming the sun does not revolve around the earth, the 'Areopagitica', a pamphlet by the poet John Milton, argued against restrictions of freedom of the press. In 1689, Bill of Rights grants *'freedom of speech in Parliament'* of England after James II was overthrown. *'The Declaration of the Rights of Man'* in 1789, a fundamental document of the French Revolution, provides for freedom of speech and in 1791, The First Amendment of the US Bill of Rights guarantees four freedoms: of religion, speech, the press and the right to assemble. However, establishing it as a 'right' was enshrined in the French Revolution and Article 11 succinctly states that:

"The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. Every citizen may, accordingly, speak, write, and print with freedom, but shall be responsible for such abuses of this freedom as shall be defined by law".

When the United Nations came into being in 1948, it further documented this right in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

The right is also enshrined in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 10 of the European Convention on

Human Rights, Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights and Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Based on John Stuart Mill's arguments, freedom of speech is understood as a multi-faceted right that includes not only the right to express, or disseminate, information and ideas, but the right to seek information and ideas, the right to receive information and ideas and the right to impart information and ideas and here lies the point of discord.

With the manifestation of such rights, let me talk about the obligations and responsibilities of media (both print and electronic). In the era of globalization of ideas, thoughts and attitudes (which shapes our beliefs), the media walks a tight rope – as it attempts to balance between two mutually inclusive but contradictory phenomena of ‘objectivity’ and ‘neutrality’. Finally, it is all about responsibility to broadcast. For a nascent democracy like us, these are brooding. We hardly question the methods and sometimes the failure of our media is a resultant of our collective ambivalence and then obviously it accentuates State interference. Should the state be the only arbiter to hand down the justice in such cases? If the wholesale right is reposed on the State itself then by default it will abuse it. And this is the matter of fact proved time and again in our case. Our collective conscience of civil society thus does never endeavour to take rein. Think about the broadcast of BDR mutiny in last 25 February 2009. In all account, most of the media houses acted on impulses and relied heavily on their instincts which runs counter to the ethos of responsible journalism or broadcasting principles. The chain of talk shows that followed aftermath started to echo the same sort of irresponsible descriptions. Responsibility comes with maturity and only time will set it right.

Let me bring another bizarre episode to the notice of the reader – the temporary (!) banning of the popular social networking website, Facebook. Despite its inherent disadvantage of susceptible to abuse with sensitive and disrespectful elements posted by its users, all the social interactive websites e.g. My Space, Hi 5 etc. follow a basic norm. It is the responsibility of the technical team maintaining the website to remove such elements once noticed. As it transpired in our case was quite secretive so far. Hearsay was that, there were few caricatures of ruling party and opposition leaders hosted recently undermining their dignity. Though since last week, some religio-political leader named Mufti Yemani was emphatically suggesting to ban it as Pakistan did so, but who could be able to link these two ubiquitous events together? But what

really happened was phenomenal. Given the number of FB users an approximate of 8 lakhs, this move simply made it super popular. There was no responsible announcement from Government's end for justifying its closure. We are now at par with China, Pakistan, Iran and North Korea despite of our varied temperaments and ideals. Are they good examples to follow through?

May be I am too enamored to the lofty ideals of free press, vibrant media etc. This is not true but precisely, I wish to make a difference of two French words 'Savoir' and 'Connaissance'. Savoir represents the realm of 'knowledge' while the other stands for 'to Know/inform'. The Savoir will empower you with the knowledge with which you will rule. This knowledge is derived through a process of collecting information, then analyzing it to meaningful intelligence. This human cycle cannot be operated by machines and human are very precious because of their ability to interpret. Previously we witnessed how the then military despot General Moin once summoned almost all (who dares not to be present!) the media bosses together and shared his precious and oblique views about the responsibility and other pertinent issues. It is naïve to think that he only enjoyed the superiority of time and space but the message was passed during that extraordinary time.

Benjamin Franklin, writing in *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 8, 1736, wrote of the American doctrine behind freedom of speech and of the press: *'Freedom of speech is a principal pillar of a free government; when this support is taken away, the constitution of a free society is dissolved, and tyranny is erected on its ruins. Republics and limited monarchies derive their strength and vigor from a popular examination into the action of the magistrates'*.

It seems we are also susceptible to tyrants round the clock in different hues. As an example, when it comes to the question of extrajudicial killings, we receive the same narratives over and over again. When it is time to discredit the opposition's activities, we receive another narrative highlighting that everything which had been done so far were wrong. Like, over last few days our honourable state minister for law is tediously trying to prove the Shahid President Ziaur Rahman as a Pakistani collaborator who animatedly risked his life many a times just to remain loyal to Pakistan. Even he was later incarcerated as one of the masterminds participating in the killing of four national leaders in the jail. These are political rhetoric and none really take it personally, is not it? It

reminds me of a statutory warning that all drama/TV serial has to display, '*all the characters of this drama is fictitious, and any resemblance to any real character is mere a coincidence*'. Our media is very apt in doing this and presumably this has to be done to avoid temporary banning, deportation or intimidation at least. Finally, who does not know the pain of an unemployed in this Digital Bangladesh.

While concluding, I notice that all the tyrants around the globe bear a funny resemblance; they all remain afraid. After enthralled by power they tend to become frightened about its longevity. It compels them to manipulate media, so to portray a picture perfect regime to their subject. It furthers their self aggrandizement. But the great equalizer Nature finally intervenes to hand down its justice which is a matter of time only.

19

Defining National Security Matters and Need for Founding a National Crisis Management Body and Its Functionaries

Preamble

1. As a nation, we are known to be resilient once it is a matter of facing natural disasters. In a newspaper quip (the Daily Star-dated 13 March 09) writer-comedian Nury Vittachi in his column 'Truthful slogans for Asia' presented Bangladesh to the potential tourists as 'Sometimes not Flooded'. Probably this summarizes the general assumption about this country. It is true that, our capability in achieving self-sufficiency in drawing timely strategy, mastering resources and mitigating sufferings, achieved its acclaim in international arena. Even this is true in contrast with US's poorly managed the cyclone - Katrina. This kind of feat is achievable once government organs/machineries are meshed together to attain one objective, and the objective is outlined fairly thus becomes attainable. This analogy is drawn here just to put forward a claim whether we are equally apt in facing manmade disasters or not. The recent BDR incident is a case in point but nevertheless the list of such man made disasters are not short in our national history. Being a third world poor country, we are beset with innumerable socio-economic and political 'problems' (the word problem here is a misnomer rather meant to highlight general condition only). These problems are commonly agreed upon, there are number of government, and non-government establishments which researched adequately on these topics and identified the causes and its effect. They also outlined the required recommendations and it becomes incumbent to the policy makers to implement it as they prioritize these (these priorities vary regime to regime). So, the socio economic or political issues are more or less identified and there exists a common platform for holding a debate, seminar, symposia etc. Nevertheless, once there arises a question regarding 'Security' there is always a 'hssh-hushhhh', which strangles

the academic and non-academics together joining in a common platform while debating on such issues and generally the analysis are reserved to the retired military/police officials as they are usually dubbed as 'Security Analysts/experts'. The term 'Security' covers a wider arena now days and broadly categorized as 'External' and 'Internal' security. Both of these types will be discussed later in this essay with special emphasis on internal security as it mostly affects the mass people. In our country, the term 'security' connotes to assumed military participation in internal state matters where elected political government does not feel comfortable to share with. This is the fallacy as the word security here stands only for deterring external aggression leaving aside the very core issues of state's vulnerability from within. Thus an attempt will be undertaken later to highlight probable steps to handle such security crises suggesting a national level consortium/body/organization, which is the centerpiece of this essay. There lies one very subtle distinction between natural and manmade disasters; for natural disasters, there is a limit of estimated destruction, but for man made one, there is no end and usually the effect is realized over a longer period in a variety of dimensions.

However, there is a visual manifestation of such manmade disasters, which are not to be confused with natural phenomenon in any case.

Defining National Security

For academic purpose lets draw necessary parameters while defining National Security. As a matter of fact, it is sometimes an open ended topic and countries around the globe tried to define it following the rules of convenience. However, the definition of "national security" is taken from the United Nations publication "Freedom of the Individual under Law: Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights", which says (para. 1028) -

"National security means **peace** and **stability** in the community. The concept would seem to relate to measures enacted with a view to **safeguarding territorial integrity and national independence** from any external threat. It covers any activity prejudicial to the very existence of the State. Nevertheless, this requirement should not be used as a pretext for imposing arbitrary limitations or restrictions on the exercise of human rights and freedoms." (Emphasis added)

A collective term encompassing both national defense and foreign relations of the states are also included in this expression . Specifically, the condition provided by:

- A military or defense advantage over any foreign nation or group of nations;
- A favorable foreign relations position; or
- A defense posture capable of successfully resisting hostile or destructive action from within or without, overt or covert.

The late political scientist Hans Morgenthauⁱ, author of *Politics Among Nations*ⁱⁱ, defines national security as the integrity of the **national territory and its institutions**. He also said emphasizing what a statesman might think a legitimate object of national interest might go against the general concept/morality of good and evil, "The statesman must think in terms of the national interest, conceived as power among other powers. The popular mind, unaware of the fine distinctions of the statesman's thinking, reasons more often than not in the simple moralistic and legalistic terms of absolute good and absolute evil."ⁱⁱⁱ

To summarize the definition aspect of it here are the substances and corresponding questions that more or less draws the boundary of national security:

1. **Peace and stability** in the community (how to ensure peace and stability in a society, rather how to ensure social justice?)
2. **Safeguarding territorial integrity and national independence** from any external threat (how is it achieved? What are the necessary tools to achieve it?)
3. It covers any activity **prejudicial** to the **very existence** of the State (what all will determine the threat to national security and who will participate in determining those?)

These questions are posed to give the readers an idea about the open ended pattern of the definition of national security and also to refute the idea that deterring external aggression is mere a tiny part of **national security**.

History and Concept of National Security

The first known use of the term "national security" was in the Clark Memorandum^{iv} of 1928. The concept of security of a nation goes back to the dawn of nation-states^v themselves. Basically most of the nation states use three arms to manage security matters; military to deter external aggression, police/para-military for handling internal security matters and intelligence arm to forecast and collate issues concerning both external and internal security. Armies for domestic peacekeeping and maintaining

national sovereignty have existed since the dawn of recorded history. Civil and national police forces have also existed for millennia. Intelligence agencies and secret services of governments date back to antiquity such as the Roman Empire's **Frumentarii** and **Agens in rebus**. While the general concepts of keeping a nation secure are not new, the specific modern English term "national security" itself came into common parlance in the 20th Century. Methodologies to achieve and maintain the highest possible desired state of national security have been consistently developed over the modern period to this day.

Elements of National Security

National security is an undertaking generally referring to the 'International Security' though it directly or indirectly encompasses much of the national public administration. At its basic, national security can be divided into Internal National Security and External National Security.

Internal national security is concerned with ensuring state legal codes that are not transgressed, and prevention of attacks on public infrastructures and their personnel by implementing civil defense and emergency preparedness measures (including anti-terrorism legislation). This also includes using counterintelligence services or secret services to protect the nation from internal threats sponsored from the outside. The executive authority for internal national security is the expression of political power, preferably through democratic process of selecting national leaders. Internal national security is also the management of national finances free from economic problems that can lead to large-scale public dissatisfaction with the government, and public disorder through protests.

External national security is generally the scope more often associated with national security in democratic states. It encompasses national border security as a means of immigration control, national environment security where the environmental threat originates from sources external to national territory, territorial waters and airspace, and assurance of international trade safety through the state borders. It is usual that armed conflicts threaten territorial integrity of states, and require development of a military doctrine as part of the national defence policy that guides armed forces posture, and the concepts, methods and technologies that are to be use in securing and preventing loss of this integrity. External national security generally requires using intelligence services to detect and defeat or avoid threats and espionage, and to protect classified information.

Different Approaches to the Concept of National Security

Our understanding of National Security is not broad enough to take into account new forces that are shaping our destiny and the machinery of state is not well designed to meet these new challenges. We are yet to define our national power (through which the aspiration and propagation of our national existence should be made) . Many analysts would accept this characterization. In practice, however, they divide into two camps. Some would expand the concept of national security to make it more comprehensive. Others do not necessarily deny the case for change, but say that expanding the scope of national security will deprive it of real meaning, and lead to incoherence.

National Security (“Standard” Model) – a General Consensus

There is a kind of standard model of the term national security: a composite of many variations. In our opinion, the customary meaning of “national security,” is a reference to any states’ ability to survive threats to its vital interests. The term “vital interest” is, in turn, generally understood to cover whatever is required for the physical survival of the nation and its “way of life.” For these purposes, “the Bangladeshi way of life” means our existence as a republic of free citizens, conducting our affairs according to laws we have made, through systems of government that operate within boundaries set by the constitution. Article 25 of our constitution stipulates, ‘*Promotion of International Peace, Security and Solidarity*’ which means ‘where the State shall base its international relations on the principles of respect for national sovereignty and equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, peaceful settlement of international disputes, and respect for international law and the principles enunciated in the United Nations Charter. Furthermore, in Chapter IV (the Defence Services) articles 61-63 only outlines the supreme command, recruitment, etc., of defence services and method of waging war. Thus for us, the concept of national security has only been restricted to waging war but not forecasting internal phenomena which might cause security vulnerability. However, it has been periodically adjusted in response to new threats, including most recently, terrorism. It remains, however, mainly focused on the elimination of physical danger in the immediate present. It pushes away longer-range concerns having to do with other vital elements of national power.

Dilemma of Delimiting Boundaries of National Security - Rights and freedoms of Individual and Outlining Human Security

The measures adopted to maintain national security in the face of threats to society has led to ongoing discussion, particularly in liberal

democracies, on the scale and role of authority in matters of civil and human rights. Tension sometimes exists between the preservation of the state (by maintaining self-determination and sovereignty) and the rights and freedoms of individuals. Although national security measures are imposed to protect society as a whole, such measures will necessarily tend to restrict the rights and freedoms of individuals. The concern is that where the exercise of national security laws and powers is not subject to good governance, the rule of law, and strict checks and balances, there is a risk that "national security" may simply serve as a pretext for suppressing unfavorable political and social views (e.g. China, many Latin American and African countries) . Taken to its logical conclusion, this view contends that measures which may ostensibly serve a national security purpose (such as mass surveillance, and censorship of mass media), could ultimately lead to a police state. In the United States, the controversial USA Patriot Act and other government action has brought some of these issues to the forefront, raising two main questions: To what extent, for the sake of national security, should individual rights and freedoms be restricted and can the restriction of civil rights for the sake of national security be justified?

Others believe that the national security approach has outlived its usefulness to the international community since many of the sources of global insecurity today (such as terrorism or global warming) are immune to unilateral state military responses. In response to this growing sense of dissatisfaction, growing numbers of scholars, NGOs, and policy makers have argued for the adoption of a new people-centered model for security – Human Security. Human Security argues that global security is best enhanced when state leaders focus on reducing human vulnerabilities as the best pathway to enhancing state security.^{vi} Our constitution also highlights it in article 11^{vii}.

Has the Security Environment of Bangladesh Dramatically Been Changed?

We think the comment of Mr. R.Swaminathan^{viii}, on this matter is sufficient to invoke a soul-searching exercise for rationalizing of the answer derived there from.

“The confidence of the citizens in the ability of the state to ensure a secure society has been rudely shaken by the spate of terrorist attacks and some other incidents of mass violence in the recent past. With the parliamentary election around the corner, this is perhaps the right time to have a calm and wide (national) debate on the system of National

Security Management which should, as in the case of any other management, be objectively judged on the basis of actual results, rather than on rhetorical statements of intent or policy. It is clear that we can no longer afford to continue doing business as usual. Some significant changes in our mind-set and in our

policy-making procedures seem necessary. The debate needs to concentrate on adapting and "tweaking" the system to meet current and perceived future threats. The causes for each type of threat, as well as military and economic threats, could be kept outside the scope of this debate on redefining the system of National Security Management".

However, this question should be answered from two viewpoints:

1. **External security.** The fact of the matter remains true that, after our gaining independence since 1971, there is no such act which can make us believe that the sovereignty of the land has been seriously threatened. But of course occasional border skirmishes by para military forces of India and a stray incident of capturing one of the Border out posts in Teknaf by rebels of Myanmar need not be portrayed as a planned aggression. The BDR so long held out to protect the border areas and it was done commendably.
2. **Internal Security.** But in the case of internal security, it needs a broad consensus first to list down the general threats which transcends the ideological boundaries of petty party politics and intellectual clutterings. Given a wider spectrum of socio-political-economic problems that infested the vitality of our national life so long, should ideally be taken as the factors threatening 'peaceful existence' of our life. However, generally speaking, the issues that threatens our human, political and economic security are considered to be transformed over a period of time. As a conscious citizenry we feel a general degradation of all these factors which is rotting the basic fiber of our nationhood and also not enabling us to live peacefully. We might have dissent in agreeing but no one will probably argue that, general peaceful condition of life which the state is suppose to ensure is fast dissipating. As a matter of fact, we are less peaceful and more violent now a days in every aspect of our social and political life. That brings it to the conclusion that, our internal dispensation of justice, ensuring law and order and provide basic security (e.g. food, shelter) is threatened to a greater degree now. That qualifies for the time being the fact that our internal security environment is fast being loosened and thereby demands a rescrutiny of awareness at all level.

Proposed Foundation of a National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC)

Under these circumstances, a serious thought of what we mean by “national security,” is needed, and in fact overdue. The term has expanded, but slowly, given the strongly held legacy view that national security is an equation about violence, rather than an equation about national vitality and overall power. National defense is a vital element of national security, but needs to be seen as the living composite of the nation’s economic, diplomatic, scientific, physical, energy, agriculture, and financial and moral resources. A probable definition of national security would include but not be limited to:

- Security from violent assault against the nation, whether from within or without, by means of a national capacity to anticipate threat; deter threat; respond to attack; recover from the effects of attack, and sustain the costs of defense.
- Security against massive societal disruption because of natural forces (specifically including the national and international effects of environmental collapse at the systems level, including climate change).
- Security against the failure of major man-made systems, by means of the capacity to plan for contingencies; to organize systems capable of containing the damage; and to organize systems capable of expeditiously repairing the damage.
- Security against societal collapse and demoralization as a consequence of massive economic failure.

What Some Say “can’t” be Done?

Many people respond very favourably to the idea that the scope of national security should be broadened, and that our administrative systems need to be reconfigured so that they can better deal with the resulting complexity. Others, however, oppose these ideas on grounds that they are not actionable. Here is a representative summary:

- Widening the scope of national security will destroy its meaning.
- National security is inherently limited to core missions of protecting the country against violent attack and subversion
- Upgrading the scope of the term “national security” would create something impossible to administer and impossible for the political parties to deal with.

- The political system in any event discounts the future, in favor of current priorities.
- Any reform would be pointless unless the political parties reform themselves, which is a utopian scheme in our perspective.
- The bureaucracy will resist any serious redesign of the executive branch.
- We always tend to approach a solution politically ignoring the fact that a crisis has many branches which needs attention from experts (who all are not necessarily always belong to some political parties).
- The covert threat of military flexing its muscle by securitizing many issues and thereby threatening the political stability.

How to Do It, Anyway?

As we attempt answering this question, it is worthwhile to mention that, this should not be seen as a panacea rather a general understanding of the need to form a higher body which will be by nature neutral, apolitical, well-constituted, thereby whose decision might be accepted by all without any prejudice and reservation. This can be named a National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) or National Security Council (NSC) as felt convenient. There might be two approaches:

- a. **Approach A**. A parliamentary standing committee which might be composed of experts from security sectors, economic sector, environmental sector headed by politically acceptable legislators. There had been some forms of such committees previously attempted which seldom came into public scrutiny and no tangible gain could be seen except they participated vigorously in purchasing military hardware.

Possible Advantages and Disadvantages . On the plus side, it will seem to have a political boss and the decision taken might have less controversies from ruling regime. On the minus side, we all know that, politically neutral and acceptable person is seldom available and the decision hereby will be fraught with controversy as usual. It is like another adhoc arrangement which can be dissolved anytime should there arise a discontent.

- b. **Approach B**. A permanent standing body having a national security adviser (may be a political appointee) and a mix of experts from all sectors (as mentioned earlier). The members and terms of reference of

such a permanent body might be decided by the parliament and the security adviser should remain obliged to the parliament in justifying any decision taken. The members might be coopted basing on their reputation and except a few standing paid members, rest all can be subscribed on need basis.

Possible Advantages and Disadvantages. On the plus side, this seems to be a permanent organisation and a coherent working procedure will prevail even if the regime is changed. A unanimous decision can also be taken regarding any matters threatening national security with broader acceptability. On the minus side, if too much authority is vested in it, will tend it to exercise its power without proportion(US's case of handling 9/11).

Whatever approach is taken, inception of such an organisation will curb many controversies that we have seen in near past. To expect the least, this kind of organisation would be able to curb such phenomena, like;

1. Basing on the merit of the issue, there surfaces a political divide always.
2. The role of print and electronic media becomes reckless due to absence of any regulating body/rules.
3. Crisis management is not done expeditiously giving rise to controversies and ill intent.
4. Arriving to a consensual decision becomes difficult because nobody knows whom to consult and whom not in due time.
5. It is impossible to bring all political parties to a unanimous consensus within a shortest possible time.
6. There are too many prescriptions and time is lost in the process to adopt one (whether good or bad).
7. Post crisis management becomes fraught with questions (e.g. how to form enquiry committees, by which laws the criminals will be tried, whether it is advisable to seek foreign help etc.).
8. Coordination of various intelligence agencies remain opaque and vital intelligence is either not shared or once available it becomes too late to act. as a matter of fact, all the intelligence agencies functioning in Bangladesh are tracking their individual paths and the paths might converge at some point which is never visible.

How It Will Function?

Whether it is NCMC or NSC, it should be entrusted with defining national security matters first and that would enable to draw necessary strategies. It should be prepared to meet in a regular basis and should also be ready to meet on emergency. However, it might work following some of the guidelines as mentioned below:

1. **Complex Priorities.** CMC/NSC operations should be organized to identify and deal more effectively with “Complex Priorities,” meaning the sets of complex policy issues that are moving fast enough to require action. Due to the connected nature of our 21st century world, our present and future are characterized by increasing complexity. Its operations should be augmented by a long-range strategy function that positions the country to become proactive, rather than reactive in its national security outlook. The issues addressed by this strategy group, as they consider the environment holistically and across time, would be longer-range and multi-faceted, and considered to be capable of generating unexpected, consequential side-developments. In addition to strategy, it needs to redefine the potential players in national security, as potentially encompassing all Agencies. This will enable us to, in effect, “pre-position” capabilities and expectations – and be better able to “bring the Government to bear” on issues of national security.
2. **Networked Operations Encompassing all the Branches of Government.** Networked procedures should lead the way to networked operations within the executive branch generally. Networking within the executive branch would be assisted by means of advanced information technology, to assist in the flow of information across organizational boundaries, and to help in the establishment of ad hoc networks and coalitions to solve problems. While improved technology is essential, these operations must be enabled through comprehensive changes to resource mechanisms, personnel incentives, programs that optimize to local agency needs, and the establishment of a “whole of government” culture and approach to leadership.
3. **Promoting “Cultural” Change.** Establishing new definitions and new systems of organization for national security must be accompanied by “cultural” changes encompassing all. The basic ethos

to follow is, there is nothing important other than the national security. Over the longer-term, education, training and incentives would be used to promote a cross-disciplinary culture among civil servants.

4. **Making the parliament and CMC/NSC compatible and complimentary.** The parliament and thereby the legislators would be encouraged to create procedures of its own for dealing with 'Complex Priorities' through strategic planning and visioning, including the possibility of standing committees with broad charters to engage in hearings and to form legislative proposals for this class of issue. Parliament members presence would be a feature of the new system for identifying and developing policy for Complex Priorities and national strategies. In case of founding such CMC/NSC, the check and balance should be maintained through the parliamentary bodies.
5. **Intelligence and Coordination.** The apparent apathy towards and unawareness of intelligence and security matters amongst political leaders of different persuasions (except for making periodic rhetorical declamations) is a major cause for worry. The absence of a mechanism for legislative oversight of the intelligence process, unlike in other countries, may be one of the reasons. For instance, the legislature in the US played a catalytic role in the setting up of the 9/11 Commission and took interest in ensuring that all concerned officials, including the President, testified before it. If our political leaders and senior bureaucrats are not adequately informed, motivated and equipped to exercise effective and non-inhibitive oversight on the intelligence agencies, the solution would be to create (through suitable briefings and 'training') cadres within the political parties and administrative services who would specialise in intelligence and security analysis.
6. **Multiple Analytical Inputs^{ix}.** As it happened to India, some times ago, prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi had evolved a non-institutional system of Adviser to the Prime Minister on National Security. During the tenure of the NDA government, the arrangement was institutionalized, with a National Security Adviser, assisted by the National Security Council staff. A Workshop organized by the Observer Research Foundation at New Delhi on 20 October 2004, to discuss the intelligence failures in USA, UK and Russia and their lessons for India, was attended by a select group of non-governmental experts, many of who had earlier served in the intelligence community

or had dealt with the reports of the intelligence community or had studied in depth the national security scenario. One of the points on which there was a general consensus was that national (or policy level) assessments should be made outside the intelligence agencies (at the level of the National Security Adviser and the National Security Council), with additional inputs relating to domestic political considerations and the international situation. A warning was sounded against the pitfall of policy makers expecting ‘intelligence’ that conforms to their pre-determined policies. In the best known cases of intelligence failures in many countries, the most crucial mistakes have seldom been made by the collectors of information, occasionally by professionals who produce finished analyses, but most often by the decision makers who are the consumers of the products of intelligence agencies. This raises the difficult and delicate issue of balancing the loyalties of the intelligence analysts to national security and to the political leadership of the day. The NCMC/NSC is a deliberative body and it cannot be effective unless it is presented with an agenda generated by an assessment body. Assessment is not mere collation, but involves extrapolation of available information. An effective mechanism for long range assessments is an absolute necessity. The need of another organ like Joint Intelligence Committee(JIC) with the NCMC/NSC is another requirement to upkeep the coordination. The JIC should be made capable of undertaking integrated intelligence assessments whenever needed. It could also be used to identify intelligence gaps, foresee intelligence needs and help in assigning intelligence tasks.

- 7. Speak With One Voice.** If the credibility of the country is to remain unquestioned, the nation should speak with one voice and project a national posture in matters related to governance, particularly concerning security and international relations. Differing views should naturally be considered before finalizing the public position. Explaining any such differing views in public may sometime be necessary, but publicly declaiming differing facts should be unacceptable. There have been too many instances of different government personalities stating different facts about the same matters, particularly relating to BDR incident. This does not speak well about coherence within the government.

Few Examples of Functional NSCs around the Globe

Countries/Factors	USA	India
Established/s started functioning	The NSC was established by the National Security Act of 1947, as amended (50 U.S.C.A. § 402), and was placed in the Executive Office of the President by Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1949 (5 U.S.C.A. app.).	The NSC of India is the apex agency looking into the political, economic, energy and strategic security concerns of India. It was established by the A B Vajpayee government on November 19, 1998, with Brijesh Mishra as the first National Security Advisor(NSA). Prior to the formation of the NSC, these activities were overseen by the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister.
Organs	<p>In the early 1990s, the NSC was reorganized to include a Principals Committee, Deputies Committee, and eight Policy Coordinating Committees.</p> <p>Under President Bill Clinton, NSC membership was expanded to include the secretary of the Treasury, the U.S representative to the United Nations, and the assistant to the president for Economic Policy as well as the president's chief of staff and his national security advisor.</p>	<p>Strategic Policy Group</p> <p>The <i>Strategic Policy Group</i> is the first level of the three tier organization of the National Security Council. It forms the nucleus of the decision making apparatus of the NSC. This group consists of the following members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet Secretary • Chiefs of Staff of the Army, Navy and Air Force. • Foreign Secretary • Home Secretary • Defence Secretary • Finance Secretary • Secretary (Defence Production) • Secretary (Revenue) • Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) • Director of the Intelligence Bureau • Secretary of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) of the Cabinet Secretariat • Secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy • Scientific Advisor to the Defence Minister • Secretary of the Department of Space

Countries/F actors	USA	India
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). <p>The Strategic Policy Group undertakes the <i>Strategic Defence Review</i>, a blueprint of short and long term security threats, as well as possible policy options on a priority basis.</p> <p>Joint Intelligence Committee</p> <p>The <i>Joint Intelligence Committee</i> (JIC) of the Government of India analyzes intelligence data from the Intelligence Bureau, R&AW and the Directorates of Military, Naval and Air Intelligence. The JIC has its own Secretariat that works under the Cabinet Secretariat.</p>
Chairman	The president chairs the NSC.	The president chairs the NSC.
Members	<p>Its statutory members, in addition to the president, include the vice president and the secretaries of state and defense.</p> <p>The chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the statutory military advisor to the council, and the director of the Central Intelligence Agency is the statutory intelligence advisor.</p> <p>The secretary of the treasury, the U.S. representative to the United Nations, the assistant to the president for national security affairs, the assistant to the president for economic policy, and the chief of staff to the president are invited to all meetings.</p>	<p>Besides the NSA, the Ministers of Defence, External Affairs, Home, Finance of the Government of India, and the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission are members of the NSC. Other members may be invited to attend its monthly meetings, as and when required.</p>

Countries/F actors	USA	India
	The attorney general and the director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy attend meetings pertaining to their jurisdiction. Other officials are invited, as appropriate.	
Jurisdiction	The NSC has been involved in American foreign policy decisions that have ranged from sending troops to Panama in 1989 and to Iraq in 1991 and 2003, as well as dealing with such issues as international trafficking in illegal drugs, U.N. peacekeeping missions, strategic arms control policy, and global environmental affairs.	National Security Advisory Board The <i>National Security Advisory Board</i> consists of persons of eminence outside the Government with expertise in external security, strategic analysis, foreign affairs, defence, the armed forces, internal security, science and technology and economics. The board meets at least once a month, and more frequently as required. It provides a long-term prognosis and analysis to the NSC, and recommends solutions and address policy issues referred to it.

Conclusion

We all are sensible citizens (at least we pretend to be) then what holds us back to take timely and prudent decisions? There are two sets of answers to this enigma; either we are not aware (for which this essay might be of some help) or we keep our own interests above all the national interests (for which only God might be of some help). In this essay, an attempt has been made to re-scrutiny the term National Security and draw necessary inferences from history. The debate on defining matters related to security falls under two categories; internal and external. Where the security threat emanating from external sources is well understood. But the ambiguity remains while defining the security threat that is generated from within. The definitions outlined here sometimes might appear to be open ended and that reminds us that unless we all unite under the banner of ‘**Country First**’ the debate and hence the manipulation and over securitization will tend to jeopardize the issue. We have to be conscious while outlining the internal security vulnerability because our prompt

actions will always have far reaching effects in the long run. The recent handling of one such matter put our nation into a precipice and where it was a naked truth that we could not be united in many matters; firstly while using media, secondly while managing the crisis (both militarily or politically), thirdly– which is far dangerous in its ramifications; the inquiry and rendering proper justice to the perpetrators in due course of time. The national security is at stake – and this cannot be overstated due to the fact that, post crisis management is far more important than pre crisis period. It is high time we should leave behind the legacy that has already settled in our hearts and minds and obstructing our vision to future. An NCMC for this matter will serve good purpose to reach a unanimous decision while handling any crisis, will enjoy an overwhelming confidence from all classes of citizenry and unite us as a nation keeping all of our interests in one basket. The age old adage always holds good in all the circumstances, ‘United we stand, divided we fall’ - lets listen to it.

(National security and need for founding a national crisis management body – published in the Bangladesh Political Science Review, A journal of the Department of Political Science, University of Dhaka Volume 6, Number 1, December 2008, ISSN 1609-7289).

End Notes

- i. **Hans Joachim Morgenthau** (February 17, 1904 – July 19, 1980) was a pioneer in the field of international relations theory. He was born in Coburg, Germany, and educated at the universities of Berlin, Frankfurt and Munich. He taught and practiced law in Frankfurt before fleeing to the United States in 1937, after several interim years in Switzerland and Spain, as the Nazis came to power in Germany. His experiences with Nazism seem to have influenced his later work in international relations theory, where he argued passionately in favor of a more scientific approach to politics, in contrast with the way the Nazi party came to imbue political science with a nationalist streak.
- ii. **Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace** is a political sciences book by Hans Morgenthau published in 1948. The book introduces the concept of political realism, presenting a realist view of power politics. It played a central role in preparing the United States to exercise global power in the Cold War period and to reconcile power politics with the idealistic ethics that had previously dominated American discussions about foreign relations.
- iii. Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 6th edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985), p. 165.
- iv. The **Clark Memorandum on the Monroe Doctrine** or **Clark Memorandum**, written on December 17, 1928 by Calvin Coolidge's undersecretary of state J. Reuben Clark, concerned the United States' use of military force to intervene in Latin American nations. This memorandum was officially released in 1930 by the Herbert Hoover administration.
- v. The nation-state is a certain form of state that derives its legitimacy from serving as a sovereign entity for a nation as a sovereign territorial unit. The state is a political and geopolitical entity; the nation is a cultural and/or ethnic entity. The term "nation-state" implies that the two (geographically coincide). This implies that the citizens share a common language, culture, and values—which was not the case in many historical states. A world of nation-states also implements the claim to self-determination and autonomy for every nation, a central theme of the ideology of nationalism. The idea of a nation-state is associated with the rise of the modern system of states— often called the "Westphalian system" in reference to the Treaty of Westphalia (1648). The balance of power, which characterizes that system, depends for its effectiveness upon clearly defined, centrally controlled, independent entities, whether empires or nation states, which recognise each other's sovereignty and territory. The Westphalian system did not create the nation state, but the nation state meets the criteria for its component states.
- vi. See *Human Security Now*, <http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/finalreport/index.html>
- vii. Democracy and human rights. The Republic shall be a democracy in which fundamental human rights and freedoms and respect for the dignity and worth of the human person shall be guaranteed 11***12[, and in which effective participation by the people through their elected representatives in administration at all levels shall be ensured].
- viii. Published in South Asia Analysis Group, Paper no. 3057 dated 17-Feb-2009, National Security Management- Issues Needing Debate.
- ix. *ibid*

20

The Coming of Fourth Generation Warfare; is Modernisation of Armed Forces at Stake?

*'Forward the Light Brigade!
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho the soldier know
Someone had blundered.
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do or die.
Into the valley of Death,
Rode the six hundred.'*¹

The Charge of The Light Brigade, By Lord Alfred Tennyson

Introduction

1. When Barack Obama opened up his campaign for the presidential race in US, he knowingly evoked a term, 'Change'. This magic word probably brought the first African American to the Capitol Hill and hence the phenomenon so popular (even in Bangladesh). Nothing changes like change. In the case of history of warfare this is equally true. It started with 14th century use of Longbow which stood for cultural change upto Nuclear Weapons outlining the technological change. However, it is human who decided to go to war as the Light Brigade did (quoted initially) and necessitated the changes. By and large, there are ideological, political and conceptual reasons those act as the factors which led nations into war. Some battles are won and some are lost but

¹ The Charge of the Light Brigade was a disastrous charge of British cavalry led by Lord Cardigan against Russian forces during the Battle of Balaclava on 25 October 1854 in the Crimean War. It is best remembered as the subject of a famous poem entitled The Charge of the Light Brigade by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, whose lines have made the charge a symbol of warfare at both its most courageous and its most tragic.

war planners and its executioners continuously started evolving methods. These methods and modus operandi undergone evolution keeping in perspective of the objectives set to be achieved. Since the end of the cold war era, the world has undergone incredible changes in its political, economic, and social structure. There is a growing consensus that the world is moving towards a fundamental shift from an agro-industrial society to an information-based society. History shows that societal shifts of this magnitude cannot occur without a fundamental change in the way we conduct war. It is clearly time to rethink for a new generation of modern war which has spread into the length and breadth of our society. No more battles are fought in isolation, they are fought in front of our eyes; brutally. In this essay, I intend to show that the generation of war has, in fact, evolved in conjunction with the political, economic, and societal changes that are modifying our thought process and war planning. I shall stratify the generation of warfare into few categories leaving it open to identify the new generation and its ramifications.

Nevertheless, the new generation of war did not arrive on the scene as a fully developed instrument but evolved (and is continuing to evolve) at widely scattered locations. Like its predecessors, new generation tactics will not be used in isolation but mixed with those of earlier generations. Given this backdrop, a poverty stricken country like Bangladesh cannot remain nonchalant to the wind of change, as its security rises and falls with its neighbour's capability to perceive a future war. Everything is intertwined in today's globalized world; the political will power of maintaining a large army, cultural interaction of its armed forces with civil society, armed forces modernization, national security doctrine etc. Ours is not an exception. Thus, crucially speaking, modernization of Armed forces rests on the politico-economic considerations. The aspirations of the member of the armed forces vis a vis the political masters formulating war fighting strategy are thus found in an ever diverging trajectory. In this backdrop, when only '3.6 % of the overall budget of the Army'² is spent for procurement, the modernization process then destined to stumble. Within the Army again, the Corps of Armour constitutes a tiny segment and thus suffers from a direct strain due to such constraints. It is expensive to purchase, even costlier to maintain. That is why when there is a question regarding its employment hangs over our

² CAS's address to officers of 11 Inf Div on 20 May 09.

mind, we quickly resort to justify its existence. The manifestation of fourth generation of warfare further compounds the issue of its employment and future expansion.

2. To start with, historical data are interpreted to show the gradual change in war fighting technique. This is to finger pointing the fact that warfare directly relates to social needs. Few inferences are also made to justify the psyche of Governments handling the future war (a glimpse of it is seen during the BDR crisis) where the generational change plays the main role. Use of different tactics/forms by the 'fourth generation warfare' proponents would gain ground as time elapses further marginalizing the matter of procuring military hardware (e.g. armour). The government in power would prefer reconciling the armed conflicts in different manners where the relevancy of using brute military force would be sidelined. The cases of China, Vietnam, Nicaragua and Palestine are illustrated in this essay to demonstrate the other factors which need to be grasped by the readers. These are, how to counter such fourth generation threats? in such cases where the relevancy of using armour would depend? We are not yet exposed to such threat but who knows the future best than the future itself? The trail of change in revolution in military affair also indicates the fact that, warfare changes based on the society and its needs. Technology only drives it. Given this backdrop, it is incumbent that the enhancement/modernization/functions of armour corps in future if purely based on 'force on force' ratio of the adversaries, would seriously run into jeopardy. The rising cost of hardware, the lack of political will, lack of training facilities will all create necessary obstacles to expand this Corps both qualitatively and quantitatively. In this essay, an attempt is thereby made to describe the gradual changes in the modus operandi of warfare as the innovations guided the conduct. Later a detail analysis is done to establish the fact that, new generations of warfare is already prevailing. In the absence of 'clear and present danger' it will give rise to ambiguity in choosing weapons by the war planner. American handling of Iraq war since 2003 and Afghan conflict are the two most recent examples in point.

Aim

3. The aim of this essay is to highlight the background, characteristics of fourth generation warfare and to find out if it has any effect on modernization program of armed forces.

The Historical Traces of Change

4. The table mentioned below summarizes briefly the changes that were prominent from 14th century on. If we look closely, we can identify the magnitude of changes due to scientific inventions but above all, they also affected the society. The political goal determined the necessity of war followed by its invention.

Timeline	Major Weapons Used	Element of Change
14 th century	Longbow	Cultural
15 th century	Gunpowder	Technological, financial
16 th century	Fortifications	Architectural, financial
17 th century	Dutch Swedish tactical reforms	Tactical, organizational, cultural
	French military reforms	Tactical, organizational, administrative
17 th – 18 th Centuries	Naval warfare	Administrative, social, financial, technological
18 th century	British financial revolution	Financial, organizational, conceptual
	French Revolution	Ideological, social
18 th – 19 th centuries	Industrial revolution	Financial, technological, organizational, cultural
19 th century	American Civil War	Ideological, technological, administrative, operational
Late 19 th century	Naval war	Technological, administrative, cultural
19 th – 20 th Centuries	Medical	Technological, organizational
20 th century World War I and II	Combined arms	Tactical, conceptual, technological,
Scientific	<i>Blitzkrieg</i>	Tactical, operational, conceptual, organizational
	Carrier war	Conceptual, technological, operational

Timeline	Major Weapons Used	Element of Change
	Strategic air war	Technological, conceptual, tactical, scientific
	Submarine war	Technological, scientific, tactical
	Amphibious war	Conceptual, tactical, operational
Operational	Intelligence	Conceptual, political, ideological
	Nuclear weapons	Technological
	People's war	Ideological, political, conceptual

Source: Appendix D-1, "Thinking About Revolutions in Military Affairs," Williamson Murray in Joint Forces Quarterly, Summer 1997, pp. 69-76.

But again the technological change is not the only cause rather the sociological change profoundly affected the conduct of warfare as they were aimed at attaining political objectives. The undermentioned table also summarizes this issue. Though the changes are termed as Revolutions (commonly Revolution in Military Affairs – RMA) but this is debatable.

Effect	Indicator	Causes
Pre-shock RMA	Longbow, Edward III's strategy, gunpowder, fortress architecture	
	Military Revolution	17 th century creation of the modern state
	Direct and Aftershocks	Dutch and Swedish tactical reforms, French tactical and organizational reforms, Naval revolution, Britain's financial revolution
Pre-shock RMA	French military reforms (post Seven Years' War)	
	Military Revolutions	French and industrial revolutions
	Direct and Aftershocks	National economic and political mobilization, Napoleonic way of war, financial and economic power based on industrialized power

Effect	Indicator	Causes
		technological revolution of war (railroads, rifles, and steamboats)
Pre-shock RMAs	Fisher Revolution (1905-14)	
	Military Revolution	World War 1
	Direct and Aftershocks	Combined arms, Blitzkrieg, strategic bombing, carrier warfare, unrestricted submarine warfare, amphibious warfare, intelligence, information warfare (1940-45), stealth.

Source: Appendix D-2, "Thinking About Revolutions in Military Affairs," Williamson Murray in Joint Forces Quarterly, Summer 1997, pp. 69-76.

The Generations of Warfare: What it is and What it is Not?

5. It is theorized that the first three generations of modern war focused, in turn, on massed **manpower** (where the concept of armour warfare grew) , then massed **firepower** (the utility of armour in the battlefield was proven) , **and finally on manoeuver** (extensive use of armour was done to seek decisions in the land battle characterized by swift and pivotal move towards the enemy's center of gravity and upsetting its timeplan³). What these generations had in common, is, each sought to defeat the enemy militarily. The centerpin of this concept thus based on the 'Hammer and Anvil' both of which signify hard surfaces pitted against each other. The outcome of the armour battles in these three generations of warfare was more or less significant. But right after the WW-II the changes started gaining momentum finally culminating in two Gulf Wars and Afganistan War.

6. **Why Generational Change?** It is essential we understand what actually caused these generational shifts in warfare. The most commonly cited reason is the evolution of technology. While technological changes clearly have a major impact, attributing the generational changes in warfare primarily to technology oversimplifies the problem. The true drivers of generational change are **political, social, and economic factors**. Each of these factors was pivotal in the evolution of the first

³ *Race to the Swift: Thoughts on Twenty-First Century Warfare* by Richard E. Simpkin (Paperback - Oct 1985).

three generations of war and the examples of World War I and II will illustrate the point:

- a. While the evolution of rifled artillery, machineguns, and barbed wire brought about trench warfare on the Western Front, these technological developments alone were not sufficient to bring about the firepower-intensive second generational war that evolved from 1914-1917.
- b. The second generation required not just improved weaponry, but the evolution of an entire political, economic, and social structure to support it. Second generation war grew from the society of the times. It required the international political structure that focused on the balance of power, formed the alliances, and stuck to them through four incredibly expensive, exhausting years of war. Further, it required the output of an industrial society to design, produce, and transport the equipment and huge quantities of ammunition it consumed. Finally, it required the development of a social system that brought catastrophic losses. Technology, while important, was clearly subordinate to political, economic, and social structures in setting the conditions for World War I.

Now based on the observed correlation between each generation of war and the society it grew from, it is logical to assume the fourth generation of war will also take its shape from society.

7. Is the High Tech War denotes the Fourth Generation of Warfare? In keeping with the previous observations, many authors writing on the future of war (Martin Van Creveld⁴, Alvin and Heidi Toffler⁵) have predicted it will be based on the impact of the information revolution on tactics and weapons. Numerous observations have traced the development of information based warfare from the incredible success of the Israeli Air Force in the Bekka Valley in 1982 to the culmination of information war—Operation DESERT STORM. Each of these articles focuses on the exceptional lethality gained by linking real-

⁴ Martin Levi van Creveld (born 5 March 1946) is an Israeli military historian and theorist. *The Transformation of War*, New York : Free Press, 1991, ISBN 0-02-933155-2.

⁵ Alvin Toffler (born October 3, 1928) is an American writer and futurist, known for his works discussing the digital revolution, communications revolution, corporate revolution and technological singularity. *War and Anti-War* (1995) Warner Books ISBN 0-446-60259-0.

time information to precision guided weapons and controlling them with digital command and control. In fact, some authors have speculated that societies capable of producing such weapons will dominate warfare to a degree not seen since Western Europeans conquered and colonized most of the known world. While it is clear that the information revolution will affect the future of war, the focus on the weapons and tactical aspects of the information revolution is as erroneous for the fourth generation as it was for its predecessors.

The Fourth Generations of War: Factors and Ramifications

8. To understand the potential shape of the fourth generation of war, we must look at the political, economic, and social changes in society as well as the changes in technology since the advent of the third generation of war.

a. The Political Factor and Rapid Rise of Non-state Actors.

Politically the world has undergone vast changes. The third generation of war developed when international relations were defined in terms of the European nation states that dominated them. In contrast, the fourth generation of war is coming of age during a period of exponential increase in the number and type of players on the international scene. While the outward trappings of the international system are still in place, there have been massive changes in how it really operates. Besides the huge increase in the number of nation states, there has been a fundamental change in the type of player involved in international affairs. Nation states still remain the primary actors, but increasingly international actors in the form of the United Nations, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the European Community, Organization of African Unity, and a wide variety of non-governmental organizations are making themselves felt in the international arena. In addition, transnational actors in the form of the media, religious movements, terrorist groups, drug cartels, and others influence international relations. Finally, subnational groups (e.g., the Zulus, the Serbs, the Kurds, and the Palestinians) are attempting to elevate their issues from matters of internal politics to a level of international concern.

b. Economic Factor. Economically, the world is becoming both much more heavily intertwined and simultaneously more divided—intertwined in terms of trade, divided in terms of wealth distribution.

For both rich and poor countries, this economic integration has resulted in a steady and significant reduction in their sovereignty. In 1918, states exercised virtually absolute control over what nations they traded with, the interest rates within their own nations, the tariffs they charged, and the information they released. The rapid integration of world economies has resulted in major restrictions on the ability of nation states to exercise these and other traditional instruments of nation sovereignty—to include the unilateral use of military power.

- c. **Social Factor.** Socially, we are developing international networks in virtually every field of endeavour. There has been an exponential increase in the number of transnational business associations, research groups, academic societies, and even lobbyists who maintain contact through a wide variety of media. These networks tie people together in distinctly non-traditional ways. As a result, we no longer conduct international affairs primarily through official diplomatic and military channels. Further, these associations provide a rapidly increasing flow of non-official information between societies and a weakening of the links tying the citizen to his nation state. Simultaneously, as national bonds become less important, allegiance to subnational groups based on ethnic, religious, or cultural ties are increasing. Finally, we are raising a generation completely at ease with the tools of the evolving information age. Education combined with the relatively low cost technology; has led to its rapid dissemination to all corners of the globe.

9. In essence, the world is organizing itself in a series of interconnected networks that while in contact with other networks are not controlled by them. Simultaneously, nation states find themselves torn in two directions-upward toward the international security, trade, and social organizations and downward by subnational movements that want to splinter the state. The exceptionally broad changes across the spectrum of human activity will clearly shape the fourth generation of war. Yet, the question remains "What form will this generation take and how the physical brute forces like armour will be employed?"

Evolution of the Fourth Generation of War and Few Case Studies

10. Each element of fourth generation war proposed can be seen in the evolution of insurgency or terrorism. While a wide-ranging study of insurgency will provide numerous examples of this new type of war

emerging, I focus on the experiences of Vietnam, China, Nicaragua, and the Palestinians.

- a. **China.** As the first practitioner to write extensively about insurgency, Mao, like Clausewitz, understood war is fundamentally a ‘political’ undertaking. However, he went much further than Clausewitz in his definition stating:

Our job is not merely to recite our political program to the people ... (we must) transform the political mobilization for the war into a regular movement. This is a matter of the first magnitude on which the victory primarily depends.

Mao believed that political strength is the primary requirement in war and is decidedly more important than military prowess. This is a fundamental shift from the third generation concept that victory is won primarily through military superiority to the fourth generation concept of defeating the enemy primarily through political action. Only after establishing the overriding political nature of insurgency did he outline his famous three phases (**Strategic Defensive, Strategic Stalemate and Strategic Offensive**) for the successful conduct of insurgency. Though apparently very simple, these three phases show a sophisticated understanding of the powerful political, social, and economic elements that constitute the base of military power⁶.

Mao further foreshadowed the future when he wrote that in order to maximize their political power, insurgents must project it beyond their borders. Although firmly convinced of the primacy of the political aspects of the struggle, Mao also conceived a military strategy that reinforced his political efforts. In summary, Mao envisioned many of the elements as fourth generation. Mao still believed final victory could only be won by a third generation military campaign. It was to Ho Chi Minh, Mao’s principal successful imitator, to take the evolution of war a step further.

- b. **Viet Nam.** On the verge of winning the Second Indochina War in 1965, Ho suffered a major setback when U.S. ground forces were introduced into the conflict. With the entrance of these units, the communists were forced back until such time as the correlation of forces once again changed in their favour. Aware of his military and

⁶ This also highlights the recent demise of LTTEs in Srilanka.

economic inferiority, Ho sought to use international political maneuvering in conjunction with guerrilla war to bring about this change. He knew a key factor in the outcome of the war was the international political situation. To accomplish those changes in the international situation, Ho went beyond Mao's concept of national networks and introduced yet another aspect of fourth generation war. He built or tapped into a variety of international networks. Ho actively encouraged and supported international peace movements (Vietnam Veterans Against the War), international charities (Quakers), and even individuals Jane Fonda and Harrison Salisbury). While he could not control these networks, he could influence them and use their assistance in getting American society to change its view of the war. In 1968, Ho and his principal strategist, Giap, provided another major step forward in the evolution of war. They used the media and international networks to turn the tactical disaster of the 1968 Tet Offensive into a major strategic success that eventually led to the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam. While the communists apparently did not anticipate the tremendous casualties and tactical failure of Tet, they were certainly aware of the fact it was an election year in the United States. They were aware the first significant cracks in U.S. support for the war were showing. Their massive commitment of irreplaceable resources to the Tet offensive shows they hoped for a major impact on the outcome of the war. Given insurgency's political nature, Ho understood the U.S. center of gravity was the political will. He used both the mass media and his carefully cultivated international networks to magnify the impact of Tet. Based on the media coverage of Tet and his own information campaign, he portrayed the Viet Cong as a militarily insoluble problem for the United States. He set out to directly attack the U.S. center of gravity and succeeded. Within months of Tet, President Johnson had withdrawn from the 1968 presidential race and U.S. public opinion turned against the war. This is Ho's unique contribution to the evolution of war.

- c. **Nicaragua.** Another step toward the fourth generation of war was taken by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). The FSLN went a step beyond Ho by developing a strategy based on *the assumption that they could not win a military victory*. According to Alfonso Robelo, one of the early opponents of the Somoza Regime,

the FSLN "*never expected a total victory. This was something that they made clear. They never expected it ...*" Instead of military victory against Somoza, the FSLN planned to win the war through internal and external political pressure against the Somoza regime. It worked. Based on this, the Sandinistas established a two-tiered approach that attacked the Somoza government across the spectrum of political, economic, and social issues while maintaining a low-level guerrilla campaign. On the first tier, the international political front, the Sandinistas carefully cultivated contacts with mainline U.S. churches, academics, and peace groups. By sponsoring visits to Nicaragua and sending speakers to the United States, the Sandinistas were able to portray themselves as a democratic movement in sharp contrast to the despotic and oppressive Somoza regime. These networks in turn made sure that message was passed clearly to the U.S. Congress. On the second tier, the internal political scene, the Sandinistas supported and, to a degree, covertly controlled a coalition of groups that touched the life of almost every Nicaraguan. In the social field, the Sandinista leadership recognized the Catholic Church's exceptional influence in the lives of Nicaraguans. By attaching themselves to the philosophy of **Liberation Theology**—the idea that the Catholic Church should assist the poor in overthrowing repressive regimes the Sandinistas gained the respect and support of many of the junior members of the Catholic Church. This was of particular importance because the clergy attracted to Liberation Theology were the same ones genuinely dedicated to improving the lives of the poor of Nicaragua. Thus the Sandinistas were able to exploit Liberation Theology by associating their movement with the local priests and sisters most respected by the people. Despite some glaring mistakes in dealing with the U.S. Congress, the Sandinistas definitely advanced the art of war. They twice won a victory using a fourth generation information approach of focusing on political and social activity rather than military action. The Sandinistas proved fourth generation war focused on the political level could defeat a weak, inefficient, and unpopular government.

- d. **The Palestinians.** This step in the evolution of war exploded onto the television screens of the world when the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip took to the streets against the Israeli security forces. Initially, the incident looked like another spasm of spontaneous anger on the part of

the Palestinians in the camps. What made it different was the fact that it grew, spread, and sustained itself. There is still a good deal of debate about exactly how the uprising ignited, but, why the **Intifada**⁷ came into being is not as important as what happened—and how it illustrates the fourth generation of war. It is agreeable that after it started and within a month, three levels of leadership emerged on the Palestinian side: neighborhood leaders of **Popular Committees**, the **Unified National Command of the Uprising** (UNCU), and finally key **Palestinian academics, journalists, and political representatives**. All three leadership groups existed before the *intifada* broke out. Yet, by bringing together the street protesters and the three leadership groups, the *intifada* created a unique organization ideally suited to exploit the advantages of fourth generation war. The local neighborhood networks dealt with grassroots issues—food, water, and medical care. The UNCU provided overall direction and coordination to the neighborhood committees. The academics, journalists, and political leaders used their ties to U.S. and Israeli political and media leaders to explain the Palestinian side of the issue. Working together, the three levels of leadership developed a well thought out strategic approach to the struggle using all the tools of fourth generation war: political, economic, social, and mass media. They opted for a strategy of limited violence (no use of firearms or explosives), maximum media exposure for their side of the issue, division of the "battlefield" into a contested zone (the occupied territories) and, a safe zone (Israel proper). In short, they sought political victory rather than a military one. While the final Palestinian goal of an independent state is still to be achieved, their use of fourth generation broad-spectrum tactics against what was essentially a third generation Israeli response has achieved more than anyone dared predict as recently as last year.

11. All four examples were fought across the political, economic, social, and military spectrums. Just as important, these studies show that fourth generation tactics are rarely employed exclusively. Rather they exist side by side with the tactics of earlier generations. The conflicts in

⁷ Intifada (انتفاضة *intifāḍa(t)*) is an Arabic word which literally means "shaking off", though it is usually translated into English as "rebellion" or "uprising". According to a 2007 article in the Washington Post, the word "crystallized in its current Arabic meaning during the first Palestinian uprising in the late 1980s and early 1990s". It is often used as a term for popular resistance to oppression.

Lebanon (1976-84), Somalia, and Bosnia provide contemporary reinforcement of this fact. Taken as a group, these events illustrate that insurgent leaders understand and apply the techniques of fourth generation war to manipulate Western democracies. When dealing with Western democracies, these insurgent leaders focused on winning a political victory by changing the minds of the enemy's policymakers. They found that when national interests are not at stake, a direct message delivered via international media is an exceptionally effective strategic approach. By using fourth generation techniques, local antagonists can change the national policy of Western democracies. Then once the Western forces have gone, they can continue to pursue their local objectives using earlier generation techniques.

Fourth Generation Environ and Its Effect on Our War Fighting Psyche

12. **Living in the Age of Fourth Generation.** Recent conflicts confirm that war is in fact evolving in conjunction with the political, economic, and social changes affecting society as a whole. Beginning with Mao's initial concept that political power was more decisive than military power and progressing to *the intifada's* total reliance on the mass media and international networks to neutralize Israeli military power, warfare has undergone a fundamental change. The fourth generation has arrived. Strategically, it attempts to directly change the minds of enemy policymakers. This change is not to be achieved through the traditional method of superiority on the battlefield. Rather it is to be accomplished through the superior use of all the networks available in the information age. These networks are employed to carry specific messages to enemy policymakers. A sophisticated opponent can even tailor the message to a specific audience and a specific strategic situation.

13. **There We Are: Living in the Age of Second and Third Generation of Warfare.** This is not an oversimplification rather a general argument which needs attention. In terms of equipment and its suitability to use in conventional warfare, we lack the required sustenance and resoluteness. Our major equipment are dying in its usefulness. In our mind, we fight the perceived enemy with our already redundant equipment basing on force to force ratio (even when we contemplate the 'combat power', it falls far behind our desired goal). Psychologically, we are trying to fight the battle that were fought in WW-II having ignored

the reality of ground, political and cultural changes that have already taken place. We outline plans but it is hardly full of potentials to be executed. We train but without the rhythm and synchronisation of all the organs of our national power. We imagine our enemy in 2nd/3rd generation spectrum and thereby our war fighting psyche dwells there by rationalizing our expenditures. The LTTEs in Srilanka also mistakenly measured the Srilankan Armed Forces in the same spectrum thereby paid so heavily. Even we cannot match the Hijbullah as they could offset the mighty Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) in the recent Lebanon War – why? Because Hijbullah after all these years evolved and adapted itself to the change while IDA wanted to fight it in the third generation spectrum. We could not go beyond joint operations to interagency operations yet. If we understand that the enemy is going to strike across the spectrum of human activity, has our national response been coordinated across the multiple national agencies that deal with international issues? Just as joint undertaking had to evolve gradually into full-fledged joint operations, so will interagency operations have to mature from simple meetings to discuss cooperation into fully integrated national operations but this is a fallacy in our case. Force structure must be reconsidered in light of fourth generation issues. Fourth generation war will require much more intelligence gathering and analytical and dissemination capability to serve a highly flexible, interagency command system – do we know that? At the same time, the fact that fourth generation war will include elements of earlier generations of war means our forces must be prepared to deal with these aspects too.

14. What Should We Do? The strategic approach and tactical techniques of fourth generation warfare will require major changes in the way we educate, employ, structure, and train forces. Professional education, from initial-entry training to staff college/war college level, will have to be broadened to deal with the wide spectrum of issues commanders will confront in a fourth generation conflict. As stated, leaders must be prepared to "group together from a new perspective a number of measures that have been used before but were viewed separately." Training (as distinct from education) must expand to deal with tactical situations unique to fourth generation warfare, such as staged confrontations between security forces and unarmed women and children. Further, this broadened education must not be limited to

military officers but must include decision makers from all agencies of the government involved with international security issues. Just as many current conflicts do not employ third generation tactics, not all future conflicts will be fought primarily using fourth generation tactics. Therefore, it will be essential for national leaders to make an accurate analysis of the war they are about to enter. The complex mix of generations of war with their overlapping political, economic, social, military, and mass media arenas makes determining the type of war we are entering more critical than ever. While much of Clausewitz' *On War* has been rendered obsolete by the enormous changes in the world, his admonition to national leaders remains more important than ever. Clausewitz wrote:

The first, the supreme, the most far reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish by that test the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature.

Conclusion

15. In the first section of this essay, an attempt was made to elaborate the historical changes of type of warfare and its affiliated technologies. It is seen that technology though crafter the weapons and equipment of war but hardly it dictated the terms in the history (the nuclear weapon ended the WW-II but it could never stop the wars aftermath). In the second section, generations of warfare had been discussed to stratify those with distinct characteristics. In the earlier three generations of warfare it was mostly dependent on the factor of using either mass manpower or mass equipment (armour, artillery etc.) The battle losses were innumerable and a lesson was learnt not to go for wholesale destruction again. The proxy wars, pseudo war and other forms of low intensity conflicts emerged in the landscape surely bringing those characteristics of fourth generation warfare.

16. In the third section, factors and ramifications of fourth generation warfare has been elaborated to make the case in discussion showing that political, social and economic condition of the world has undergone a major change over these years which nullifies the methodologies of earlier warfare to be useful now. Later the evolution of such warfare has been discussed studying the four cases of China, Vietnam, Nicaragua and Palestine. These case studies solidified the ramifications that will happen

once facing and conducting fourth generation of warfare. Lastly, the environ and its effect has been put forward and shown that we are still unaware of these changes surrounding us. We are living in a pseudo world where we feel self-content. It is understandable that, the modernization program of armed forces in our country would keep taking place without any coherence in piecemeal. There are social, political and economic reasons behind this attitude. The present armoured fighting vehicles will over the time lose its battle efficacy and due to lack of training resources, the fighting skill surely denude. In these circumstances, we should come out with realistic measures for our own survival.

Bibliography

1. *Thinking about Revolutions in Military Affairs*, Joint Forces Quarterly, Summer 1997, Williamson Murray, professor emeritus at The Ohio State University, (Charles A. Lindbergh Visiting Professor of Aerospace History at the National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian institution).
2. *Race to the Swift: Thoughts on Twenty-First Century Warfare* by Richard E. Simpkin (Paperback - Oct 1985).
3. *War and Anti-War (1995)*, Alvin Toffler, Warner Books ISBN 0-446-60259-0.
4. *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976).
5. *The Evolution of War: The Fourth Generation*, Lt Col Thomas X. Hammes, Marine Corps Gazette, September 1994.

(This essay was published in Armour Journal in 2009)

21

Civil Military Relationship (CMR) Complementary or Contradictory: A Bangladeshi Perspective

The more powerful and inspiring the motives for war,... the more closely will the military aims and the political objects of war coincide, and the more military and less political will war appear to be. On the other hand, the less intense the motives, the less will the military element's natural tendency to violence coincide with political directives. As a result, war will be driven further from its natural course, the political object will be more and more at variance with the aim of ideal war, and the conflict will seem increasingly political in character ...when people talk, as they often do, about harmful political influence on the management of war, they are not really saying what they mean. Their quarrel should be with the policy itself, not with its influence. If the policy is right--that is, successful--any intentional effect it has on the conduct of the war can only be to the good. If it has the opposite effect the policy itself is wrong.

Carl Von Clausewitz, On war

Prologue

Bangladesh as a nation state has not travelled far in comparison to European nation states in its path of societal transformation. For discussion purpose even if we consider the Treaty of Westphalia ¹ to be

¹ The term **Peace of Westphalia** refers to two peace treaties of Osnabrück and Münster, signed on May 15 and October 24, 1648, respectively, that ended both the Thirty Years' War in the Holy Roman Empire (today mostly Germany) and the Eighty Years' War between Spain and the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands. I quote one key principle: **Article II** says:

"On both sides, all should be forever forgotten and forgiven—what has from the beginning of the unrest, no matter how or where, from one side or the other, happened in terms of hostility—so that neither because of that, nor for any other reason or pretext, should anyone commit, or allow to happen, any hostility, unfriendliness, difficulty, or obstacle in respect to persons, their status, goods, or

the beginning of modern concept of statehood then in respect of time it is infinitesimally small for a country like us to achieve maturity in the field of democratic polity. This maturity refers to is, in terms of governance, tolerance, friction in society and perceived democratic values that is expected to prevail. For Europeans, it all happened gradually through a slow and painstaking social transformation where , Mazarin's² and Colbert's common-good principle of the "Advantage of the other" triumphed over the imperial designs of both France's Louis XIV himself, and the Venetian-controlled Hapsburg Empire. In the 18th Century, the same principle brought the posthumous victory of Gottfried Leibniz over John Locke in shaping the American republic's founding documents, the victory of "the pursuit of happiness" and the principle of the general welfare, over Locke's "life, liberty, and property." These seemingly parallel concepts ought to be cherished by any nation states and both the civil and military organs are supposedly to be engaged in its pusuance. Throughout the ages, soldiers always performed thier duties and responsibilites in actualizing the interests of the social elites—who happened to be civilians (kings/queens/barrons/ knights etc.) and religious supremos (popes, imams/khalifas etc.). As a matter of fact, ‘men at arms’ are generally reared just to sacrifice their supremes to protect the values which had been instilled in them either politically or religiously. These values of course differed time to time and with the priorities set by ruling class or regime. For example, the Japanese army was indoctrinated in such a manner that they used to treat Chinese as subhuman, Nazis in Germany used to consider the Jews to be of lower race. So, in each and every turn of the history, the soldiers are found to be used to attain some politico-economic objectives. Though sometimes the generals (or warlords) reigned and founded different dynasties where the army of their own was used to lay the foundation of a huge empire (e.g. The Ottoman, The Mongols). Starting from the mid centuries, the western style of civilization propagated through the barrel of the guns and most of the western countries are still spending from the wealth they pludered with the help of soldiers (e.g. The British, Dutch, Portugese, Spanish). That is

security itself, or through others, secretly or openly, directly or indirectly, under the pretense of the authority of the law, or by way of violence within the Kingdom, or anywhere outside of it, and any earlier contradictory treaties should not stand against this.

² Two men- France’s Cardinal Jules Mazarin and Minister Jean- Baptiste Colbert (right)-were most responsible for this opening of the principles of nation-building.

why the Prussian General Carl Von Clausewitz very succinctly termed war as an extension of policy by some other means, because that was what was revealed to him while serving in two great Armies (Russian and Prussian). In the decision making spectrum, the strategist were the social elites, or civilians in the helm of power occasionally composed of generals/soldiers as advisers. The combination of ruler-general is thus small in number. Well, there are exceptions in the history where they are branded as war mongers bringing death and destructions to the civilizations too. As a tradition, all the ancient aristocracies (even the modern UK!) thus used to enroll at least one of their sons/heirs in the armed forces as a symbol of power/royalty. Whatever famous dynasties you recall; The Hapsburgh, The British, The Dutch, The Prussian and Russians (till the Bolshevik revolution) you will find the same instances. As the concept of expansion came into the minds of rulers, it was necessary to use soldiers and their technologies (to name a few; railway, commercial shipping). The major credit for ushering the industrial revolution thus goes to the military factories that went into producing tanks, guns etc. The aviation factory saw its greatest enterprises during the mid of two world wars driven by war effort, the idea of data sharing came from US army from which today's Internet sprang. However, if we ponder more over the rules of business of soldiers; Just War Theory³, it will take us to the center of power where the king is making his decision and asking his generals to achieve it. Here Michael Walzer⁴'s views are inspiring as he writes that "by and large we don't blame a soldier, even a general, who fights for his own government" (p. 39)⁵. Of General Rommel, who fought for Hitler and Germany in World War II, and was said to have fought honorably, obeying the war convention, Walzer writes, "*It would be very odd to praise Rommel for not killing prisoners unless we simultaneously refused to blame him for Hitler's aggressive*

³ Just War theory is a doctrine of military ethics of Roman philosophical and Catholic origin studied by moral theologians, ethicists and international policy makers which holds that a conflict can and ought to meet the criteria of philosophical, religious or political justice, provided it follows certain conditions.

⁴ Michael Walzer (3 March 1935) is an American political philosopher and public intellectual. A professor emeritus at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, he is editor of the political-intellectual quarterly Dissent. He has written books and essays on a wide range of topics, including just and unjust wars, nationalism, ethnicity, economic justice, social criticism, radicalism, tolerance, and political obligation and is a contributing editor to The New Republic.

⁵ Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, 4th ed., (New York: Basic Books, 1977). ISBN 0-465-03707-0.

wars. For otherwise he is simply a criminal and all the fighting he does is murder or attempted murder, whether he aims at soldiers in battle or at prisoners or at civilians" (p. 38). Again, same page, Walzer observes: "We draw a line between the wars itself, for which soldiers are not responsible, and the conduct of the war, for which they are responsible, at least within their own sphere of activity." On the next page Walzer makes it plain that the proposal not to hold soldiers responsible for the justice of the war they fight includes the proposal not hold soldiers responsible for their individual act of volition to join the army and participate in the war" (p. 39). We need to distinguish two questions about an agent's (in this case a soldier) conduct: (1) Is what he/she is doing morally right or morally wrong? (2) Is the agent responsible for the act in such a way that she is eligible for blame (if the act is wrong) or praise (if the act is right)?

However, even after outlining the requirement of war (or for that matter any state function) later arises the extraordinary phenomenon of sharing 'Power' which ultimately compounds the power dynamics of a state. Generals while commanding men at arms tend to feel the raw powers at their disposal while their civil counterpart remains skeptical about its usages. This uneasy equation tends to cast shadow towards the ultimate happy marriage; what we term Civil-military relationship (CMR). To draw things in perspective, have not we spent the last two years unpacking the relationship's subtle complexities and identifying the assumptions and practices that have come to hobble national security decision-making (the BDR incident in question)? Did we not find that the civil-military partnership needs repair at this crucial juncture of our national life? This essay will firstly attempt to explain the spectrum of Just War theories and where the soldiers stand. Later it will discuss Clauswitzian dictum with necessary historical inferences and analysis. Finally it will go on elaborating various aspects of CMR with particular emphasis on situation in Bangladesh.

Just War Theory and Where a Soldier Stands in Decision Spectrum?

The idea that resorting to war can only be just under certain conditions goes back at least to Cicero. However its importance is connected to Christian medieval theory beginning from Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas. First work dedicated specifically to it was *De bellis justis* of Stanisław of Skarbimierz, who justified war of the Kingdom of Poland with Teutonic Knights. Francisco de Vitoria justified conquest of America by Kingdom of Spain. With Alberico Gentili and Hugo Grotius just war theory was replaced by international law theory, codified as a set

of rules, which today still encompass the points commonly debated, with some modifications. Importance of the theory of just war faded with revival of classical republicanism beginning with works of Thomas Hobbes. Just War theorists combine both a moral abhorrence towards war with a readiness to accept that war may sometimes be necessary. The criteria of the just war tradition act as an aid to determining whether resorting to arms is morally permissible. Just War theories are attempts "to distinguish between justifiable and unjustifiable uses of organized armed forces"; they attempt "to conceive of how the use of arms might be restrained, made more humane, and ultimately directed towards the aim of establishing lasting peace and justice." Just War Theory has two sets of criteria. The first establishing *jus ad bellum*⁶, the right to go to war; the second establishing *jus in bello*⁷, right conduct within war. If we scrutiny the principles of 'just war' which obviously comes first than 'fighting the war justly', we shall be clear about the decision maker and his/her obligations to outline the limiting factors of war:

Principles of the Just War

- A just war can only be waged as a last resort.
- A war is just only if it is waged by a legitimate authority. Even just causes cannot be served by actions taken by individuals or groups who do not constitute an authority sanctioned by whatever the society and outsiders to the society deem legitimate.
- A just war can only be fought to redress a wrong suffered. For example, self-defense against an armed attack is always considered to be a just cause. Further, a just war can only be fought with "right" intentions: the only permissible objective of a just war is to redress the injury.
- A war can only be just if it is fought with a reasonable chance of success. Deaths and injury incurred in a hopeless cause are not morally justifiable.
- The ultimate goal of a just war is to re-establish peace. More specifically, the peace established after the war must be preferable to the peace that would have prevailed if the war had not been fought.
- The violence used in the war must be proportional to the injury suffered. States are prohibited from using force not necessary to attain the limited objective of addressing the injury suffered.

⁶ Latin for "Justice to War", a set of criteria that are consulted before engaging in war.

⁷ Latin, the law of war (Laws of armed conflict), is law concerning acceptable practices relating to war.

- The weapons used in war must discriminate between combatants and non-combatants. Civilians are never permissible targets of war, and every effort must be taken to avoid killing civilians. The deaths of civilians are justified only if they are unavoidable victims of a deliberate attack on a military target.

Defining War as a Politico-military Activity- Clausewitz Revisited

With the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the state hailed the birth of a new system in which political control became vested in the hands of a government or monarchy that delimited its own territorial interests and held ‘the legitimate monopoly on the use of force.’ Since 1648, it has therefore become the foundation upon which most major wars have been fought. The pre- eminent exponent of nation-state warfare, Clausewitz, and his ‘On War’ became the most influential tome on military thinking and strategic principles since Sun Tzu’s book of the same name. His maxim of war as an extension of policy by other means is the essential theme in his work. For Clausewitz, war is violence waged for the state, against the state and by the state. The assumption of the state is paramount in any reading of Clausewitz and is essential to understanding current Western strategic military thinking. War was fought by governments against governments using military versus military means and, while it was occasionally conducted in the name of ‘the people,’ there was a large distinction between those governed and those governing. There was thus, a kind of holy trinity of warfare that rested upon the three stations of government, military and people, all of which were separate but all of whom knew their place within the system. Clausewitzian thought examines the teleology of war: whether war is a means to an end outside itself or whether it can be an end in itself. He concludes that the latter cannot be so, and that war is "politics by different means"; i.e. that war must not exist only for its own sake. It must serve some purpose for the state.

Anatol Rapoport's Teleological Categories

Anatol Rapoport's⁸ introduction to his edition of the Clausewitz's ‘On War’⁹ identifies the political school of thought, of which Clausewitz was a proponent, shows war as a tool of the state. On page 13 Rapoport says,

⁸ Anatol Rapoport (born May 22, 1911- January 20, 2007) was a Russian-born American Jewish mathematical psychologist. He contributed to general systems theory, mathematical biology and to the mathematical modeling of social interaction and stochastic models of contagion.

⁹ J. J. Graham translation

Clausewitz views war as a rational instrument of national policy. The three words "rational", "instrument" and "national" are the key concepts of his paradigm. In this view, the decision to wage war "ought" to be rational, in the sense that it ought to be based on estimated costs and gains of war. Next, war "ought" to be instrumental, in the sense that it ought to be waged in order to achieve some goal, never for its own sake; and also in the sense that strategy and tactics ought to be directed towards just one end, namely towards victory. Finally, war "ought" to be national, in the sense that its objective should be to advance the interests of a national state and that the entire effort of the nation ought to be mobilized in the service of the military objective.

He later characterizes the philosophy behind the Vietnam War and other Cold War conflicts as "Neo-Clausewitzian". Rapoport also includes Machiavelli as an early example of the political philosophy of war. Probably Clausewitz laid the basic foundation of CMR which is still followed both by military strategists and their civil counterparts when they sit in the war room. A quotable quote from British War time premier Winston Churchill is worth mentioning here just to show the readers how war was justified in the minds of civilians.

We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering. You ask, what is our policy? I can say: It is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival. Let that be realised; no survival for the British Empire, no survival for all that the British Empire has stood for, no survival for the urge and impulse of the ages, that mankind will move forward towards its goal. But I take up my task with buoyancy and hope. I feel sure that our cause will not be suffered to fail among men. At this time I feel entitled to claim the aid of all, and I say, "come then, let us go forward together with our united strength"¹⁰.

How Does the Armed Forces See Its Role in today's World? Case Study - Iraq Afghanistan and Pakistan

After the end of the two great wars, humankind heaved a sigh of relief while founding the UN by taking oath to save the 'successive generations

¹⁰ Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat, First Speech as Prime Minister, May 13, 1940, to House of Commons.

from the scourge of war'. But that remained to be a fallacy. The subsequent decades erupted with more violence and the armed forces around the globe saw their roles within an ever divergent and complex environment. We may ask posthumus Clausewitz whether his principle stands correct for Iraq or Afghanistan? Does the army of coalition saw their enemies within the state? Whether the War on Terror (WOT) was launched against a state? or it was against stateless enemies? Both countries now reside in a gray area between war and peace, demanding simultaneous military and civilian action to help create stability for economic and political development. Thus part of the today's trend reflects violent, rapidly changing realities on the ground. While a temporary reduction in violence on the ground in Iraq is heartening, the current situation in Iraq is not simply the result of the surge led by General Petraeus¹¹. The picture is far more complex. While the U.S. Army is more diligent at "lessons learned" than civilian agencies, the "lessons" of Iraq cannot be fully understood from a purely military perspective. Moreover, lessons from Iraq do not translate easily to the Afghan context. U.S. led arming of Afghan militias is not parallel to the 'Sunni Awakening'. It could prove destructive to the enfeebled grasp of a central government. Nor will a larger foreign military footprint in Afghanistan necessarily be effective. Pakistan is also going through some crucial moments of its national history, as the threat of radical Talibanisation is looming large. Pakistan as a sovereign state is yet stumbling to find out a stable CMR to stop the country adding in the list of 'Failed State'.

How do the Armed Forces Envisage Its Role During Armed Conflict and Humanitarian Disaster Assistance?

There is a wealth of texts that describe the relationship between the military and humanitarian actors in time of armed conflict¹². The subjects

¹¹ General David Howell Petraeus, USA (born November 7, 1952) is the 10th and current Commander, U.S. Central Command. Petraeus previously served as Commanding General, Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) from January 26, 2007 to September 16, 2008.

¹² A cross-section of views on civil-military relations include the following:

- Sarah E. Archer, "Civilian and military cooperation in complex humanitarian operations", *Combined Arms Center Military Review*, March-April 2003
- Jane Barry and Anna Jefferys, "A bridge too far: Aid agencies and the military in humanitarian response", *Humanitarian Practice Network*, 6 May 2004
- Eric James, "Two steps back: Relearning the humanitarian-military lessons learned in Afghanistan and Iraq", *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, October 2003

covered include the humanitarian and political aspects of the relationship, the cultural differences between the humanitarian and military worlds and some of the persistent issues that the two groups should resolve at the field level. Interestingly, there is relatively little written about how armed forces understand their role in assuming civilian tasks. However, without closer consideration of how the military understands its evolving role in humanitarian activities, humanitarian agencies are unclear about whom exactly they are dealing with. Furthermore, within the complex military world of hierarchy and acronyms it is prerequisite to understand how the military interface with humanitarian agencies fits into broader military operations. The following therefore is an examination of some definitions of the military practice of non-combat functions, including the provision of humanitarian assistance.¹³

Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) and Civil affairs (CA) – A New Approach

These are the names used by NATO and the United States Armed Forces (USAF) and in Bangladesh the term ‘In aid of civil power’, respectively, to describe those non-combat functions of their armed forces that deal with civilian functions, or involve armed forces taking on tasks typically performed by civilian authorities, NGOs or international humanitarian organizations. In order to avoid confusion with the military terms, the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) deliberately chose the term “civil-military relations” to describe the relationship between humanitarian organizations and multinational military missions in situations associated with armed conflict. It has to be imagined that armed forces have developed such doctrine with a view to improving their capacity to meet their obligations towards the civilian population as laid down by international humanitarian law. The key issue under international humanitarian law in considering civil-military cooperation and civil affairs lies in assessing whether the civilian population is being provided with these basic supplies in an impartial manner, without any

-
- Damian Lily, “The peacebuilding dimension of civil-military relations in complex emergencies: A briefing paper”, *International Alert*, August 2002
 - Michael Pugh, “The challenge of civil-military relations in international peace operations”, *Disasters*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 2001, pp. 345-357

¹³ NATO and United States Armed Forces doctrines are chosen as examples, given their availability in the public realm, their relevance to the key contexts of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the ICRC’s practical field experience with these armed forces in time of armed conflict.

adverse distinction.¹⁴ It must be brought to the notice that neither the concept of civil-military cooperation nor that of civil affairs is a new phenomenon. Both have been part of the major military operations of the twentieth century. For example, the Provincial Reconstruction Teams set up in Afghanistan in 2004 have their roots in the Strategic Hamlet Project implemented by the USAF during the Vietnam War. In the latter example, Special Forces personnel were deployed alongside USAID¹⁵ civilian representatives in a hearts and minds campaign to provide development assistance while waging a counter-insurgency campaign. The post-Cold War period has seen the importance of civil-military cooperation and civil affairs rise and become more of a mainstream capacity of armed forces. Their respective military definitions are the following:

- CIMIC¹⁶ (civil-military cooperation) is the co-ordination and co-operation, in support of the mission, between the NATO Commander and civil populations, including national and local authorities, as well as international, national and non-governmental organizations and agencies.”¹⁷
- Civil Affairs (CA) are those interrelated military activities that embrace the relationship between military forces and civil authorities and populations. CA missions include civil-military operations and civil administration. CA encompasses the activities that military commanders take to establish and maintain relations between their forces and the civil authorities and general population, resources, and

¹⁴ Article 69.1 Additional Protocol I.

¹⁵ United States Agency for International Development, Disaster Assistance Response Teams:

“A DART is a rapid response management team composed of disaster relief specialists who conduct assessments, identify and prioritize needs, manage onsite relief activities, recommend response actions, and coordinate with affected country and other response organizations. The teams are typically deployed after devastating disasters of significant magnitude. DARTs have been deployed worldwide, including deployments to Iraq immediately following the aftermath of the recent conflict, to affected populations in Angola’s 27-year civil war, and to provide humanitarian relief to communities affected by the drought through out Ethiopia”. “USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) Deploys to Liberia”, 6 August 2003.

¹⁶ This terms is also used in UN sponsored peace missions.

¹⁷ “AJP-9: NATO Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) Doctrine”, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), June 2003, <<http://www.nato.int/ims/docu/AJP-9.pdf>>, (last visited on 24 June 2004).

institutions in friendly, neutral, or hostile areas where their forces are employed. Military Commanders plan and conduct CA activities to facilitate military operations and help achieve politico-military objectives. With the restructuring of armed forces over the last decade, civil-military cooperation and civil affairs have been bundled together with the bulk of non-combat operations that are part of a commander's range of tools for waging war —referred to as “information operations”. There can be no complete separation between military humanitarian activities and intelligence gathering. This trend extends equally to armed forces involved in UN-mandated peace operations.¹⁸

How the Armed Forces are Called for ‘In aid of Civil Power’ in Bangladesh?

In Bangladesh, the armed forces are called in to participate in civic duties or law enforcing, law and order maintaining activities by the below mentioned rules:

- Representation of People's order Bangladesh Gazette no, 703 (pub) dt 08 Aug 2001, PO no 155 of 1972 (amdt). Article 2 (xiao) where as a member of law enforcing agency.
- Instructions regarding ‘Aid to the civil power’ issued by the Govt of the People's Republic of Bangladesh’.
- The code of criminal procedure, 1898 (Sec 127-132).
- Manual of Bangladesh Military Law (MBML) 1982 Part-I, Chapter VII, ‘Duties in aid of the civil power’ published by Ministry of Defense.

In particular, instructions regarding ‘Aid to the civil power’¹⁹, states that, *the success of all military measures in aid of civil power depends upon the co-operation between the civil and military authorities. Successful co-operation is only achieved when there is mutual confidence and understanding. Therefore it is important that in peace time, the officers responsible for administration and maintenance of law and order and the officers of the Army should know each other and have knowledge of each others' duties. The officers of each district should be fully*

¹⁸ Examples of this include the SFOR and ISAF military missions, which control newspapers, radio and television stations. From these platforms, they are able to control the flow of “good news” to the local population and can attempt to influence public opinion and behaviour in their favour and towards broader political objectives.

¹⁹ Para 7, co-operation between Civil and Military Authorities.

conversant with the procedure for calling of military and should have a clear understanding of the roles of the army and police in emergencies requiring military aid. Plans to meet likely contingencies should be prepared by the local civil authorities and the local military commanders in fullest collaboration.

The above mentioned para clearly expresses how the CMR is expected to evolve between the civil and its military counterpart.

Various Dimensions of CMR – A Bangladeshi Perspective

Role of Civil Society

Rise of civil society is always encouraging particularly in the third world countries where they act as a required buffer between the ruler and the ruled. In our country generally they represent the educated and intellectual groups of people working in their respective fields. Ideally they are not to postulate any political or other hidden agenda of the ruling regime or for that matter any vested bodies. Most of the members of this club comes from established editorial houses, print and electronic media or think tanks, research organisations (handsomely supported by foreign NGOs). Recently in many instances their opinions in Talk Shows and publications represents their ulterior motives aimed at damaging the CMR whereas it should have been vice versa. The recent report of Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA) is a case in point²⁰. It is not either proposed that these group should be reconciliatory

²⁰ 'WORRY OVER SPURT IN ARMY RECRUITS FROM MADRASAS', A daylong workshop on 'Current and Emerging Trends of Terrorism: Safeguarding National Security of Bangladesh' at the auditorium of the Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA) at Dhanmondi published in The Independent on Friday 1 May 2009. It was jointly organised by BILIA and Bangladesh Heritage Foundation (BHF) and was sponsored by Bangladesh Research and Publication Limited, Sheltech and Buriganga Arts and Crafts. The workshop was held in three sessions and executive director of the BILIA and chairman of the BHF, former ambassador Wali-ur Rahman, Justice Golam Rabbani and president Commonwealth Journalists Association of Bangladesh and Bureau Chief of the AP Farid Hossain chaired the sessions respectively. Quoting the research report Mr. Waliur Rahman said, "A recent research has shown that before the 2001 election, only 5 percent of military recruits were from Madrasas. By 2006, madrasas supplied nearly 35 percent of army recruits." "I will not be surprised, if these people are linked to the militancy," he said. Journalist and columnist Shahriar Kabir said, "The appointment of the Jamaat activists in the law enforcing agencies including army, police and RAB and in civil administration have increased significantly in the last seven years (2001-2008). Around 500 Jamaat activist were appointed in the BDR with recommendations of a Jamaat-e-Islami leader." "The government should find out the Jamaat activists in the army,

to the events but a bipartisan view/comments are expected which would not further divide the society on a particular fault line and put the military and civil authority as opponent.

Role of Media

Responsible role of media is another single most important factor in our country for a healthy CMR. They help building public opinion and also help eroding it. Their responsibility does not end in live telecasting of facts but also encompasses a bipartisan analysis of the events. There are ethics to be adhered and national interest must be kept in mind while transmitting an event. The recent BDR incident again is an example where initially the raw coverage outraged the common populace and almost established the cause of mutineers as an expression of their class struggle.

Role of Retired Military Officers

It is a common phenomenon now in our country for the retired armed forces officers (majority from Army) to join the mainstream political parties. Present trend in media is to showcase them periodically by inviting in talk shows as they offer their expert advices and opinions. It is noted recently with due concern that CMR sometimes beomes controversial as the retired officers interact publicly with civilian counterparts/experts on issues concerning national security matters. For example; the recent comment of Major General Fazlu (retired) on 25th February during the BDR carnage was corrosive to both the Army and civil authorities. However, this relationship often generates acrimony when they publicly opinionate issues those are found with political connotations. It is difficult to decide when retired officer input moves from providing observations to becoming partisan once they push some political agenda of their own.

What Are the Roles and Responsibilities of Civilian Leadership?

It begins with an assertion that there is inherent distrust between politicians and soldiers because they come from different worlds despite their allegiance to the same Constitution. A long history of this distrust and recent history make it even harder to maintain the requisite bonds of trust and partnership. A healthy CMR will emerge when the Civilian government takes the military into his or her confidence (that includes by

police and civil administration and sack them from their jobs immediately, otherwise it would be impossible to conduct the trial of the war criminals," he said.

not stating often that; ‘ *Bangladesh could not attain its desired development yet as military and military-backed forces ruled the country frequently in the past with disregard for people’s welfare. Not only in Bangladesh but in many other countries of the world it has been proved that without democracy a nation cannot achieve its cherished development, said PM.*²¹) and makes it clear why decisions were made. Likewise, if the Civilian authority is careful to avoid disputes by working closely with parliament on the defense agenda, the military (or its allies) will not have a seam between the parliament and the Executive Branch of the government to exploit. The civil-military relationship also benefits when a national defense team is established that understands the military, treats the military with genuine respect, and holds the military accountable. A point to remember that walking away from the relationship through resignation or retiring is dangerous. It provides a club that, if used, will destroy trust in the military. In our perspective, the secretary of defence traditionally maintains a low profile and does not play a befitting role between the Prime Ministers’ Office (PMO) and Army. Thereby we never experience influential civil bureaucrats in the Defence Ministry who might be revolutionaries (transforming the military), team players (supporting the interagency process), or fire fighters (problem solvers) who can defend the institution rather than merely advocating the ruling regime’s agenda.

What Are the Roles and Responsibilities of Military Leadership?

Lets turn our attention to the military side of the civil-military relationship. It is argued that armed forces of today have moved from a post-modern model to a hybrid model. This shift occurred gradually and due to the absence of a manifested physical threat and included changes such as changing from a largely indifferent societal attitude to a more supportive position. Within that context, options available to military leaders when confronted with flawed policy formulation become few. One view posits that due to a strong “Can Do” spirit and a well-engrained, notion of civilian control, senior military leaders are disinclined to publicly share their disagreement with emerging national matters in our country. It is also seen that many senior officers mistakenly believe that there are no alternatives other than silently executing orders, resigning, or retiring. Depending on the degree to which the civilian authorities are receptive to military advice and the magnitude of the threat

²¹ The New Age, dated 29 April 2009, source UNB.

to national security involved in the policy, senior military leaders can choose among many alternatives to widen the policy debate. The military leaders have three trust relationships to consider—trust with the people, trust with civilians in both the parliament and executive Branch, and trust with subordinate leaders in the profession. An act of dissent should be evaluated by conducting a moral analysis of the impact on each of these relationships by the gravity of the issue to the nation, the relevance of the senior leader's expertise to the issue, the degree of sacrifice involved, the timing of dissent, and the authenticity of the leader. Many options available to senior leaders as forms of dissent, ranging from acquiescence, to writing a scholarly article, to resigning in protest, to outright disobeying the policy.

The CMR in Perspective: What Has Changed?

What has changed in the national security arena? Currently there is a lack of consensus on what the threats, opportunities, and appropriate missions are for the military. This is partly due to an unprecedented degree of challenge with global warming, growing political instability, economic meltdown, justification of defense costs, unbound participation in UN mission and last but not the least, the absence of a defence policy. Recent civil-military contradictions that are appearing in the media over BDR carnage, add to the complex environment. The high visibility of these experiences provides the potential for overcorrection in balancing the civil-military relationship. Perhaps it would be prudent to stop worrying about civilians controlling the military. It is not a zero-sum game, and it is a poor assumption that this conflict is bad. Conflict between the military and civilian leadership can actually be acceptable if it is regulated. For this to happen, however, it is important to understand both the military and civilian cultures. It is noted that success came with being comfortable working in a bureaucracy, occasionally pushing back against civilian leaders, and understanding the philosophical approach of civilian overseers. Let us consider several factors as to why the current civil-military relationship may be different from the relationship in the past. First, there may be more acrimony and perceptions of disagreement. These perceptions result from changes in technology with blogs and emails providing faster access to leaks and disagreements. Alternatively, it could be that the military is viewing its role as not only giving military advice, but also as setting things right (the Operations carried out by Army during the Emergency period). Finally, more civil-military tension may exist simply because of the increased politicization of the Armed

forces by appointing the visible followers in key appointment . Many people believe that in the usual debate about civil-military relations, there is a bright line dividing what the military and civilians should do. In reality, that line is not as bright as anticipated as the changing rules of engagement have challenged the civil military relationship. The civil-military relationship includes more than just civilian control. It also involves the allocation and exercise of war powers and the impact of the civil-military relationship on those powers. A problem with the civil-military relationship has emerged over the last eighteen years that has caused the exercise of war powers to shift from parliament to the PMO. Interestingly, the military has an obedient relationship with the Executive Branch, a weak relationship with parliament, and a relationship with society that is so complex that it is detrimental to the nurturing of such a relationship.

The Transition of Armed Forces since 1971 and Related Thoughts

Our armed forces rose from the ashes of liberation war. Since then it did not have to participate in any war. Thereby a gradual domestication of the armed forces took place to serve the nation in times of natural disasters and emergency duties which probably created an acrimonious relationship between the ruling class and the member of the armed forces. If we take an account, we can clearly identify the phases of this transformation basing on their distinct attributes;

- Since the liberation war till 1981 – a period marked by chronic instability in the armed forces followed by a series of coup d'état. Both the civil and military actors were confused about their roles and responsibilities in the newly found republic.
- Since 1982 till 1990 – a regime which is generally termed as authoritative gave birth to some political outfits in the mainstream polity. Armed forces saw their limitless power while the usual democratic uprising were suppressed.
- Since 1991 till 2007 – a period of relative tranquility except few stray attempts of destabilization seen in 1996 and 2001. The democracy was being institutionalized and civil military relationship went to constructive changes through test and trial.
- Since 2007 till today – The 1/11 again changed the equation of civil military relations while state of emergency was declared.

In all the above mentioned phases, the member of the armed forces being posited against the civilian authorities thereby conceptualising the

facts in peoples mind as the 'military' is necessarily an opponent, the people are generally bad, military has a right to correct the wrong, military presence is mandatory in civil functionaries and military tends to be elite in social status. Thereby the society does not feel a social responsibility towards the military. The enduring hardships that the military goes through thus opted to be avoided by the society. Trying to make the soldiers' lot the best it can be is thereby remain ignored and did not become a societal obligation. Unfortunately, the absence of this perceived social responsibility combines with the military's obedient relationship with the Executive Branch of the government, the military's weak relationship with parliament, and the absence of a standing higher security body (in the form of National Security Council) to serve as a counterbalance to executive power, rendered the civil military relationship tattered. Another aspect is that, we may not yet understand what is different in today's civil-military relationship. Even when discussing civilian control, there grows a tension about what intimidation means and how it might appear from different perspectives. Additionally, an occasional erroneous belief is that, stating policy without considering all the factors, to include military expertise, is acceptable. In a recurring theme in today's perspective, all parties involved in civil-military relations should be educated and equipped to participate in the relationship.

Concluding Thoughts

Our members of the armed forces definitely treat the 25th February as a turning point from where CMR has started taking a new direction. Is the direction right? This question can not be answered unless they are tried with another crisis where the decision making process among all the hierarchies are re-tested. The expression of subservience by the military to the political masters might have to be recast at that time. The fear looms large in such circumstance about the cost which might be unbearable for the nation itself. But till then let's believe,

In these typically difficult times it is better for us to focus our humanitarian minds on engagement and not complaint. Instead of lamenting about the forces ranged against us, we should be planning and preparing, making relationships and building alliances, persuading or outwitting our opponents. We need to get tactical: to win where we can and to retreat where we cannot. Now is not the time, as some are advocating, investing in yet more interminable debates that pander to a

culture of complaint and seek to re-define humanitarian action from first principles once again. Nor is it the time to form a square and defend humanitarian values. They are simply not that threatened. Instead, it is the time to get decisive about where we can and cannot operate and to get innovative about how we do things. It is the time to be creative about humanitarian agency rather than to wallow in humanitarian agony.”²²

The following paraphrases the relationship of the civil authorities with military establishments. As it advocates:

- Maintaining its independence of decision making and action;
- Keeping a clear distinction between humanitarian, political and military roles and actors in times of armed conflict or national assistance; and
- Maintaining a dialogue at all times, and at all levels, with multilateral military hierarchies

Our military leadership requires to study the paradoxical trinity Clausewitz writes about. A deep thought process flows about the study and reflect often about the relationship between passion, reason, and chance. The people of our great nation provide the passion, our political leaders provide the reason, and the military manages chance based on how we fight the fight. It is well understood that the military clearly accepts that the military is just an extension of policy and the importance of unequal dialogue. Senior civilian and military leaders often lack a common understanding of roles and reciprocal responsibilities within the partnership. The traditional shorthand that "civilians make policy and the military executes" is overly simplistic, masking the intricate mutual dependence of the parties. For example, civilians may not see their policymaking role as accompanied by a responsibility to ensure that military concerns about policy implementation have been fully addressed. Military leaders may define their substantive advising role narrowly and perform it only in response to civilian inquiry. These misunderstandings have proven costly in national security decision-making. In addition, the parties largely fail to harness the inherent frictions in the relationship. The roles of various civil and military actors abut and overlap in practice, particularly when multiple civilian authorities (including members of parliament) are engaged. Managing the inevitable tensions without rancor or overreaction is a key responsibility of the civilian leadership.

²² Hugo Slim, “A call to arms: Humanitarian action and the art of war”, *Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue*, February, 2004.

Transparent and consistent decision-making processes would also help clarify roles and build trust in civil-military relations, particularly in terms of reinforcing the importance and scope of military advice. When that process is inclusive, it is viewed by military actors as more satisfactory - even if the outcomes are not preferred by military actors.

It is hightime that military leadership might rethink about their responsibilities which does not necessarily means a quick acquiesce with the regime in power. Why not military should concentrate more on their own jobs and let the civilian do theirs? Why should military always try to cover the mess created by their counterparts? If this role is always taken then the stink of clearing the mess could never be washed out of their uniform.

Bibliography

1. Representation of People's order Bangladesh of 1972 (amdt) , the code of criminal procedure, 1898 (Sec 127-132) and Manual of Bangladesh Military Law (MBML)1982.
2. Instructions regarding 'Aid to the civil power' issued by the Govt of the People's Republic of Bangladesh'.
3. Online archive of The Independent.
4. Meinrad Studer, "The ICRC and civil-military relations in armed conflict", *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 83, No. 842, 2001, pp. 367-392.
5. AJP-9: NATO Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) Doctrine", North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), June 2003.
6. Michael Pugh, "The challenge of civil-military relations in international peace operations", *Disasters*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 2001.
7. Sarah E. Archer, "Civilian and military cooperation in complex humanitarian operations", *Combined Arms Center Military Review*, March-April 2003.
8. Jane Barry and Anna Jefferys, "A bridge too far: Aid agencies and the military in humanitarian response", *Humanitarian Practice Network*, 6 May 2004.
9. Eric James, "Two steps back: Relearning the humanitarian-military lessons learned in Afghanistan and Iraq", *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, October 2003.
10. O'Hanlon, Michael E.; Jason H. Campbell (2008-08-31). "Iraq Index Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq". Brookings.

22

The Present and Future of Food Security – an Afterthought

Prologue

Present food crisis acted as ‘agent provocateur’ to write this article while discharging duties in aid to civil power at Rajshahi District from September 07 to June 08. The experiences elaborated are purely writers own view and should not necessarily obfuscate the Government Machinery as well as various organizations involved in managing food chain. This particular topic is not only a current issue which has earned prominence but also a matter of grave danger in terms of social security. The writer feels personally that, the matter of managing food security should be the prime agenda irrespective of government in power or politics in vogue.

Introduction

Food is the most fundamental requirement of human beings which is taken to be granted like air and water in the atmosphere. The urge of producing food made the civilization located nearby the rivers, fertile valleys and in arable lands. After World War II, technological development turned many agro based countries into industrialized one but the demand and supply of food products always kept in a state of equilibrium except is some Sub Saharan countries. The worldwide population growth, economic progression vice versa economic disparity (rich-poor gap) and other affiliated issues kept on raising the demand of food materials and eventually the supply could not keep pace. Thereby the new dimension of security thinking got prominence in the beginning of this century which observed that if fundamental management of food supply chain is hampered than it pushes the law and order situation of a country to precipice. The food security thus not only indicates the availability of food grains in a given society but also its free flow to the consumer in a needed time.

This century started with fanfare but kept on experiencing some menacing global crisis in terms of armed conflicts. The causes and effect of armed conflicts are visible but we were hardly aware of the other

effects which is eroding the very basic fiber of our existence – environment. Once Inter Governmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) was honoured with Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 and former Vice President AL Gore received a nomination in Oscar for best documentary¹ on climate change, then possibly we were little stirred about this new type of danger. Thanks to the brilliant graphics that had been presented in both the cases which instantly drew a wider crowd. Little had been thought before such move (as Kyoto Protocol² was not ratified by USA) as the direct effect of climate change could not be envisaged in its fullest spectrum. Now as the inhabitants of a third world country we are paying the price of such predictions so dearly.

Bangladesh in all count being the weakest in economy, GDP growth, and human development index is also a direct stake holder of such environmental effects. Last year was a sheer demonstration of such a phenomenon when two untimely cyclones and one SIDR hit not only our land but also our already battered economy. The ramification of such effects was felt on the food production. As the production was hampered so did the supply chain which contributed exponentially on the price factor. Present government was taken in back foot while addressing such calamities as the economy was already limping due to the abrupt anti corruption drive. So, probably after 1974 for the first time we encountered a ‘Silent Hunger’ (not a full blown hunger!). These kind of terminologies does not only mock our present ability to address the crisis but also dehumanize the issue altogether. The dire situation could only be restored due to rapid and timely interference by Army on ground while discharging duties in aid of civil power. Coupled with earnest diplomacy and increased internal production, the situation could be restored to a breathing level. But what is next? Are we ready to face this challenge that looms large globally? Are all government and non-government machineries aware of such threat and ready with the plans? These seem to be some humble questions but might cost the governments to fall (e.g. Haiti). This article will elaborate few practical experiences related to

¹ **An Inconvenient Truth** is a documentary film about global warming, presented by former United States Vice President Al Gore and directed by Davis Guggenheim. The film premiered at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival and opened in New York and Los Angeles on May 24, 2006.

² The **Kyoto Protocol** is a protocol to the international Framework Convention on Climate Change with the objective of reducing greenhouse gases that cause climate change. It was adopted on 11 December 1997 by the 3rd Conference of the Parties, which was meeting in Kyoto, and it entered into force on 16 February 2005. As of June 2008, 182 parties have ratified the protocol.

administering food security while serving side by side with government machineries at Rajshahi District. There are three parts of this article which will endorse the experience sequentially. First part will address the definition part of food security including present and future scenario. Second part will elaborate the reasons of price hike with particular emphasis on Bangladesh. Third part will propose a set of pertinent recommendations.

Aim

The aim of this essay is to define food security in the context of Bangladesh and highlight the present and future situation leading to a set of recommendations.

Food Security- How to Define It?

Food security refers to the availability of food and one's access to it. A household is considered food secure when its occupants do not live in hunger or fear of starvation. Two commonly used definitions of food security come from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA):

- Food security exists when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (FAO).
- Food security for a household means access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum:
 - The ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods.
 - An assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (that is, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies), USDA.

Food security was defined in the 1974 World Food Summit as: 'availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices'³. In 1983, FAO expanded its concept to include securing access by vulnerable people to available supplies, implying that attention should be balanced between the demand and supply side of the food security equation: 'ensuring that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to the basic food that

³ United Nations. 1975. *Report of the World Food Conference, Rome 5-16 November 1974*. New York.

they need'⁴. In 1986, the highly influential World Bank (WB) report "Poverty and Hunger"⁵ focused on the temporal dynamics of food insecurity. It introduced the widely accepted distinction between chronic food insecurity, associated with problems of continuing or structural poverty and low incomes and transitory food insecurity, which involved periods of intensified pressure caused by natural disasters, economic collapse or conflict. This concept of food security is further elaborated in terms of: 'access of all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life'. The 1996 World Food Summit adopted a still more complex definition: 'Food security, at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels [is achieved] when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life'⁶. This definition is again refined in *The State of Food Insecurity 2001*: 'Food security [is] a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life'⁷.

The Present and Future Scenarios of Food Security

World Wide Situation in Perspective.

Riots caused by spiraling food have been reported from Egypt, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Ethiopia, Madagascar, the Philippines, Indonesia, Haiti, Burkina Faso and Senegal. The FAO estimated that the world has four to five million tons of cereal stocks that could feed the global population for only 8-12 weeks. Since March 2007, prices of rice have soared 76%, wheat 130% and soya beans 87%. UNICEF says that the impact of higher food prices is particularly marked in poor countries where 75% of a family's revenue goes on food, compared to rich countries where just 15% of a household's income is spent on meals. IMF also warned that the price hike of food items could trigger social and political upheavals and security risks. This might make it difficult to attain the targets for human development in the Millennium

⁴ FAO. 1983. *World Food Security: a Reappraisal of the Concepts and Approaches*. Director General's Report. Rome.

⁵ World Bank. 1986. *Poverty and Hunger: Issues and Options for Food Security in Developing Countries*. Washington DC.

⁶ FAO. 1996. Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action. World Food Summit 13-17 November 1996. Rome.

⁷ FAO. 2002. *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2001*. Rome.

Development Goal (MDGs)⁸. The significance of the deteriorating situation has also been underlined by the WFP when they launched an appeal for additional emergency donations to meet this 'Silent Tsunami of Starvation'.⁹ A landmark UN sponsored report on April 15, 2008 warned that a growing discontent among the world's poorest people is rising of food prices. The report commissioned by the WB and FAO and considered by 64 governments at an international plenary in Johannesburg, stressed that agriculture as it is practiced today, is the source of deep inequalities and that the number of malnourished people worldwide is continuing to grow.

In Asia, for example, the National Food Authority (NFA) of Philippines announced to buy 335,500 tons of rice mainly from Vietnam, Thailand and Pakistan, to avoid any crisis in the coming months.¹⁰ The grain's price has risen to record-high levels across the world - including in rice bowl countries such as Thailand, where premium Thai Rice has spiraled in price from about 9,600 baht (\$300) a ton last December to 10,500 baht (\$333) a ton. In January in the Philippines, a standard sack of rice was selling for 720 pesos (\$17). Later it had risen to 1,100 pesos (\$26). Several rice producers and exporters in Asia have already curbed or halted exports to safeguard domestic supplies, mindful that rice is a politically sensitive commodity. In recent weeks Cambodia and China have suspended their rice exports while India has stopped exporting its non-basmati varieties. Indonesia, Mongolia, Sri Lanka and South Korea have already dropped or reduced import tariffs on the grain. Manila is trying to crack down on hoarders who are making the crisis worse by stockpiling rice until prices climb even further¹¹.

Food Fuel Paradox. The price of a barrel of crude oil exceeded \$130 a few days back. However, the causal relationship of food shortage with the use of crops for extraction of fuel is interesting. The buzzword is-Ethanol (E-85) as the alternative green fuel of the day. E-85, the mixture of 85% ethanol and 15% gasoline that has a capacity to reduce emission of Green House Gas (GHG) by 12% to 19% is rapidly becoming popular

⁸ Point and Counterpoint 'World food prices and situation in Bangladesh'. Published in The Daily Star on May 9, 2008.

⁹ 'The Global Food Crisis and Bangladesh' by Muhammad Zamir, Published in The Daily Star on May 10, 2008.

¹⁰ 'Manila Hikes Spending To Avoid Rice Crisis', AFP, Manila, Published in The Daily Star on March 20, 2008.

¹¹ 'Rice Price, Thais keep vigil over rice, The Straits Times/Ann', Published in The Daily Star on 01 April, 2008.

in USA, Brazil, China and many other countries with populations sensitive to climate change. In European countries, edible vegetable oil is used for bio-diesel. Refined oil from Rapeseed and Canola is used for direct injection into truck fuel. China is using rice and wheat, besides corn, to produce ethanol. However, U.S. corn exports are in danger of seizing up in about 3 years if the country continues to subsidise ethanol production. This again creates a strain on already receding abundance of food. The increase in production of ethanol from corn in USA accounts for about 20 % of last year's 13-billion bushel¹² corn production. That percentage is expected to increase to 30 % for the next crop year ending August 31, 2009. WB president Robert Zoellick said; "We estimate that a doubling of food prices over the last 3 years could potentially push 100 million people in low-income countries deeper into poverty. This is not just a question about short-term needs, as important as those are. This is about ensuring that future generations don't pay a price too." IMF head Dominique Strauss-Kahn sounded even more ominous. He warned: "As we know, learning from the past, those kinds of questions sometimes end in war"¹³.

Climate Change and Food Security. As recently as 2006, progress reports on malnutrition published by UN agencies made no reference to climate change. Yet it was no surprise when, in preparation for the Bali Climate Change Conference in 2007, IPCC painted an almost cataclysmic picture for Africa in which "for even small temperature increases of 1-2 degree- yields for rain-fed agriculture could be reduced by up to 50% by 2020". In addition, the predicted increase in drought and floods will aggravate what is already a serious short term cause of food insecurity. In South and East Asia climate change threatens to upset the stable monsoon pattern around which rice production in particular has evolved. The UN supports the 50 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in preparation of National Adaptation Programmes of Actions (NAPAs) and the Bali Conference launched an Adaptation Fund which may in time support these programmes. Recognising that funding is likely to be scarce, NAPAs limit their scope to community-based low-cost options for

¹² A **bushel** is a unit of dry volume, usually subdivided into eight *local* gallons in the systems of Imperial units and U.S. customary units. It is used for volumes of dry commodities, not liquids, most often in agriculture. 1 **U.S. bushel** = 35.23907017 [litres](#) = 8 corn/dry gallons = 9.309177489 wine/liquid gallons

¹³ 'The Food-Fuel Paradox-Point Counterpoint' by Golam Kibria. He is a Marine Engineer, now working as the Country Representative of Bureau Veritas Certification. Published in The Daily Star on Apr 28, 2008.

dealing with climate variability. Adaptation of agriculture will include the use of alternative seed varieties, improved soil management, maintenance of water management systems and reforestation. These NAPA reports convey universal concern for the sensitivity of food security to a less predictable climate and for the very limited capacity of poor communities to respond¹⁴.

The Common Reasons for Price Hike

The current world wide price-hike of essential agro-commodities is termed as “Agflation¹⁵” by ‘The Economist’. The global increase in food prices have been blamed on rising populations, the use of bio-fuels aimed at combating climate change, higher demand for cereals for livestock (particularly in China to meet the growing demand of more protein for half a billion upwardly economically mobile Chinese), national disasters, a very poor rice crop in Australia and higher energy prices. This deteriorating scenario has been further exacerbated by latest statistics which revealed that global rice demand had risen by 0.9 % last year, while production increased by 0.7 %. It has also been mentioned that Asia's rice stock is at its lowest in decades.

Bangladesh in Perspective. Soon after liberation, the country was hit by a catastrophic famine in 1974. Despite a good harvest in 1973-74 food security collapsed and people suffered terribly. Food production was around 10 million tons, while the population was 75 million in 1971-72. There was no food crisis and people were well-fed. The crisis started in 1973, though there was no crop failure that year or in the preceding one. The situation turned precipitous in 1974-75, a period marked by excessive rains and floods. The Ministry of Agriculture compiles district-wise production figures of cereal crops. If we go by their statistics, the country is at least self-sufficient in food, if not in surplus. So where does the deficit come from? Either the production figure is wrong or the presumed consumption per capita is misconceived, or the presumption of 10% seed, Feed and Wastage (SFW), is far from reality. What might probably went wrong are listed below:

¹⁴ Millennium Development Goals and Hunger, at http://uk.oneworld.net/guides/food?Gclid=CN_oyKL_2JMCFQ8hQgodkB0zZA

¹⁵ **Agflation**, a term coined in the late 2000s, describes generalised inflation led by rises in Agricultural commodity prices. In the United States, agricultural prices are not generally factored into core inflation figures. The term describes a situation in which "external" (i.e. agricultural) price rise drive up core inflation rates. It has been claimed that the term was invented by analysts at Merrill Lynch in early 2007.

- The use of urea registered sharp rise during the last decade (about 2.6 million tons/ year). The country has to import about one million tons of urea to meet the local demand, because it is now being used in fishery, animal husbandry, and in the industrial sector. It is likely that cereal crops also have diversified uses, which has spurred a sharp rise in demand.
- The output of cereal crops needs to be more reliably estimated by improving the quality of data. The methodology of the survey has to be agreed upon by an expert group, and data has to be collected by persons trained for the purpose.
- Marketable surplus is not separated from the total output. The producers might hide information but an astutely designed questionnaire may resolve the problem. With increased per capita income and improved quality of life, producers earmark a much higher portion of their product for consumption and for emergencies. The result: marketable surplus might not have increased *pari passu*¹⁶ with increase in production. We, therefore, do not see a high flow of food grains in the market. Our estimate of SFW at 10% of the output has to be revised. 1% increase in SFW means diversion of 275,000 tons from the production basket. Disinformation on this count also has serious implications for food security planning.
- Production of some non-traditional farm products and fruits has markedly increased. These are high value-added crops, and farmers are switching over from low value-added crops to those. This is inevitable in an emerging economy. If the increase in the production of other crops has come at the cost of food crops, appropriate action will be needed to adjust to this transition. Lack of correct information and insidious disinformation must not be allowed to frustrate the country's food security plan¹⁷.
- According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, diminution of the country's arable land is seriously hampering the government's initiatives to ensure food autarky. There was approximately 202,000 acres of cultivable land in the country in 1983 and has decreased to 143,000 acres in the beginning of 2008. In other words, the amount of

¹⁶ **Pari passu** is a Latin phrase that literally means "with equal step", "fairly", "without partiality".

¹⁷ 'We need to get our facts straight', Point Counterpoint, Dr. Saadat Husain - Chairman, Public Service Commission. Published in The Daily Star on Mar 21, 2008.

cultivable land has decreased by 60 lakh acres during the last 25 years and the country will lose one fourth of its cultivable lands by 2020 if it is not checked. The news which is really alarming for the nation is that, every day nearly 235 hectares of arable lands are being lost in the country and more than two lakh new babies are being added every day to our overwhelming population of 15 crore.

- Only few rich farmers, who have surplus saleable rice, get the benefit of soaring rice price. Out of three crore farmers in the country, only 15% have more or less surplus rice to sell after harvest. A vast majority of farmers are compelled to sell most of their rice just after harvest to repay the debts and depend on the market to buy their food at higher price.¹⁸

Average Rise of Price in Bangladesh in Last One Year.

Type of food	% of price rise in average
Rice	42.6
Wheat	55.4
Edible Oil	42.8
Milk Powder	48.9

We are traditionally relied on imports in order to offset the national demand-supply gap for many agro products (rice, onion, edible oil, etc). Recent data indicates that approximately 2.5 % (pre-cyclone Sidr estimate) of Bangladesh's staple crop (rice) is from imports and it is worth stressing here that natural calamities have, to some extent, increased this dependency percentage. Bangladesh's international sources of rice import are limited to India, Thailand and Vietnam. Between February 2007 and February 2008, prices of 5% broken rice imports increased by 59.1 %, 43.6 % and 46.1 % respectively in these 3 major importing sources. Added to the increased global price are two more factors:

- Higher transport cost resulting mainly from higher world fuel prices, which have spiraled prices of agro-products upwards.
- Traditional market structure of our economy, where starting from the producers to the end-users (consumers), there is presence of a large number of 'middle-men' or market intermediaries, who have a fair amount of say on market prices and influence the overall competitive environment in the market. Farmers tend to receive an insignificant

¹⁸ 'For Food Autarky' - Editorial, A.N.M. Nurul Haque , Published in The Daily Star on Apr 27, 2008.

equivalent part of the retail price at consumer level, in the supply-chain of essential commodities in Bangladesh. It is difficult to measure demand-supply situation in Bangladesh in absence of reliable data on total demand for food grains for human consumption, as seed and as fodder.¹⁹

What All Can Be Done

Working at grass root level opens up many scopes which seem practicable in certain time but again when viewed in totality with various agencies, it is nothing but possible. Keeping this in view, a series of 'Views Exchange' meeting was conducted at nine Upazillas of Rajshahi district which strengthened the thesis on a solid foundation. It is strongly felt that unless a revolutionized attitude in management and production sector (almost similar to communist pattern of centralized production and marketing system like China) is adopted at all level, this infinite corruptive cycle of food chain can never be broken. However, followings are few general suggestions:

- **Ensuring Fair Price to the Farmers at an Appropriate Time.** As ensuring fair price at the growers' level is the best way to raise the morale of the farmers to grow more in the next season. Expecting a record 17.5 million tons of Boro rice this year (previous highest was 16.2 million tons in 2006), the procurement price for rice has been set at Tk 28 per kg, up from Tk 18 a year ago. It has set a target of procuring 1.2 million tons of rice during the drive. During the drive, the government will also buy 0.3 million tons of paddy from growers at Tk 18 per kg. The government estimated the production cost at Tk 19.23 and Tk 13.19 for a kg of rice and paddy respectively, which is close to the production cost, Tk 20.80 for a kg of Boro rice on an average. This will encourage the farmers for a guaranteed sell of a portion of their product.
- **Changing Food Habit– The Potato/Pulse Campaign.** The preliminary report of the Agriculture Ministry revealed that a record amount of 8 million tons of potato has been grown this season. It can be used with rice as 100 grams of potato contain 19 grams of carbohydrate. Similarly, it can be used as a vegetable as 100 grams of potato contain 2 grams vegetable proteins, 0.6 gram mineral salts and 2.2 grams dietary fibre. Pulses (Peas, beans and lentils) being

¹⁹ 'Business Analysis, Riceflation and Agflation', by Kazi Mahmudur Rahman, Ashiq Iqbal and Hasanuzzaman. Published in The Daily Star on Apr 01, 2008. The authors are researchers at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

relatively a cheaper food, are 20 to 25% protein by weight, which is double the protein content of wheat and 3 times that of rice. Lentils supply 4 times as much protein, 6 times as much riboflavin and 7 times as much calcium as rice. In Bangladesh, we eat over 460 grams of rice a day. A person replacing his rice intake with pulses by 50 grams would not lose anything in terms of calories, but would gain 9.3 g of protein (required for growth and maintenance), 0.21 mg of vitamin B2 (riboflavin) (required for energy generation from foods) and 25.5 mg of calcium (required for bone formation during growth and prevention of bone loss during old age). In addition, he would get some extra vitamin A (required for good vision and immunity to diseases). The gains are also retained for most nutrients even under the present price situation (nutrient/Taka), particularly in case of protein, calcium, and vitamin A. The recently published findings of the famous "Food Habits in Later Life" (FHILL) study undertaken in Japan, Sweden, Greece and Australia showed that the pulses are the most important dietary predictor of survival in older people of different ethnicities. Another long-term study in seven countries - USA, Finland, The Netherlands, Italy, former Yugoslavia, Greece and Japan (the famous Seven Countries Study) showed that legume consumption is highly correlated with a reduced mortality from coronary heart disease²⁰.

- **The 'Small Farm' Farming Tactics and Efficient Fertilizer Management Chain.** The small farm management revolution in China, Japan, Taiwan and South Korea has combined technologies of "mass production" and "production by masses" stimulated farmers with marginal and small holdings to work for their income security in the rural areas and food security for the nation. Agricultural practices will have to change radically to save the situation. For that, investment in agriculture should be enhanced to increase productivity and maintain soil fertility. New varieties should be developed to grow crops in saline and drought-hit areas. The existing system of fertilizer distribution need careful scrutiny as it does not ensure timely receipt to the hands of terminal farmers. The open market sale of fertilizers hence will improve the situation on two counts; 'increase the availability' and 'discourage hoarding'. The farmers are found to be eager to purchase at a higher price than that of not having adequate

²⁰ 'Point Counterpoint -National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Program', Published in The Daily Star on Apr 01,2008 by K.M. Yusuf Harun. He is a professor of biochemistry and human nutrition, University of Dhaka and currently Nutrition Advisor, FAO-National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Program, NFPCSP.

quantity in the required time. The effective management chain of Barendra Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA) might be used as a test case in adopting a different track of fertilizer distribution.

Proper Survey and Update of Statistics. The first step should be to carry out a renewed, intensive land survey of cropping area at the entire village level of the country. I believe that this will help us to identify tens of thousands of hectares of potential arable unused land in the coastal zone, near water bodies, in waterlogged regions and in munga affected areas. The second step could be re-calibration by the relevant authorities of the national need, according to seasons, of quality of fertilizers (of the different types), pesticides and the profile of water management and distribution that is required for different crops.

- **Contract Farming.** Procurement arrangements like contract farming are expanding rapidly in Bangladesh, and provide for more orderly marketing with less price volatility and better sharing of risks and rewards. Contract enforceability remains a major challenge, with breaches common among both producers and purchasers. Building trust and developing positive social capital is ultimately the best way to improve contract enforceability. Strengthening producer organisations may help enforce contract terms on the farmers' side, and a variety of other institutions can provide alternative method for dispute resolution. Associations formed around professions, industries, and commodities are likely to play a very prominent role in developing high-value agro-business in Bangladesh. Effective producer groups often enable small-scale farmers to forge mutually beneficial partnerships with private industry.
- **The Public Sector's Regulatory Role and Encouraging Private Sectors for Food Production.** The public sector's regulatory role is also very important in ensuring that the growth of high-value agriculture and agro-business does not deepen poverty, accentuate prevailing inequities, or harm the environment. Closer collaboration between the public sector, nongovernmental organisations, and the private sector would be extremely beneficial in addressing the combinations of opportunities, risks, and challenges that the shift to high-value agriculture carries for Bangladesh²¹. Government buys only 5-10% of total production and rest of the amount remains at the

²¹ Agriculture and Rural Development Department, World Bank, by Xian Zhu. Published in *The Daily Star* on May 15, 2008. He is Country Director, World Bank, Bangladesh, and Mona Sur is Senior Economist,

hand of individuals. If this private sector can be organized and monitored properly it will have a substantial effect in food chain.

- **The Hybrid Rice Production.** At present, growers and importers are marketing various types of hybrid rice seeds such as Hira, Aloron, Jagoron, Sonar Bangla and Moina, which are said to be about 20-30 percent higher yielding than the high yielding variety (HYV) of rice seeds. “We have focused on the increased cultivation of hybrid rice to recover the losses incurred on floods and cyclone Sidr,” said Dr Shahidul Islam, director Field Service Wing of the Department of Agricultural Extension. To recover such losses, the government targeted to produce hybrid crops on 12 lakh hectares of land out of 45 lakh hectares, the total targeted area for boro cultivation. Out of the total land, hybrid rice has been cultivated on over 10 lakh hectares of land. The DAE official expected this cultivation would help produce additional 10 lakh tons of rice. “Its demand is rising because farmers are getting higher profits,” said Mokfor Uddin, managing director of the biggest seed supplier firm, Supreme Seed Company. Supreme has sold about 3,500 tons of hybrid seeds. Sudhir Chandra Nath of Agro-marketing Division of BRAC that grows hybrid seeds, said farmers are now encouraged by hybrid seeds' higher yield. “Cultivation of hybrid rice requires the same extent of fertiliser, pesticides and irrigation as needed for the cultivation of HYV crops. But it gives higher yield than the HYV,” he said, adding that BRAC's continued motivational campaign has also encouraged farmers to grow hybrid.

Other Measures.

- Strengthen safety nets (i.e. mainly VGD); expand OMS; revive TCB (the state-owned trade corporation); explore new sources of rice imports. Direct imports by TCB would presumably lead to lower import costs and would prevent prices being manipulated (by unscrupulous/greedy private importers and traders), while expanded OMS at lower than market rates will help stabilise prices.
- Traders are not the only ones whose appetites have been whetted by the unprecedented high prices. Farmers have responded with matching zest, marshalling every inch of available land and investing their last taka on fertilisers or pesticides or diesel into the Boro crop. A mass awareness program can be undertaken to inform the ill effects of such practices.
- Our original sin (in the area of food policy) was to agree to dismantle the Public Food Distribution System (or the ration system, as

popularly known then). Now, it is quite true that the PFDS was riddled with inefficiencies and problems, but instead of trying to address these, we decided to cripple it before throwing it overboard²².

Conclusion

Definition of food security rests on two aspects; the ability of the government to supply the requisite shortage of food grains in the open market when the crisis occurs and managing the supply chain through which these are suppose to reach to the vulnerable group. This is a matter of policy on government's part to manage the situation as such crisis obviates to social anarchy. Throughout the world the overall stock of food grain is hitting bed rock due to many reasons. Of which, environmental effect is more pronounced. Ex American vice president Al Gore rightly focused this issue in his brilliantly created documentary- An Inconvenient Truth. This documentary is self evident which shows how the degradation of environment is taking its toll on food production. Besides the search for an alternate fuel source (Ethanol), the increase of economic condition (purchase power) of China and India and faulty forecast of demand and supply system, resulted in the overall food crisis. All the international agencies like WB, FAO have forecast the crisis and it is high time that we are aware of the worldwide situation and take precautionary measures in due time. In our country, the main reasons of recent food crisis are import dependency, diminution of arable land, faulty forecast of supply and demand, and government's inefficiency in handling the production.

Diagnosis of a problem correctly is more important and hence the first step of problem solving method. The reasons for price spiraling is different in every country basing on its unique geographical positioning, culture, type of government, import policy and many other pertinent issues. Generally speaking, the recent price hike is characterized mainly by environmental effect and the gaping economic development in many countries which exacerbated the supply crisis due to excessive demand. Worldwide rise of fuel price (crude oil price is 133\$ / barrel in US market) also played a major role as it is directly related to the transportation/production mechanism of food materials. WB and IMF pressurized us a number of times to increase the fuel price and reduce the subsidy so that government exchequer doesn't fail in time of crisis. Ours

²² 'The Rice Price Dilemma: Time to worry about low prices? Point Counterpoint', by K.A.S. Murshid. He is a Research Director, Bids and Director, Bids Policy Resource Program. Published in the Daily Star on Mar 20, 2008.

is an import heavy country and India being the only closest neighbour has a dominant role to play to control the rice price (as evident after the Sidr). The corrupt business practice of middlemen in the production and marketing chain also plays vital role in shooting the price up. This attitude is difficult to modify as it is only a part of a bigger story of profiteering. The stark fact is, there is no effect in the retail rice market even after the bumper Boro crop production.

There are many superficial definitions outlining the recent food crisis as 'Hidden Hunger' and elsewhere as 'Silent Tsunami'. Theoretically many things can be foreseen and seems altruistically pragmatic as discussed in round table conferences or talk shows. Nevertheless, it is only the grass root level working experience which can outline practical measures to be adopted. Though the scope of the article does not allow a threadbare implementation policy, as such few general implementable policies are mentioned. Of which, ensuring fair price to the farmers, changing food habit – the potato/pulse campaign, the 'small farm' farming tactics and agricultural practice, proper survey and update of statistics, contract farming, the public sector's regulatory role, the hybrid rice production are important. Other than these broad measures, strengthening safety nets (i.e. mainly VGD), expanding OMS, reviving TCB, exploring new sources of rice imports are also necessary. We can dismantle any institutions without much forethought but cannot make new ones as it takes time and resources. Whatever are the measures described, the bottom line of efficiency/effectiveness dwells on two aspects; honest attitude of administration and mass awareness of public.

Bibliography

1. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) report on Food Security in the United States: Measuring Household Food Security, at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/measurement.htm>
2. Food crisis will take hold before climate change, warns chief scientist, published by James Randerson, science correspondent, The Guardian, Friday March 7 2008 available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2008/mar/07/scienceofclimatechange.food>
3. The global grain bubble As prices soar, riots rise. But it's not for lack of crops. The cause? A rush to biofuel and grain-fed meat, from the January 18, 2008 edition. Available at <http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0118/p08s01-comv.html>
4. The World's Growing Food-Price Crisis, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2008 by VIVIENNE WALT available at <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1717572,00.html>
5. Global food crisis looms as climate change and population growth strip fertile land by Ian Sample in science correspondent, The Guardian, Friday August 31 2007.
6. 2008: The year of global food crisis, Special report By Kate Smith and Rob Edwards available at http://www.sundayherald.com/news/heraldnews/display.var.2104849.0.2008_the_year_of_global_food_crisis.php
7. FAO. 1983. *World Food Security: a Reappraisal of the Concepts and Approaches*. Director General's Report, Rome.
8. The Daily Star, the publications on March 20, March 21, Apr 01, Apr 27, Apr 28, May 9, May 10 and May 15.

(This essay was published in Bangladesh Army Journal in 2008 as one of the five best essays)