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DRV's Impressive Offensive

North Vietnam's three-week old offensive has astounded the world. The *Economist*, 15/4, with its customarily patronising air of cynical aloofness commented that "the North Vietnamese are running what may well be the most efficient fighting machine in Asia and their leaders are just as determined as ever to win the war, but they are not supernmen. Ideology, discipline and sheer imperviousness to moral outrage can carry you a long way, but they do not always add up to victory. So the outcome of the offensive that the communists launched in South Vietnam over Easter is not a foregone conclusion." The *Economist* argued that the ARVN, after the initial setback, had begun to regroup and fight back—thus halting the onrush of DRV troops. The Easter offensive now has four prongs and the ARVN is kept on the alert on every front. At the time of writing, on one front, DRV tanks and troops had come as close as 35 miles of Saigon from sanctuaries in Cambodia which the ARVN claimed had been "wiped out for all time."

American strategists seem to think that the present offensive was an all-out one designed to crush Thieu's government because the DRV has thrown an unexpectedly large number of troops and surprisingly large quantities of military hardware into this offensive. But other observers feel that the DRV is

essentially a political diversion intended to make a mockery of Nixon's vietnamisation policy as well as embarrass the US President with the election campaign under way. On both matters, the DRV has scored heavily. It is clear that Thieu's nixonised troops cannot defend the territory which is nominally theirs — without massive over-doses of US firepower from the air and sea. Secondly, the anti-war movement, which was dormant in the US itself, has once again sprung into action protesting against the escalation of US involvement in Vietnam.

DRV's General Giap is a "pastmaster of the science of logistics" and will know that he cannot take his tanks very far from bases having the fuel and spares. The DRV can be counted upon not to overstretch their supply lines and it is for this reason that many observers feel that General Giap may well be laying a trap to ensnare the ARVN. It was Giap 27 years ago, who had lured the French led by General Navarre into unfavourable ground at Dien Bien Phu. The Americans are waging the war from the air. Whether this will pay dividends is yet to be seen. The *Economist* commented: "... the next few days will show whether the cost-benefit ratio for American bombing is any better than before. American bombing did not stop the Easter offensive or the massive pile-up of men and

resources in the communist base areas north of the demilitarised zone, in eastern Cambodia, and in the tri-border enclave where the non-communist parts of Indochina meet. It has slowed the communist down now, but the battles at An Loc and elsewhere will be decided by the infantry. It will be a close-run thing."

The *Newsweek*, 17/4, was bitter. "No military conflict," it said, "in modern history has been punctuated with as many predictions of finality as the war in Vietnam. And yet, like some tragic curse hanging over the peoples of Indo-china and the United States, the war stubbornly refuses to go away. Four long years after the communists' *go for broke* Tet offensive was 'defeatd', many months after the invasions of Cambodia and Laos 'set the enemy back', weeks after US strategists thought that Hanoi had been 'forced' to postpone a massive year-end assault, everything was back to square one. In a devastating attack, the North Vietnamese army smashed through many South Vietnamese defenses from one end of the country to another. And with their ferocious onslaught, the Communists threatened to make a mockery of President Nixon's carefully constructed policy of disengaging from an unwanted war in an orderly and honorable fashion. The painful sense of *deja-vu* was overpowering. It was though all the blood and treasure that the U.S. had poured into Vietnam over the past decade had made little difference"

from THE EDITOR'S DESK

Mainly International

April 15, 1972

THE Sinhala and Tamil New Year has come and gone. It has been a rather quiet week so far as Ceylon was concerned. Even the *furor* over the 4 communist MPs, who had failed to respond to the Government's Whip to vote for the Criminal Justice Commissions Bill before April 5, went off the headlines. Minister Keuneman returned from Singapore and the hierarchy of the CP went into sessions on what the Party should do next. The Politbureau had suspended Junior Minister Tudawe from the CC for having dis-

obeyed the Party directive not to vote for the Bill. The hawks in the CP who seem to think that the time had come to break with the UF, seem to have an edge in the Politbureau, but the doves led by Keuneman who want to continue the collaboration with the UF are said to have the majority in the Central Committee, and it is therefore likely that the decision about Tudawe will be reversed in the CC. In the meantime, the Government Whip had set a deadline on April 15 to receive a reply from the errant CP MPs who had ignored his call, but these members are reported to have asked for more time because they wanted to consult the Party. The CC of the CP was expected to meet on April 20 and 21, and interesting developments are likely to follow.

Apart from this, everything was quiet on the political front in Ceylon. No one was particularly perturbed by the unusually high murder rate which heralded the new year. The papers reported that there were at least a dozen murders on that day—and the free flow of arrack seemed to have been a major contributing factor. The insurgents were quiet. Robberies were fewer and the trains generally ran to schedule in spite of the holiday rush. But on the international front, the world was in great turmoil.

Britain had assumed direct

control in Ireland, and though this had restored a certain degree of calm it was still uncertain whether the violence and bloodshed, which had marked Irish history in recent times, had been substantially eliminated. West Asia was in a dangerous mood with the Arab nations divided sharply over a number of issues. Egypt has broken off diplomatic relations with Jordan because King Hussein had unilaterally set out a plan to resolve his quarrel with Israel. But more than anything else the developments in Vietnam stole the headlines. On April 1—it was no longer the All Fool's Day of the leisurely past when the rat race was not so acute—North Vietnamese crossed the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) in strength and attacked the northern quarter of South Vietnam. Hanoi's troops also broke into South Vietnam from Laos and Cambodia, and South Vietnam saw the biggest offensive since the *Tet* of 1968. Within a few days, N. Vietnamese troops had overrun a sizable part of the country held by Saigon, and the US was compelled to mount one of the strongest—if not the strongest—air attack so far witnessed in the Indochina region.

While the tempo of fighting in Vietnam increased day by day, the State Department in Washington announced on April 4 that it had decided to recognise Bangladesh. This announcement had been expected for sometime. This came at a time when international

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diplomatic activity had reached new heights of nervous dizziness. President Nixon had met King Hussein and was preparing to go to Canada. Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh had journeyed to Moscow and Soviet Premier Kosygin had then gone to Iraq to conclude another treaty of friendship. President Podgorny went to Turkey, Peking received delegations from several countries notably Don Mintoff of Malta and Ramgoolan from the Mauritius. France was preparing for the referendum on the entry of Britain and the ten into the ECM whilst the British Labour top leadership was faced with serious problems with Roy Jenkins, resignation. Bhutto was confronted with many difficulties and the Indian PM's letter suggesting preliminary talks at official level to prepare for a summit did not help Bhutto very much: because, he wanted a summit in a hurry to secure the release of the 90,000 odd Pakistani POWs in Indian hands. Whilst the world was caught up in this kind of changing uncertainty in every part, the much talked about sessions of UNCTAD met in Santiago in Chile in a desperate attempt to bring some kind of order into international trade and commerce, and that in a way in which the richer countries would not continue to grow richer whilst the poorer continued to be exploited mercilessly.

Even though so much was happening in every part of the world, it was the fighting in Vietnam which engaged the

attention of most people. In the US, reaction followed predictable lines. Nixon's Administration blamed everybody, except the South Vietnamese, and directed the chief criticism against the Russians for delivering to Hanoi the heavy equipment which had made the offensive possible. The doves in Washington became even more dovish. Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield renewed his demand for American withdrawal whilst hawkish Senator Barry Goldwater renewed his call for an all-out air offensive against North Vietnam including the bombing of Haiphong harbour.

On April 4, State Department spokesman Robert McCloskey told a press conference the current offensive across the DMZ could probably not have taken place if Moscow had not supplied large quantities of tanks and SAMs. "The Soviet Union has been supplying North Vietnam with military equipment for a long time," he said. "But it appears that the number of tanks now being used has increased and the emplacement of SAMs in the DMZ is an important new development."

But he said, the US 'concern' over the Soviet support to North Vietnam would not affect President Nixon's plans for a visit to Moscow next month. He also said the possibility of the US taking up the question of North Vietnamese violation of the Geneva accords with the Soviet Union, a co-chairman of the Geneva conference had not been ruled

out. Mr. McCloskey did not link China with his criticism of Soviet support for North Vietnam. He said China had been supplying military equipment to Hanoi, but the heavy equipment which made it possible for North Vietnam to shift from guerilla warfare to full-scale invasion came from the Soviet Union."

At the time of writing these notes, South Vietnamese troops have been pushed back considerable distances and even with the massive bombing by the US, the Nixonised and Vietnamised troops of President Thieu seem to be in full retreat before the forces of North Vietnam. Though the new attack was anticipated for quite sometime, and US President Nixon had threatened heavy retaliation against such an offensive, Hanoi's forces have made significant advances. The bombing of targets in North Vietnam, which had started sometime before Nixon went to Peking on February 21, was obviously undertaken to cripple Hanoi's capacity to start a major offensive. The intensity and sweep of the new North Vietnamese attack, which is reported to be the biggest since the *Tet* offensive of 1968, had caught the Americans and the South Vietnamese by surprise. In less than a fortnight of fighting, North Vietnamese forces are on the very doorstep of Saigon.

This offensive has upset all American - South Vietnamese calculations. It also marks the failure of President Nixon's

policy of "vietnamisation." The US is anxious not to involve its ground troops in the fighting, but it is hard to see how it can be avoided if the South Vietnamese are unable to make a stand. But, for the moment the US seems to think that by blasting North Vietnam and its troops from the air and from ships of the seventh fleet, it will ultimately succeed in "containing" this "invasion". It is also obvious that the new offensive is Hanoi's retort to President Nixon's recent decision to suspend the Paris talks indefinitely. Mr. William Porter, the chief US delegate to the Paris talks, told the North Vietnamese delegates just before he withdrew on President Nixon's instructions, that the talks would be resumed only when Hanoi showed some signs that it was disposed to "engage in meaningful exchanges on the various points raised in your and our proposals" *The new Hanoi offensive is directed at forcing the US back to the conference table, after showing that Nixon's "vietnamisation" programme was a total failure.*

It has been pointed out that the term "vietnamisation" was a misnomer and that it should be more properly described as "de-americanisation", meaning that after the withdrawal of US ground troops from South Vietnam, the US would continue to provide naval and air protection to the present Saigon regime against any attack by North Vietnam and the NLF to overthrow it. Hanoi is out to defeat this objective of

the Nixon administration. President Nixon, unfortunately, has chosen to place all his eggs in the "vietnamisation" basket. This explains the massive bombing before and after the Hanoi offensive. As Senator McGovern as pointed out, there are only two alternatives open to President Nixon: either to escalate the war to the 1967-68 level by throwing in ground forces on a massive scale, or to withdraw completely from Vietnam. Escalated war had failed in 1967 and 1968, and with it, went President Johnson. Mr. Nixon had fondly hoped that his "vietnamisation" policy would pay dividends, but the present offensive and the poor showing of Saigon's ground forces has knocked the Nixon Plan for Vietnam into a cocked hat. In the context of what has happened in the past, the US will do well, in its own national interest, to quit Vietnam. The US will also do well to participate in the Paris talks and hammer out a formula to enable the US to withdraw with grace and dignity from Vietnam. It was short-sighted on the part of White House to suspend the peace talks, but it would be stupidity of the highest order if it does not revive these talks immediately, and thereafter under cover of the Paris talks evolve a face-saving formula to quit Vietnam with as much self-respect possible under the circumstances.

To persist in "vietnamisation", which is a corner-stone of the Nixon Doctrine for Asia, will be stupidity of even greater magnitude. The US *Time*

magazine of April 17 had the following remarks to make about Saigon's army. "For better or worse," it said, "the army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN for short) holds the key to the success of President Nixon's Vietnamisation policy. Expert opinions are strongly divided on whether the ARVN can sustain that policy. Reflecting the cynical view of more than a few American GIs who had returned from combat in Southeast Asia, one US military adviser last week complained:

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'The colours in the South Vietnamese flag are certainly appropriate — most of the people are yellow, and the rest are red.' The magazine then went on to discuss the strength and equipment of Saigon's army, and said that 'US advisers make two general criticisms of ARVN: it is not flexible enough to defend the country properly, and it tends to get bogged down in bureaucracy...' And it went on to conclude that "in a purely military sense, most US strategists believe that Vietnamese will succeed. 'It is inconceivable that the South can't hold out against the North Vietnamese,' a senior Rand Corp. analyst observed last week, they are just too good and well equipped an army for that—unless the North Vietnamese are all Prussians and the South Vietnamese all Italians.' He paused and added. 'There is always that chance, of course' *Hanoi has now set these doubts, lingering in the minds of many Americans that Nixon's Vietnamisation programme could be made to work, at rest once and for all.*

Another significant feature is that the US today seems to stand alone in Vietnam. Britain has been lukewarm in its support for the US retaliatory bombing; and none of the other traditional allies of the US have even had a good word for current US strategy and tactics in Vietnam. On the other hand, the USSR, has come out fully behind North Vietnam. Moscow was jubilant about North Vietnam's "considera-

ble successes in its struggle against American imperialism aggression" and forecast that "this just struggle, which has the support of all the world's progressive forces, can end only in total victory". China has likewise supported the Hanoi offensive and condemned the US bombing of North Vietnam and even in the fighting areas in South Vietnam. A *Hnishua* message on April 4 hailed the "repeated fierce attacks on the military bases and establishments of the US-puppet clique" in the northern Quang-Tri province. On April 10, the Chinese government issued a fuller statement, it read as follows: "In the past few days, U. S. imperialism brazenly sent out large numbers of aircraft and warships to bomb and shell many areas of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, thus committing new crimes against the Vietnamese people. At the same time, the U.S. aggressors moved additional scores of B-52 strategic bombers to their Guam base and several aircraft-carriers in to the Bac Bo gulf, while declaring that they would continue such attacks, making a truculent war threat to the Vietnamese people. The Chinese government and people express their utmost indignation at these acts of aggression of U.S. imperialism. On April 6, 1972, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam issued a statement, sternly denouncing the new military adventure of U. S. imperialism, reiterating the solemn and just

stand that the land, air space and territorial waters of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam are inviolable, and expressing the iron-like determination of the Vietnamese people to smash all military adventures of the U. S. aggressors. The Chinese government and people express their resolute support for this.

"In an attempt to justify its acts of aggression, the U. S. government audaciously claims that its raids on North Vietnam are 'in response to' the north Vietnamese 'invasion' of South Vietnam. This argument is ridiculous and absurd to the extreme. As is known to all, South and North Vietnam is one country; it was on the pretext of the same argument that U.S. imperialism groomed the Ngo Dinh Diem puppet clique and unleashed its war of aggression against Viet Nam; and it was again on the pretext of the same argument that U. S. imperialism launched massive air and naval attacks on North Vietnam and expanded the war to the whole of Vietnam after suffering disastrous defeats in South Vietnam. The so-called 'Bac Bo gulf incident' of 1964 was a plot laid by the United States for making raids on the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The true story has long been disclosed to the whole world. It is precisely on the pretext of so-called responding to North Vietnamese 'invasion' that US imperialism has expanded the war to North Vietnam and the whole of Indochina step by step. This is a fact known to

the whole world, and no hoax is of any avail.

"The Vietnamese nation is a whole. It is fully legitimate and a matter of course for the Vietnamese compatriots in the Northern and Southern parts of the country to support each other and jointly combat the aggressors in order to attain the sacred goal of liberating the south, defending the north and proceeding to the reunification of their fatherland. No military threats of the U.S. aggressors can hold back the triumphant advance of the Vietnamese people in the war against U. S. aggression and for national salvation; nor can they prevent the people in North Vietnam from fulfilling their sacred duty of supporting their blood-sealed countrymen in the South."

In spite of the current *de-tente* between China and the USA, Peking is understandably very strong in its denunciation of US policies in Vietnam. The US, also understandably, is bitter in its disappointment about current developments. A *Reuter* message from Washington datelined April 7 stated that the US had accused the North Vietnamese of making military preparations for the current offensive in South Vietnam while presidential aide Henry Kissinger was seeking an accommodation with them in secret negotiations. Washington also rejected an NLF charge that the US was responsible for the suspension of the Paris peace talks. A State Department spokesman accused Madame

Binh of upside down logic. "It was the North Vietnamese who broke off the effort undertaken by Dr. Henry Kissinger (National Security Affairs Adviser) over a long period of time," he said. The spokesman said the North Vietnamese were constructing roads to move troops and heavy equipment through the demilitarised zone (DMZ) as far back as May, 1971. This activity, he said, was going on while the United States was honestly and forthrightly attempting to find an accommodation so that substantive talks could be held in Paris.

US State Department spokesmen also described the North Vietnamese offensive as an "invasion" and hinted that the US would keep all its options open to deal with the situation. But it was clear that it would be extremely difficult for the President to send fresh combat troops into battle. The surest way of reviving the Vietnam issue during the Presidential campaign was to send US troops back to Vietnam. Commitment of the 80,000 or so ground combat soldiers still in Vietnam would certainly increase American casualties which would also be domestically unacceptable. The US would need a massive effort to send back fresh troops into South Vietnam. President Nixon, however, has proclaimed that he will not hasten the pull-out under military pressure.

The US bombing offensive in Vietnam has further widened the gulf between India and the US. External Affairs Mini-

ster Swaran Singh made it clear in the Indian Parliament that India was totally opposed to US bombing of targets in North Vietnam. He said that the bombing raids should stop and that the US should withdraw from Vietnam, and pointed out that "this kind of escalation of the war situation and the resumption of bombing is not consistent with the declared intention of withdrawal of armed forces." Mr. Swaran Singh also referred to the activities of the US government and its agents in this region and stated that "we have to be vigilant to safeguard our own interests against any intrigues." The US took umbrage against this attitude adopted by India, and the Indian Ambassador was summoned to the State Department and told in no uncertain terms what the Nixon administration felt about India's attitude on this question. What made matters worse was that Mr. Swaran Singh in the course of his remarks had also said that the Indian Government was "disturbed" to read the news item that the US might use nuclear weapons in the current war in Vietnam. The talk of nuclear weapons was a very dangerous matter, said Mr. Swaran Singh, and stressed that everything should be done to prevent the use of nuclear weapons.

As a result of these exchanges, Indo-American relations, which "were badly bogged down by a crisis of confidence" after the Indo-Pak war, was hitting rock bottom again in the wake of the latest develop-

ments in Indo-China with India denouncing the resumption of US bombing on North Vietnam. India had also criticised the US for suspending the Paris talks. The US was naturally in a "mighty huff" over the sharp Indian denunciation of US air attacks without any countervailing criticism of North Vietnam which, from the American point of view, is tantamount to totally absolving Hanoi of all responsibility for the latest aggravation of the situation. The US has also insinuated that by taking up this "one-sided" stand—and by refusing to take note of even the fact of North Vietnamese "invasion" of the South across the demilitarised zone—India was identifying itself completely with the Soviet Union which is accused of precipitating this crisis to put the US and China on the collision course again. In blaming the United States for the present escalation, External Affairs Minister Swaran Singh had stated in the Indian Parliament that "we are not aware of any so called mass invasion of the South by North Vietnam." He further maintained that by unilaterally abandoning the Paris talks, the US had virtually negated its own peace proposals despite the positive response of the South Vietnamese Provisional Revolutionary Government.

The United States has also accused India, both publicly and privately, of giving transit facilities for the Soviet airlift of equipment to North Vietnam. In spite of India's repea-

ted denial of this accusation, the US has persisted in this allegation without drawing a distinction between the weekly Soviet courier service operating between Moscow and Hanoi and the so-called airlift which India insists has not taken place. At the instance of the US, Britain has made a formal suggestion to the Soviet Union for a joint initiative in their capacity as co-chairmen for reconvening the Geneva Conference on Indo-China to discuss the latest situation. The USSR had promptly rejected the British proposal with the counter suggestion that the US should bring the fighting to an end by calling off its bombing attacks and resuming the Paris peace talks without any pre-conditions. And as the Chairman of the International Control Commission, the stand that India has taken more or less falls in line with the Soviet approach to the problem.

The US is in a real dilemma. The US is in no position to help the hard-pressed ground forces of the ARVN, even if President Nixon wanted to commit US troops again. The withdrawal of US troops has reached such a point at which the 80,000 combat troops left in South Vietnam are in no position to turn the tide, if the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong decide to keep up the momentum of their present offensive. And President Nixon cannot reverse his withdrawal policy and extend the bombing policy to the Ha-

noi-Haiphong zone, without risking his chances of re-election, and also making a mockery of his recent visit to Peking.

An Indian political commentator summed up New Delhi's attitude in the following terms: "While India is not deriving any special satisfaction from Mr. Nixon's predicament, the policymakers in Delhi see no reason for going out of their way to help the U.S. pull its chestnuts out of the fire. They feel Mr. Nixon has placed the U.S. on a slippery slope by trying to bypass the Soviet Union, bully India and intimidate North Vietnam in his bid to woo China at the expense of the other countries in the region. As India sees it, the kind of political rebuff that the United States is now facing in Vietnam serves as yet another example of the impotence of power when a great country asserts itself to no purpose, while being unable to enforce obedience or secure compliance with its carrot-and-stick policy in any particular context."

In the meantime, US sources have stated that India has granted the Soviet Union naval base facilities. A UPI report from Washington stated: "American officials are worried that India will grant the Soviet Union home port facilities in the Andaman Islands of the Bay of Bengal." India has hotly denied this as baseless, ridiculous and unwarranted, but American officials

(Contd. on p. 16)

Can Civilization Survive?

Continuing Research, Essential

BY Prof. K. KULARATNAM

THE POPULATION CRISIS we are now passing through is of a very critical nature, and the problems have only belatedly become apparent to all. The acceptance and sharing of responsibility should have begun on a systematic and scientific basis a few decades ago and is long overdue. To deal with it, we have to develop an integrated multidisciplinary approach and design and construct techniques for the study of the dynamics of population, for ascertaining, establishing and maintaining for a region its optimum population projections for specific periods in the future.

The horizon is much wider than what is implied in family planning. Participation by a variety of disciplines is called for, having due regard to the interlocked elements of the ecosystem (the community of living things and the environment), namely: the health of the natural and cultural environments, the availability and development of resources (natural and human), population growth (including explosion and implosion, resulting in unregulated urbanisation and pop-pollution) and planned development.

The optimum population would be that which gives the maximum of "quality of life." Nature maintains the ecosys-

tem is a delicate state of equilibrium and man's interference with it for development can upset this, if due concern is not shown for the environment, and cause unpredictable degradation and damage to it, sometimes even of an irreversible nature as has already been experienced in some parts of the earth.

The integrated study needed is *Population Engineering*. It calls for team-work with the involvement of the natural scientist, geographer, economist, sociologist, demographer, statistician and the medical scientist. The goal of population engineering is to enrich life, not to restrict it, through maintaining a healthy and robust ecosystem, proper husbanding of resources and planned development with due concern for the environment.

The population crisis has become the common denominator of our time: in relation to war and peace, crime, political chauvinism, corruption, malurbanisation and implosion, environmental disruption, maladies of the developmental process, etc. It is the pervasive element affecting the great issues of our time: global, regional and national. To deal with it we have to develop *Population Engineering*.

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING has today come to mean not merely economic

goals in terms of the Gross Domestic Product; it now has much wider social and cultural implications and dimensions, in answer to the peoples' ever-growing yearning for a fuller life for the individual and family; their concern for quality of life, calling for new dimensions in development thinking and for a new idiom and terminology. Development plans have got to be ecologically valid to produce results commensurate with the inputs. Development has to be linked with concern for the environment. *Below are some revealing facts about the current population crisis.* Most developing countries of the world, whether in Asia or Africa or Latin America are plagued by this problem; several developed and over-developed countries have also fallen victims, though in different ways. Population explosion is currently taking place, in many countries.

A survey of the known and available resources of the countries of the Ecafe region of south and southeast Asia was recently carried out by the present writer, in terms of land, water, forestry, fisheries, pasture, livestock, agriculture, minerals, energy, tourist potential, etc. It was found that the resource endowment of the region cannot simply match projected populations (at current rates of growth); further if population is allowed to grow at current rates, it will seriously upset the environment, reduce the resource base and decelerate the development effort.

Below are some relevant population figures.

COUNTRY	MILLIONS	ESTIMATED
	1970	1980
Burma	28	35
Ceylon	12.6	16
India	555	717
Japan	103	116
Indonesia	121	161
Malaysia	11	15
Thailand	36	50

THE SITUATION is now grave and belated, as babies already born will continue to aggravate the problem for another quarter of a century and anything done immediately will begin to show its impact only after that period. Rapid population growth has resulted in serious environmental degradation: soil erosion, pollution of the atmosphere and water, burgeoning urban monstro-cities with sprawling slums (caused more by rural push than urban pull), etc.

Can civilisation survive its own impact on Nature? Is man at the brink of his extinction? Can we keep our planet habitable? Yes, but provided the rising tide of humanity does not destroy itself by rising much too fast, the present rate being 2 persons born per second, 200,000 a day, 70 million a year. Homo sapiens, thinking man, took half a million years to reach the present figure of 3400 million; homo insapiens might double this in less than thirty years by the turn of this century.

Therefore, every country should immediately set up volun-

tary movements for population engineering, to arrest the further breakdown of the ecosystem, through population regulation, concern for the environment, conservation of resources and development related to all these, by action-oriented planning, lest things become hopelessly irreversible.

The old and deep-rooted myths of "proliferate or perish" have outlived their useful purpose, because now infant mortality has been reduced, life-span extended, social security and old aged insurance are generally becoming available. So, today, it should be "proliferate and perish", because of the unwanted burden of surplus population, which is a heavy drain on resources, and impinges adversely on the environment, thus lowering the "quality of life" for the people living. Calhoun's experiment with rats is significant in this context.

A knowledge base on population dynamics, environment, resources and development must be built up and continuing research in Population Engineering undertaken. Man

is not just an animal to think that Population Engineering is synonymous with contraceptive technology. It is much more. Old habits and attitudes have to be changed through enlightened knowledge, more effectively and with less risk. Today, it is enough and good for every family to be satisfied with maintaining itself at replacement level. (2 or 3 children)

(To be Continued)

THE NIXON DOCTRINE

Pentagon and Peking

BY I. F. STONE

This is the first part of an article by the distinguished U S Commentator in *The New York Review of Books*, March 23, 1972.

LIKE Vietnamization, the new China Policy had its covert beginnings in the Johnson Administration.

A cable from Johnson to Ambassador Lodge in Saigon, which turned up in the Pentagon Papers, is evidence of an earlier recognition in Washington that the Sino-Soviet split might offer useful leverage in power politics. It was dated March 20, 1964, and spelled out the reasons for delaying any open attack on North Vietnam. Johnson added as "an additional international reason for avoiding immediate overt action" that "we expect a showdown between the Chinese and Soviet Communist

parties soon and action against the North will be more practicable after than before a showdown”.

When the air war against the North began in 1965, it was accompanied by friendly “signals” to Peking. In December 1965, Johnson modified travel restrictions to allow the heart specialist Dr. Paul Dudley White and other famous doctors to visit Communist China. The following year, athletes, teachers, and members of Congress were added to the list of the permitted.

This was the first step toward ping-pong diplomacy. Johnson’s State of the Union message in 1967 expressed the hope of a reconciliation with Communist China and said the US had no intention of denying Peking’s “legitimate needs for security and friendly relations with her neighbouring countries.”

How enviously Johnson must have watched Nixon’s arrival in Peking on TV! How unfairly treated Johnson must feel! Nixon had been allowed in, though his visit, like the wheeler-dealer’s first friendly feelers, had also been preceded by a sharp escalation in the air war. That old suspicion of downright racial prejudice against him may have recurred to Johnson. He may have felt that those snobbish Mandarins, like us mean Eastern intellectuals just don’t cotton to little old country boys with a Texas accent.

THERE ARE BIGGER STAKES than the Vietnam

war involved in the new entente with China. Another of Washington’s neo-Maoists, Secretary of Defense Laird, touched ever so lightly upon them in his new “defense posture” statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee. “As we evaluate the strength of Soviet and Chinese weapons development and deployments”, Laird said, “we must also take into account in a realistic net assessment the fact that they face some considerable constraints.”

The first—and the foremost—he cited was that, “the Soviet Union and Mainland China must deploy hundreds of thousands of troops to their Far Eastern border”. (*Statement of Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the FY 1973 Defense Budget and FY 1973-1977 Program, February 15, 1972. Superintendent of document, \$1.75 Stock Number 0800-0165*)

Tito was an ideological diversion, the first break in the once monolithic world communist movement, but altogether minor shift in the East-West military balance. But Mao’s defection is a major change in the power equation. It means that the USSR must deploy and plan its forces for war on two fronts, both major. It faces the same threat of military encirclement that was Germany’s nightmare before World War I and II.

The Soviet Union was spared this problem in World War II by Japan’s decision to strike

south against the colonial possessions of the Western powers instead of against Siberia, so the Russians could concentrate their forces against the German invaders. *But now they must take into account the real possibility of war on two fronts that are widely separated and poorly connected.*

Mao is a Pentagon bonanza. The dimensions begin to appear in the fiscal 1973 posture statement delivered to the Senate Armed Services Committee by Admiral Moorer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, right after Laird’s appearance. Admiral Moorer thought it would be “useful to note the current deployment of all Soviet divisions and tactical air units”. He told the Committee, “Of a total of 160 Soviet divisions and about 4,300 tactical aircraft, about one quarter is oriented toward China”.

That means forty divisions and more than 1,000 tactical air units which would be available against the West if there were no Sino-Soviet split. *It is no wonder that old anti-Chinese Communist hands like Joe Alsop are delirious about Nixon’s romance with Mao, indifferent to the broken heart Nixon left behind him in Taipei.*

NO DOUBT these stray and sparse glimpses of the new military realities are being widened behind the closed doors of the Armed Services Committee.

No doubt this delicate subject is figuring in the cross-examinations to which Laird,

Moorer, and the other Pentagon witnesses are now being subjected in the annual military authorization and budget hearings before the armed services and the appropriations committee of both houses of Congress. Perhaps some further revelations will survive the censor's blue pencil.

The size of the shift in the military balance is given curiously little attention in the voluminous prepared statements of the Pentagon chiefs. They are treating it almost as if it were a military secret. Laird himself did not give it more than one sentence and even lumped it with two other "constraints" on Soviet military capacity, as if to downgrade its importance.

But one of the other "constraints" he mentions is hardly new and the other is trivial. The first is his discovery that the growing Russian navy lacks warm weather ports! Laird was scooped on that story by Peter the Great. The other is Laird's boast that the Russian navy lacks "containerization"! It probably also lags behind ours in fresh frozen hamburgers.

These annual posture statements cover not only the next fiscal year's military and military assistance budgets but the Pentagon's projections for the next five years, its annual—excuse the expression—Five Year Plan, the Pentagon's *Piatiletka*. Nowhere in the prepared statements will one find a word about what may prove to be the most important new factor in the next five years; *The ex-*

tent to which China diverts Soviet military resources away from Western Europe could be increased by assistance to Chinese industrial development.

The equipment of China's armies and the speed of its nuclear development would be strongly influenced by the ultimate outcome of the Nixon visit-by American aid in the shape of credits and know-how. This is the common Sino-American interest in that agreement, the Nixon - Chou communique records, "to facilitate the progressive development of trade between their two countries". Here credits must have been discussed because no real expansion of trade with China is possible without them, and here surely is the place to suspect some further and wider understanding, as yet undisclosed. Here is the carrot for Peking, the stick over Moscow.

CHINA'S SLIM INDUSTRIAL BASE reduces her weight in the military balance. This is particularly true in the case of nuclear development. There is a wide range of non-nuclear industrial and electronic machinery and technology that would make a crucial difference in the tempo of her nuclear program.

Already, as Laird notes, "the Chinese missile threat encompasses most cities and other area-type targets in South and East Asia and a substantial part of the USSR". The Pentagon believes, he continued, "that the Chinese could begin deployment of an ICBM

with a range of 3,000 nautical miles or more, capable of striking all or most of the USSR, by 1975". But 3,000 nautical miles would only be a third of the way across the Pacific.

All this opens the widest—indeed the giddiest—perspective yet for the Nixon Doctrine. This is a new name for the old idea he has taken from John Foster Dulles of providing the equipment so that Asians can fight Asians for us, at fire-sale prices and coolie wage. What if it could be applied not to the relatively few Viets, Thais, Khmers, and Meos, but to China's teeming millions, fearful of a Soviet first strike and eager for weaponry to defend themselves?

This is the card that old poker-player Nixon is taking with him to Russia in a few weeks to the biggest poker game of his career. This is the card with which he hopes in the Kremlin to conclude the first phase of the SALT talks and perhaps other matters as well.

If Canning, with what became the Monroe Doctrine, hoped to redress the balance of the old world with the new, *Nixon can redress the world military balance by threatening to re-arm China if the Soviets do not come to terms.* The Pax Americana may be in the process of acquiring the world's most populous state as client. *This is the innermost meaning of the Peking visit and the coming Kremlin talks.*

India

New Delhi,

As Smt. Indira Gandhi and her lieutenants bask in the glory of the Congress recapturing lost strongholds in different States and reinforcing the ramparts in others, they have good reason to be elated at the brilliant success of the entire electoral battle—its strategy of alliances, its tactics in outwitting the adversaries, and above all, the timing of the operation itself. In fact, the marching steps of the jawns entering Dacca guaranteed in advance Smt. Gandhi's party seeking the mandate of the electorate so soon after the liberation of Bangladesh.

It is but natural that the masses have felt elated at the liberation of Bangladesh. It is a matter of pride for the entire nation, and naturally, the first to get the kudos for this achievement would be the Government, and inevitably the party in power cannot but reap the harvest at the poll. Incidentally, Smt. Gandhi suffered heavy reverses in the 1967 poll after a spell of Asoka Mehta-Subramaniam-L. K. Jha politics of bending to the US pressure; and after five years, she has swept the polls with all her powerful indictment of the US policy towards this country.

Along with the euphoria over Bangla Desh liberation, there is no visible sign of glorifying the brass-hat. The pathetic state in which Pakistan finds

herself under the dispensation of the Pentagon-propped Generals has discounted any such possibility; though one does hear strange voices, as that of the retired Maj. General Som Dutt who, writing recently in a weekly under the editorship of a former Foreign Minister, has demanded a permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee: "Not only would the military viewpoint be placed before the Government but the Committee would have conveyed to the *political* considerations on the issues under discussion" — a rather outspoken demand that the Service Chiefs should have a say in political aspects of national security.

While the electoral avalanche in favour of the Congress makes it clear that Smt. Gandhi has won a memorable victory, it would be incorrect to confine its significance to the impact of the Bangla Desh liberation. There have been other factors which have contributed to the sweeping success of the Congress. It is to be noted that this was the first large-scale electoral trial of strength at the State level for Smt. Gandhi's party after the Congress split in 1969. How disastrous would have been the fate of the Congress had it tried to avoid the split could be seen from the virtual liquidation of the Syndicate as an all-India political entity in this election.

Equally refreshing has been the severe trouncing that the parties of the Right, both the Swatantra and the Jana Sangh,

have received at the hand of the electorate. The Jana Sangh mushrooming into a political force since Nehru's death, has been cut to size—one more testimony to the robust secularism of India's democracy. This was demonstrated in the mid-term Lok Sabha poll, but significantly enough, it is much more pronounced this time. In other words, the Bangla Desh liberation has been effected with such sound political approach that the disintegration of Pakistan could not be cashed in at all by the Jana Sangh; if anything, it has strengthened the anti-communal outlook of our people.

This is demonstrated also by the reaction of the Muslim voter. It is undeniable there has been a lot of confusion among a large section of Indian Muslims over the emergence of Bangla Desh. Banking on this, the parties of the Grand Alliance — as also the CP M — took up the demand that the so-called Bihari Muslims must be allowed to come into India from Bangla Desh, and this was climaxed by the notorious "Bihari Bachao" convention. But the poll verdict shows that the Muslims, by and large could not be misled by such clap-trap slogans, and they voted according to their political choice.

While the progressives have reasons to be happy at the collapse of the Right challenge, it is a tragedy that a Left party of standing like the CPM should go down so ignominiously in this electoral battle. With all their fulminations about

the elections having been rigged through high-level conspiracy, the CPM leaders cannot escape the judgement that they have allowed themselves to fall out of step with a national outlook; whether over their peculiarly ambivalent stand on the question of Bangla Desh liberation, or their raging campaign the West Bengal would not suffer the Centre's persecution, they have missed to strike the national chord.

A by-product of the election verdict is the lesson that the mere strength at the organisational level bereft of correct politics can never strengthen a political party. Had it been so, the Jana Sangh and the CPM with party apparatuses much superior to that of the Congress, would not have found themselves in their present predicament.

One of the factors which may have helped the Congress gain such massive strength in most of the State Assemblies seems to be the widespread disillusion among the masses at the ineffectiveness of various types of coalition governments whether Left-led United Front or the motley crowd that formed the so-called Samyukta Vidhayak Dals, mostly under the Rightist leadership. The aversion to the Left-led United Front has come mainly because of the CPM's sectarian intolerance, and as it so happens, the States where the Left could lead the United Front Ministries, are the very strongholds of the CPM. The repudiation of the CPM-style United Front came first in Kerala

and is now complete in West Bengal. At the other end, the different varieties of the SYD Ministries emerged basically as the conveyor-belts of the Rightist parties, particularly of the Jana Sangh; the antics of the Socialists could not hide this ugly reality from the masses.

As a rebound has come the electorate's striking preference for strong one-party governments in the States. There is realisation that if the radical promises made by practically every party have to be implemented, then it will be necessary to have strong governments; and no strong government can emerge from the coalitions of the type that the country has seen since the 1967 General Election. This is not to say that the concept of the United Front has been found unsuitable for the Indian soil, but it does imply that the experience of multi-party coalitions or the United Front as practised in this country so far, has yet to earn the applause of the masses. This indeed is no mean loss for the Left.

In the emerging situation, the Left has therefore to work out its strategy skilfully basing itself firmly on the experience provided by the developments in this country. It will be a futile exercise in super-sectarianism if Left parties, now crippled or reduced in stature, decide that the first task is to demolish the Colossus that the Congress appears to be under the plea that unless this monolith is broken, there could be only dictatorship as Sri Atal

Bihari Vajpayee and Sri Madhu Limaye would perhaps like us to believe or neo-fascism as Sri Ranadive may diagnose.

Such an approach misses the very essence of the populist upsurge that the Congress has mostly reflected in our history. It has never been a monolith, and less so today. Within it are ranged both the forces of advance and of reaction. In the period ahead, the battle over issues will be fought out inside the Congress itself, with the Right elements pulling it in their own direction, while the Left within will have to strengthen its ties with the Left outside, so that the direction of development points towards a radical social order.

N. C.

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INDOCHINA

Washington, Peking and Hanoi: Anything Cooking Behind

the Scenes ?:

The Great Offensive

by TRIBUNE CORRESPONDENT

Hongkong,

THIS is a city of rumours. There are fresh rumours every day on every possible subject. More often than not, the smoke of hongkongian rumour does not stem from fire. This city has acquired a reputation for emitting smoke without a fire, thus making a mockery of the old adage that there cannot be smoke without fire.

But, there have been occasions when rumours, which appeared to be fictitious canards, turned out to be more than true. That is why no journalist worth his salt ignores any rumour which floats around in this eastasian paradise of entreport trade lying at the doorstep of gigantic communist China and at the gateway to the fabulous fareast with its wonder island of Japan.

At the moment most of the rumours are about Hanoi, Peking, Saigon, and Indochina generally. These rumours had started with a bang shortly before Nixon went to China in mid-February. After the Nixon visit, Chou is alleged to have made a secret trip to Hanoi, and this brought about a massive escalation in the volume and intensity of these rumours. It

was confidently predicted that, although the Shanghai communique had pointedly left the Vietnam issue out, a peace settlement worked out in a secret understanding was imminent. It was said that a hotpotch, churned out of the 7-point programme of Hanoi and President Nixon's 8-point proposals, would form the basis of a peaceful settlement of the Vietnam problem. Chou and Kissinger are said to have agreed on the details during their meetings in 1971. When the US unilaterally walked out of the Paris peace talks, and demanded that they be suspended indefinitely, it was believed that this was part of the strategy secretly arranged between the Chinese and the Americans for the purpose of shifting the venue of the talks from Paris to Peking, or at least to change the forum where the talks have gone for the last three years to a new forum.

No one here had any doubts that Chou and Nixon had made a secret deal about Vietnam and that it was in pursuance of this unpublicised agreement that Chou had airdashed to Hanoi with the utmost secrecy almost immediately after Nixon left the shores of

China. In Hanoi, it was alleged that Chou met Fam Vam Dong, the N. Vietnamese PM, Sihanouk, the Cambodian King-in-exile, and possibly the leaders of the Pathet Lao and the NLF of South Vietnam. What they discussed is a secret but hints were dropped that Chou went there to assure the Indochinese leaders that China had no bilateral agreement, secret or otherwise, with the US, and that China continued to extend the fullest support to the national liberation struggle. Whether these leaders felt re-assured or not is not known, but Sihanouk on his return to Peking went on record to assure the world that the Indochinese leaders had accepted the *bonafides* of Peking on this question. He did not reveal where the meeting had taken place.

However, it was not Sihanouk who told the world that Chou had gone to Hanoi on a secret mission. A US columnist, Joseph Kraft, was the first one to send a despatch from Peking, on March 9, that Chou had gone secretly to Hanoi and that he had succeeded in swinging the North Vietnamese on to his side in spite of the misunderstandings Hanoi had developed in regard to the Sino-US *detente* — undoubtedly prompted it was said by whispers from Moscow. It must be mentioned that observers here were tempted to accept the story that there was a secret deal between China and the US over Vietnam because of the writings of many US newsmen and columnists,

notably Stanley Karnow's articles in the *Washington Post* immediately after his return to Washington with the Presidential party.

In one of his articles he ventured to suggest that Nixon was making a "BID TO HELP CHOU TO STAY ON TOP". This is what he said "..... The Nixon Administration appears to be striving through indirect means to bolster the position of Chou En-Lai in the hope that the Chinese Premier's efforts to sustain an accommodation with the United States can succeed. This approach by the Administration is evidently based on the estimate that Chou's flexible foreign policy has been encountering—and will continue to meet—resistance from radical Chinese elements hostile to a Sino-American rapprochement. White House sources indicate that in the communique that ended the President's China trip, Mr. Nixon and his National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, deliberately took a conciliatory line as a way of bulwarking Chou and his faction.

"These sources explain that the President and Kissinger, aware that the communique would be publicised throughout China, calculated that a soft US stance on the contentious Taiwan issue would not only improve the American image around the country, but also strengthen Chou's hand against his adversaries. The extent to which Chou has been defending his foreign policy in esoteric manoeuvres indi-

cates to China specialists here that his rivals are still harassing him...."

But apart from his rivals inside China, Chou had a great deal of explaining to do among, China's friends abroad, especially their closest neighbours in Indochina. And US publicists were anxious to show that Chou had regained the confidence of the Indochinese in spite of the machinations of the Russians. And China was keen to show that these rumours about a secret deal were untrue, tendentious and mischievous.

But it is not easy to disabuse peoples' minds of such rumours which had begun to snowball. The rumours had it that the deal between Chou and Kissinger was a comprehensive one: that more than anything else Nixon had wanted the release of American POWs in the hands of the Vietnamese before the US Presidential campaign got under way. Knowledgeable China-watchers in Hongkong assert that Nixon had been willing to concede in principle Peking's *zuerainty* over Taiwan as *quid pro quo* for the return of the POWs. It was obvious that Nixon had believed that Peking would be able to persuade (through politico-economic pressure) Hanoi to release the POWs.

Whatever the secret understanding the Americans and the Chinese may have concluded about Vietnam, it is evident that Hanoi has refused to play

ball. And if there was no secret deal it will be a long time before even astute political observers, let alone ordinary people, can be persuaded that there were no secret deal between China and the US over Vietnam.

It is a truism which is oft repeated that *dame rumour* is fickle. And there cannot be a better example than what is now said about Chou's secret mission to Hanoi. It is now asserted that Chou did not go to Hanoi after the Nixon visit. He had gone only as far as Nanking to which place he had summoned ("invited") the the North Vietnam PM, Fam Vam Dong, and also Sihanouk, the Cambodian king-in-exile. The Nanking meeting it is said was not so much as to assure the North Vietnamese that China had not betrayed the revolutionarg struggle, but to effect a reconciliation, if possible, between Hanoi and Sihanouk. In recent times there had been growing tension between them, because the Russians are said to have convinced the North Vietnamese that Sihanouk could not win the support of the ordinary Cambodians and that it was better to drop him and switch their support to other elements capable of winning effective power, even if it be General Lon Nol. The Russians have diplomatic relations with the Lon Nol government and have broken with Sihanouk. The North Vietnamese, in spite of several trips Sihanouk had made to Hanoi, have little use

for him, and it was in an effort to make Fam Vam Dong and his colleagues accept Sihanouk as the "leader of the Cambodian people" that Chou was said to have convened this meeting in Nanking.

For the North Vietnamese, Cambodia is important. The plans for the conquest of South Vietnam is through the maze known as the Ho Chi Minh trail. This route begins in Laos and this area is under the control of the North Vietnamese. But the road continues into Cambodia in what was known as the Sihanouk trail—and it is here that it finally reaches the frontier of South Vietnam not far distant from Saigon itself. This is the area which was denied to the North Vietnamese as a result of the military operations by the Americans and the South Vietnamese into Cambodia last year with the permission of the Lon Nol government. In the future, it is unlikely that American ground forces will take part in incursions of this kind, and South Vietnamese troops can lead such raids only with the consent of Lon Nol. This is where the North Vietnamese change of policy *cum* strategy comes in. They seem to be prepared to do a deal with Lon Nol—the same sort of deal they had for many years with Sihanouk, viz, that they will stop all pressure on the main inhabited parts of Cambodia provided they were given a free hand in those parts of the country needed for infiltrating into South Vietnam.

Since the Nixon-Chou talks, Moscow has been engaged in a diplomatic offensive in Hanoi to persuade the North Vietnamese that their support was more effective and genuine than what emanated from Peking. Furthermore, the Russians had no particular reason for retaining allegiance to a useless Sihanouk in exile, and they seemed willing to swing to Lon Nol if it helped Hanoi. Moreover, the Russians are accredited to the Lon Nol government which they recognise. What the Chinese feared was that the Russians might mediate between Hanoi and the Lon Nol regime for a return to a state of things as they were before Sihanouk was overthrown vis a vis the Ho Chi Minh trail. It will be recalled that Sihanouk fell not because he supported the communists, but mainly because he had become a megalomaniac who had lost the respect and support of his people.

At the moment, on one part it is South Vietnam which is important. Laos and Cambodia are only incidental to the fighting. On the other, it is Hanoi which counts and here the Russians have been busy. For years, it is said that in spite of many difficulties they had sent the North Vietnamese far more military supplies than China had done. China had made the most noise denouncing US imperialism and encouraging Hanoi to fight to the last man to destroy imperialism. Russia, on the other hand, had demanded a peace

settlement, but at the same time had quietly sent arms and equipment. Now the Chinese have begun to talk of peace and co-existence with US imperialism on the basis of the five principles. This has given an excellent opportunity to the Russians to sow suspicions about the Chinese. And also to tell the North Vietnamese that there was no reason why China should back Sihanouk when there was little or no chance of his restoration—even the Cambodian communists who might overthrow Lon Nol will not have Sihanouk.

It is now felt that Chou did not have his way with the North Vietnamese. The offensive they launched on March 31 was clear indication that Hanoi was prepared to *go it alone* without Peking. Admittedly, there is a major debate within the North Vietnam communist party, not only with regard to the attitude of the Sino-Soviet ideological conflict but also on more mundane questions about strategy. The line which seems to have emerged is that North Vietnam would be able to hold a balance between the strain of stepping up military pressure while improving economic and social conditions for the civilians at home. This is the policy which was finally adopted at the National Assembly recently. The decision to strike at South Vietnam across the DMZ seems to be part of the new strategy to shatter Saigon's morale and at the same time smash Nixon's Vietnamisation programme.

Peking itself seemed a trifle surprised by the vitality shown by the current North Vietnamese offensive, and also seems perturbed by Hanoi's go-it-alone attitude. The staid *Far Eastern Economic Review* summed the position thus: "..... despite China's assurances to North Vietnam about its invitation to Richard Nixon, Hanoi has been deeply suspicious of the Sino-US summit and does not accept Peking's claims that the visit was in complete harmony with China's long-term policy towards Washington. The US imperialist chieftain was warmly welcomed by a country which has been exhorting Hanoi to fight on without compromise. The onslaught on Quang Tri is a gesture of defiance: Hanoi will 'go it alone' if necessary.."

Another commentator in the same magazine, discussing current developments, stated: "... This week, the Communists opened new assaults on fire bases near Hue. But there are also reports they might be winding down operations. The American military adviser to the South Vietnamese government said all communist would be killed before they escaped to Cambodia. If this threw doubt on the Americans' ability to understand the meaning of what was happening right under their noses, there seemed little doubt about President Nixon's reading of the situation. He 'rebuked' the Russians for sending military assistance to North Vietnam. It was as though the Russians were doing something immoral

by helping the communists while the Americans were simply exercising a divine right in helping the Thieu Administration. But this was not necessarily a cause for despondency. Observers of the US role in Indochina comforted themselves with the conviction that the Americans were fast catching up with the world. After 23 years they had discovered China. After a lapse of 30 years they had just woken up to Charlie Chaplin. By this yardstick, Vietnam holds no secrets which the Americans will not fully comprehend in another 20 or 30 years: Blessed are those who are slow on the uptake, for they shall inherit the White House.."

from THE EDITOR'S DESK

from p. 6

(unnamed) have hinted that the recent visit of the C-I-C of the Soviet Navy to India was in regard to such facilities being regularised. They believe that Admiral Gorshkov was seeking such facilities "as the price the Soviet Union expects to extract from India in return for the Soviet support in the Indo-Pak war last December". The Indian Prime Minister and other Indian leaders have persistently and vigorously denied that India has either granted or was on the verge of granting such facilities to the USSR. In the Rajya Sabha Mr. Swaran Singh categorically stated that the Soviet Union has no naval base in the Indian Ocean. On the other

hand, he said, the US, Britain and France had regular naval bases in this region. He also told the House that American and West European spokesmen had stated that they had increased their naval strength in the Indian Ocean because of the Soviet presence. India, he further stated, wanted to keep the Indian Ocean free from big power presence, but whether India could succeed in this was dependent on the attitude of the super-powers.

Meanwhile, the Soviet Admiral Gorshkov in a press statement in Bombay on April 7 said that the USSR will not have a naval base in the Indian Ocean area. He said that although Soviet ships sailed under difficult conditions in the Indian Ocean area, the Soviet Union did not want to build any bases in this region and that Russia was not going to have any bases. He admitted that Soviet ships called at the ports of "friendly countries to provide rest for the crew." He also stated that the presence of Soviet ships in the Indian Ocean was mainly for oceanographic research and survey while the ships of the Western powers were there for other purposes.

With the war in Vietnam escalating in the most unexpected way, it was clear that the Indian Ocean had become a very important region not only for the super powers but also for all others who have "vital interests" in the area.

SOUTH ASIAN GEOPOLITICS

Ceylon, Nepal and the Emergence of Bangladesh

by S. D. MUNI & URMILA PHADNIS

Consequent to the emergence of Bangla Desh, the power pattern in the subcontinent has been restructured. India is now in a position of indisputable dominance in South Asia. In a way this is not a welcome development for India's smaller neighbours, including Ceylon and Nepal. It invalidates their hitherto pursued strategy by restricting their diplomatic manoeuvrability within the region. It also deepens their existing psychological apprehension of India the 'colossus'.

These doubts along with serious misgivings about 'sepa a-tist' movements—particularly on the part of Ceylon—occasioned the marked reluctance of the Ceylonese and Nepalese Governments to back the Bangla Desh movement in its earlier phases, in spite of considerable public sympathy within the two countries for the Bangla Desh struggle. Now that Bangla Desh is a fact, the national interests of the two countries are already moving the two states towards closer ties with Bangla Desh.

THE international response to the Bangla Desh issue becomes intelligible in the context of three principal considerations. These are: (i) Two internationally accepted values, one pertaining to human rights and the other to the territorial

integrity of an established state. These two values seemed to be in conflict with each other in the context of Bangla Desh. (ii) Concern over the consequences of the breaking up of the traditional power pattern in the subcontinent. (iii) Domestic national interests of the various states.

The debate on the December 7 UN resolution on the Indo-Pakistan conflict revealed that while there was broad sympathy among the international community for the people of Bangla Desh on humanitarian grounds, there was also a noticeable reluctance on its part to acquiesce in the dismemberment of a member state. Underlying this concern for the preservation of the territorial integrity of Pakistan was the desire of many to uphold the *status quo* in the power structure of the region in which some sort of power balance had evolved between India and Pakistan.

Partly due to its own limited power potential, Pakistan's major objective of acquiring power parity with India prompted it to enter into military alliance with the US and subsequently, to look for more allies who could facilitate the attainment of this goal. In the process, it sought and obtained economic and military aid from the US and China, not

to speak of the Soviet Union. In its own interest, China gradually cultivated Pakistan as an ally to 'contain' India. As regards the US, it found in Pakistan an ally which did not mind providing a military foothold in the subcontinent in the form of bases.

In the continuation of this power balance both China and the US had vested interests. So was the case with the other regional states, as any change leading to the neutralisation of Pakistan's role *vis a vis* India, apart from becoming a threat to the peace and security of the region, also posed new challenges to their limited diplomatic manoeuvrability. The response of many states to the Bangla Desh issue had its ideological and domestic dimensions too. Broadly speaking, the attitude of many West Asian countries was conditioned by identification of the Yahya regime as the upholder of an Islamic state.

Countries like Yugoslavia and Ceylon, on the other hand defined their attitude towards Bangla Desh in terms of their own minority problems. Faced with secessionist threats, such countries viewed the developments in Bangla Desh as a dangerous precedent ignoring the causes that led to it.

Lastly, the countries with close economic ties with West Pakistan also found it expedient not to view the emergence of Bangla Desh with favour. Within the broad framework of these considerations—universal, regional and domestic—an

attempt will be made in this paper to analyse the attitudes of Ceylon and Nepal.

ON THE QUESTION of genocide and the flow of several million refugees into India, Nepal and Ceylon seemed to echo the hollow concern of the international community. This was evident in various official statements of both the countries as also in the Indo-Nepal and the Indo-Ceylon joint statements signed after the visit of Swaran Singh to Kathmandu and Colombo in September 1971. Both the statements expressed concern about the social and economic implications of the influx of refugees into India and urged the necessity for creating suitable conditions for the return of refugees to their homes. The Indo-Ceylon joint statement also referred to the refugees as a problem of humanitarian concern to the international community.

However, official reaction in both the countries avoided any direct reference to the mass killing of East Bengalis by the Pakistan army. And 'suitable conditions' for the return of refugees were never spelt out clearly. Addressing the eighteenth session of the National Panchayat, the late King Mahendra, for instance, merely talked of a solution acceptable to all the parties concerned. Ceylon merely expressed the hope that "accelerated democratic and constitutional procedure" would be used to enable the refugees to return to their homes in East Pakistan."

Caution was a logical corollary to the fact that from the

beginning the political upheaval in Bangla Desh was viewed as an "international affair" of Pakistan. If Nepal expressed its views only in words, Ceylon went a step further and reinforced its words by deeds.

An official spokesman in Kathmandu viewed the "East Bengal developments as an internal problem of Islamabad" and stated that Nepal would pursue a policy of "strict non-interference" in the affairs of a friendly country. In the Indo-Nepal joint statement, the term used was "East Pakistan and not the relatively neutral term "East Bengal." Further, the Nepalese Government did not permit the non-official East Bengal Refugee Relief Committee to raise funds for the refugees in India. Instead, the government contributed Rs. 25,000 for refugee relief to the UN.

As regards Ceylon, while the term "East Pakistan" did not figure in the Indo-Ceylon joint statement, the reference to refugees from "East Pakistan" in the speech of Premier Sirimavo Bandaranaike in the UN General Assembly on October 12, 1971 was notable. Moreover the Ceylon Government allowed Pakistani civilian as well as military planes to use its facilities and air space all through the crisis despite protests at home and abroad. *The assumption that Ceylon considered the East Bengal crisis to be the internal affair of Pakistan was made explicit by Ceylon's actions.*

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The breakout of full-scale war between India and Pakistan on December 3 and India's military advance in Bangla Desh followed by its diplomatic recognition of the new Republic upset earlier calculations. Before Nepal and Ceylon could comprehend the direction of change and its implications, they had to take a stand at the UN. Ceylon voted in favour of the UN ceasefire resolution and Nepal abstained, but both of them made it understood that they were against the dismemberment of Pakistan and against the right of secession. The Ceylonese stand was quite pronounced on these issues.

With a war going on next door, both Ceylon and Nepal were for the immediate cessation of hostilities. This was made amply clear by the delegations of the two countries in the General Assembly. Mahendra of Nepal addressed letters to the Presidents of India and Pakistan pleading for peace and negotiations to settle the dispute.

Besides wishing to uphold peace on principle, Nepal and Ceylon were guided by other considerations. For Nepal, the war caused the disruption of tourist traffic to the kingdom. The prices of essential commodities like salt, kerosene, petrol, soap, coarse cloth, etc., shot up owing to a slowing down in the movement of these goods from the Indian side. The situation caused some anxiety in Kathmandu. In Ceylon's case, the period of

tension before the war brought in short-term economic benefits. It was reported that Ceylonese ports did additional business during this period.

THE INDIAN VICTORY in the war disturbed the balance of power existing between India and Pakistan and may have upset the diplomatic strategies of Ceylon and Nepal which were attuned to the existing balance. In view of their geo-political situation which makes them critical points in India's security system as well as their close connections with India, particularly in the economic sphere, any counterpoise to India's power in the region was welcome for political and economic reasons.

China constituted the principal counter-weight for Ceylon and Nepal against India. Pakistan, with its limited potentialities as compared to China, was the second counter-weight. In order to use Pakistan in securing political and economic benefits from India through diplomatic manoeuvrability, it was essential for Nepal and Ceylon to maintain a show of friendship towards both India and Pakistan so as not to give the impression to the one of siding against it in consort with the other.

Herein lay the basis for the neutral stance adopted by the two countries towards the issues pertaining to the direct clash of interests between India and Pakistan. The Kashmir issue can be taken as an example in this context.

Ceylon, whether under a UNP or a SLFP government, contented itself by expressing the hope that "its expeditious solution in accordance with the UN resolution or by other peaceful means would be in the interest of peace in the subcontinent and in the region." Nepal on its part also refrained from taking clear sides on the Kashmir question except in 1957. Similarly in 1965, both Nepal and Ceylon adopted a neutral position on the Indo-Pakistan conflict.

In view of the advantages that the then existing balance of power between India and Pakistan provided for the diplomatic manoeuvrings of Ceylon and Nepal *vis-a-vis* India, the two countries were inclined in favour of the *status quo* in the subcontinent. The desire was reflected in their efforts to maintain consistently their neutral stance towards Indo-Pakistan conflict. Mahendra's identical letters to the Indian and Pakistani heads of state have already been noted. The Ceylonese Prime Minister, Sirimavo Bandaranaike declared in the island's parliament on December 1, 1971: "We do not get involved in other's business. We are not prepared to take sides."

Thus Ceylon and Nepal were both sympathetic towards India about the situation created by the refugees. They were also one in mildly demanding a political settlement between the two wings of Pakistan, in supporting the principle of territorial integrity of a nation-

state, in being anxious about peace and stability in the subcontinent. They were also equally desirous of the maintenance of the existing power pattern in the region. And yet the stands taken by them towards the emergence of Bangla Desh and India's role in it were not identical as is evident in their reactions in the UN General Assembly and elsewhere. This divergence can be explained with reference to the domestic considerations of the two countries.

THE RETICENCE till December 1971 of the governments of the two countries to deal with the issue of Bangla Desh as anything but an internal affair of Pakistan was born out of their respective geographical situations, sizes, histories and social structures. *Ceylon has to cope with its million strong Ceylon Tamil minority community, a segment of which has occasion ally demanded a separate state.* A 'secessionist' movement elsewhere was therefore regarded as potentially contagious, in that it might have affected the Ceylon Tamils in the island.

Speaking in the UN General Assembly, the Ceylonese delegate, Shirley Amarasinghe, declared: "This is surely not a liberation movement in the classic and universally understood sense of the term. We would be creating a deadly precedent if we regarded it as such. It could be claimed that it is not only majorities that have a right to be liberated but, and even more logically,

Is it true?

minorities. Most countries in this Assembly have substantial minorities—my country has—and must bear in mind the implication of treating the East Pakistan Awami League movement as a liberation movement. If there is to be a reconciliation, the East Pakistan leaders must renounce all secessionist demands.”

Ceylon was not very impressed by the argument of a majority seceding in the case of Bangla Desh. *The heavy concentration of Ceylon Tamils in two of its provinces closest to Tamil Nadu across the Palk Straits, was a major factor in Ceylon's sceptical attitude towards Bangla Desh.*

Besides, the continuation of the East Bengal crisis seemed to be beneficial to Ceylon in economic terms. With many of the East Bengal tea gardens in shambles, Pakistan became a keen buyer at Ceylon's tea auctions, particularly of low and middle grown teas. Pakistan's Tea Board, controlling the country's tea trade, was stated to buy 15 million pounds of tea in 1971 as against 5 million in 1970.

Pakistan's entry into the tea auctions for the low and middle grown varieties resulted in a sharp rise in their price—by about 20 cents per pound. Such an increase may not seem very significant but in a country with an acute foreign exchange crisis, particularly after the April 1971 insurrection, any amount earned in hard currency mattered.

To be concluded.

IS IT TRUE?

by Sherlock Holmes

FOR over ten years in the early years of the publication, *Tribune* regularly published a column by a master investigator using the pseudonym *Sherlock Holmes* to spotlight matters which needed public scrutiny. At that time stories exposing public scandals were regarded as too much anti-establishment and were frowned upon by all the so-called big “national” dailies. *Tribune* had a clear field in this kind of journalism for some years. Later, especially after the first Coalition Government was formed in 1964, every daily paper slipped into exposure stories motivated by political considerations and inspired by factional groupings. When all exposure stories became tied up with the internal political cold war in this country, *Tribune* dropped out of this field of exposure journalism and Sherlock Holmes and his fellow investigators, who wrote for *Tribune*, went into temporary retirement. *Tribune* did not want to be caught up in the cross-fire of what had turned out to be a journalistic racket, viz. exposure stories pregnant with political blackmail and intimidation. Such stories reached dizzy heights in the later sixties directed at Parties with leftwing flavouring either in the Government or in the Opposition.

But with the traumatic experiences of the 1970 elections

and the fact that the *takeover* of some sections of the daily press became an election issue, such exposure stories with political significance and motivation went out of the columns of most newspapers. Only small personal prattle which could pass for “exposures” continued to adorn the newspapers—and that only from time to time. The Emergency of 1971 and the Regulations regarding press censorship have deterred some newspapers from indulging in such stories even intended as circulation gimmicks. We still see an occasional exposure story in screaming headlines—to have a sensational frontpage lead to make readers forget that there is precious little in the rest of the paper of any value, as news, comment or interpretative analysis. And the story itself had usually nothing more than the headlines.

But there is a crying need today for public scrutiny into inefficiency, corruption, and bureaucratism which are sapping the life-blood of the nation. Such exposures to be valid must be free of ideological predilections, party loyalties, personal inhibitions or ulterior selfish considerations. Janatha Committees are expected to act as the watch dogs of the nation to root out corruption and bureaucratism, but it is necessary to have a watchful eye on the Janatha Committees themselves.

At the request of many of its readers, *Tribune* is reviving the column IS IT TRUE? by

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TRIBUNE, April 20, 1972

Sherlock Holmes—a column which had been one of the star attractions of *Tribune* some years ago. *Tribune* feels that Ceylon must quickly evolve a democratic way of life suitable to the conditions which have stemmed from historical factors—if it is to show progress of any kind. National interest must be based on national unity devoid of communal or sectional considerations. And only democracy and national unity can bring economic advance—only if bureaucratism, inefficiency and corruption and all the evils which go with them are fought and are kept down to a minimum. *Tribune* has always pointed out the baneful effects of these evils in various articles which have appeared in its columns in recent months. The *Sherlock Holmes* column will seek to bring in a great deal into a small compass so far as space is concerned through a quick-fire barrage of questions intended to pierce the thick skins of our bureaucratic diehards who have foisted themselves upon the people and the nation. The Competent Authority might occasionally dampen the enthusiasm of our *Sherlock Holmes*, but that is part of the game in the current era. This is only one of the occupational hazards peculiar to this period in Ceylon.—*Editor*.

IS IT TRUE that a whole consignment, or rather a whole schoonerful, of maldivian fish disappeared under mysterious circumstances? That this shipload had been consigned to one of the government organi-

sations which handle imports of foodstuffs? That a genius had evolved a method of clearing the goods in a way that the stuff went to a private party? That it was nearly a week before the consignees realised that the goods had vanished? That after a series of conferences at various levels and some super-duper sleuthing the major portion of the consignment was traced to the store of a private trader about fifty miles out of Colombo? That it is immaterial what action is taken to bring the wrongdoers to book? That what is significant is that this switch took place at all? That pinching a few bags, or even a lorryload, has become the rule and not the exception, but taking a whole shipload takes the cake? That is also surprising that the lorries which transported the shipload of maldivian fish were not stopped or examined in this fifty mile journey? That lorries carrying onions and chillies are pounced upon by the security forces with great regularity? That a lorryload of maldivian fish usually advertises itself with its unmistakable flavour and smell? That a great many people are having a mighty laugh about the missing shipload of maldivian fish?

* * *

IS IT TRUE that many producers of milk have been badly hit by the new rule that milk could be supplied to the Milk Board's collecting centres only through the regional co-op centres? That in many milk producing centres a pro-

ducer has to by-pass the collecting centre and go a further three or four miles to reach the co-op? That in the past he had delivered the milk at the closest collecting centre? That now he has to go several miles to take it to the co-op? That by the time the milk reached the Milk Board centre it had gone bad? That even in cases where the co-op was closer to the producer, the co-op made the delivery to the Milk Board centre after several hours and this also resulted in the milk going bad and being rejected. That one of the reasons for the lower quantum of Milk Board milk on the market was this rule about the supply being diverted through the co-ops? That one large supplier of milk in the Kandy region has written to the *Tribune* that he was fed up and had decided to sell his milching cows for slaughter and stop producing milk? That in the last fortnight, more often than not, his milk had been rejected? That he had supplied the Milk Board between 100 to 200 pints a day for the last few years without any rejection? That with the coops being imposed as a new kind of middlemen he was faced with loss and bankruptcy? That it would be better for him to call it a day and cut his losses?

That the bigwigs in the Milk Board had been confronted with the disastrous realities of this new rule making the Coops compulsory middlemen in the milk business? That the Milk Board is helpless and

Is it true?

that it was not able to do anything? That Minister Illangaratne who is in charge of Coops, and who is the only person who can bring relief to the milk producers and the Milk Board, is away in Chile? That Minister Kobekadduwa is away in Manila? That deputations will besiege these two Ministers when they return to set matters right? That all middlemen are bad even if the middlemen are Coops? That they only hinder smooth operations and increase cost of production?

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IS IT TRUE that the issue of free tickets for the UTA inaugural flights caused a great deal of heart-burning? That queues of VIPs stormed the appropriate quarters for tickets? That great embarrassment was caused to officials who had to do the actual handing over of tickets? That in all this hullabaloo about the UTA bonanza many in Air Ceylon seem to have forgotten that they have regional flights to Jaffna, Trinco and Trichy? That passengers on the flight feel neglected because they are treated like poor outcasts? That there are occasions when the UTA DC 8 and the modest Avro arrive at Katunayake about the same time and the treatment meted out by Air Ceylon officials to the miserable passengers from Trichy has been the cause of legitimate resentment? If the Air Ceylon officials at Katunayake must feel superior about the UTA and International flights

it would be best to transfer the regional flights back to Ratmalana? That it would not be difficult to have the necessary customs officials for the purpose? That in nearly all countries abroad, international flights do not get mixed with regional flights the way they do in Katunayake? That passengers on the Trichy flight have a raw deal? That on more than one occasion even the few meagre sandwiches were not enough to go round?

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IS IT TRUE that the Government and the Coop movement seem to be at cross purposes on certain fundamental matters of importance? That whilst the Government wants the coop form of enterprise to become more widespread in all fields of economic activity, certain elements in the co-op hierarchy have outdated ideas of how this policy should be implemented? That these officials for instance, do not think that persons employed in the white collar sphere, should own or run co-op farms, dairies and the like in an effort to provide more employment and increase food production? That coop officials think only farmers can start coop forms and so on and so forth? That this is a new system of caste enforced by the coop movement? That something must be done to free the coop movement from this restrictive philosophy of the hierarchy?



Headlines

MARCH 21 — APRIL 1

TUESDAY, MARCH 21: According to TOC, a section of the rank and file of the Federal Party is up in arms against some members of the party leadership for making far-reaching moves affecting the party without a mandate from the party. Nearly 15,000 acres of recently replanted tea in the upcountry areas are in danger of being destroyed by the prevailing drought. Soviet Leader Leonid Brezhnev yesterday called for broader co-operation with the United States in a major Foreign Policy speech. The United States and China yesterday held their first session of substantive talks aimed at promoting trade and paving the way for normal diplomatic relations.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22: The Government will set up Criminal Justice Commissions which will have the powers to hear the cases in connection with the insurgency, exchange control violations and alleged gem and foreign currency rackets. Several Cabinet Ministers yesterday refuted certain press reports on Gift Cars and said that the Government has made no decision to allow gifts of cars from abroad. A foreigner whose arrest sparked off investigations into the multi-million rupee gem smuggling and foreign currency racket is seriously ill and warded in the Colombo General Hospital. Soviet Union yesterday called

for Asian Collective security through regional Co-operation at the annual conference of the ECAFE.

THURSDAY, MARCH 23: Bombs, blue uniforms and army boots were found in three suitcases at the Peradeniya campus yesterday and two undergraduates were taken into custody. The Dept. of Inland Revenue collected Rs. 58.38 million in revenue more than the estimated target for 1971-72. Nathubhai Pahade of Gujerat yesterday completed the 18-mile Palk Strait swim in 18 hours. According to Soviet sources, a new cold war in Europe may be unavoidable if the West German Parliament refuses to ratify the treaties made with Moscow and Poland.

FRIDAY, MARCH 24: The Minister of Finance yesterday said in the House of Representatives that the Government has taken steps to strengthen security arrangements all over the island, because reports reaching the Government indicated that a new and 'disturbing' situation had developed. Peradeniya campus of the University of Ceylon was closed yesterday while the Kaady Police continued the interrogation of two undergraduates arrested with insurrectionist material. Chinese Premier Chou En-lai yesterday firmly called for a total and unconditional US withdrawal from Indo-China while US announced an indefinite postponement of the Paris meetings until the Communists

indicated they are ready to negotiate seriously.

SATURDAY, MARCH 25: The Government is considering the question of banning the import of certain Indian newspapers which have been publishing full page advertisements containing biographical excerpts of the North Korean Premier, Kim Il Sung. The Minister of Fisheries, Mr. George Rajapakse, yesterday said that no foreign nation would be given facilities for the use of the fisheries harbour at Trincomalee. Trade Unions representing plantation workers yesterday urged the Government to ensure that the workers received a monthly wage. The British Govt will assume direct control of Northern Ireland. India and Mongolia yesterday urged China to join the 25-nation Geneva disarmament conference.

SUNDAY, MARCH 26: The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, has appointed Co-ordinating Officers in 10 districts. The Minister of Labour, Mr. Michael Siriwardene, has taken immediate steps to re-organise "registration at the Employment Exchange on an electoral basis. A major fraud running into nearly Rs. 2 lakhs has been detected at a People's Bank office in Colombo. Bangla Desh yesterday observed the first anniversary of the bloody martial law cracked down in East Pakistan. President Nixon yesterday predicted a successful Moscow summit meeting in May, possibly including a US-

Soviet agreement on limiting nuclear arms.

MONDAY, MARCH 27: Mr. Philip Gunawardene, leader of the MEP, former Minister and a founding father of the United Left Movement in Ceylon passed away yesterday. A trade unionist attached to the State Trading Corporation has been taken into custody in connection with a revolutionary pamphlet he is alleged to have distributed among Corporation employees. The coconut pest "Cumingi" is spreading rapidly in the Panadura electorate with visible signs of further devastation in the Kallutara district. Premier Sheikh Mujibur Rahman yesterday announced that Bangla Desh is nationalising local banking and insurance companies.

TUESDAY, MARCH 28: The police have taken in for questioning several persons alleged to have been spreading false rumours in connection with the prevailing emergency situation. According to *Daily Mirror*, the Premier Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike will soon meet the leadership of the Communist Party to iron out differences that have arisen between CP and UF Government. The credit squeeze which has been in operation since October, will end on March 31. The Ceylon-UK Eire Conference has informed the Ministry of Shipping and Tourism that it was now prepared to reduce the surcharge imposed on freight consequent to US dollar devaluation, Russia yesterday

launched its eighth spacecraft to Venus. The Soviet Union's Defence Minister, Marshal Grechko, yesterday began an official visit to Yugoslavia which highlights the improvement in relations between the two countries.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29: No right of appeal will be allowed against the findings of Criminal Justice Commissions to be appointed to try alleged insurgents. Ten executives of the Ceylon Fisheries Corporation have been served with termination notices following strong strictures made by the Jayaratne Commission which inquired into the affairs of the Corporation. The Cabinet sub-Committee on the Cost-of-Living has appointed an official committee to examine and report on reducing the cost-of-living. Government medical officers and specialists have decided to press for a general revision of salaries in lieu of private practice. The Soviet Union yesterday tabled at the Geneva Conference a draft treaty banning chemical weapons. North Vietnam has called on the US to return to the Paris peace conference on Vietnam.

THURSDAY, MARCH 30: The draft Republican Constitution is to be re-drafted accommodating the recommendations of some of the Committees appointed to examine the provisions of the draft. More than 13,000 jobs have been provided to youth in the last few months under various projects sponsored by the

Ministry of Planning and Employment. The Government yesterday discussed a memorandum by Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Kobbekaduwa, on the ownership of land by individuals, but the lengthy discussions were inconclusive. The death was announced yesterday of Hsieh Fu-Chih, former Chinese Minister of Security and member of the Communist Party politburo. A right-wing plot to assassinate President Salvador Alleade and seize power last weekend was disclosed yesterday.

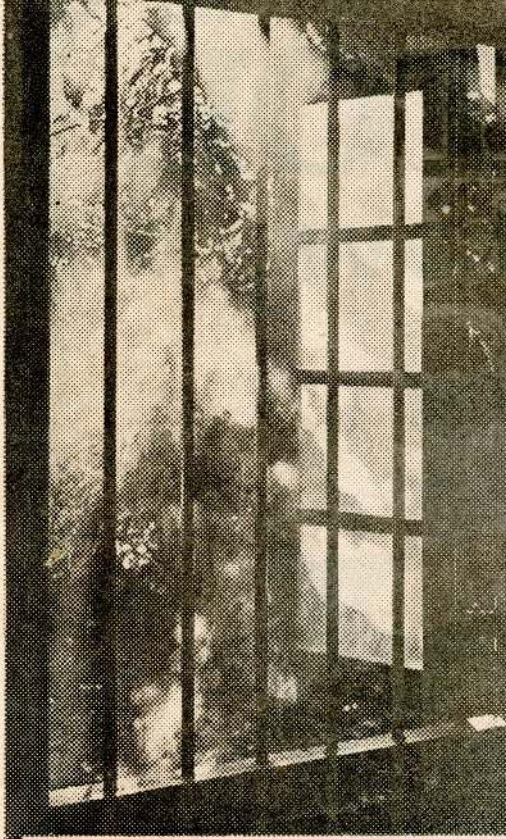
FRIDAY, MARCH 31: The leader of the Communist Party, Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe, yesterday accused the Government of breaking the promises made to the people during the last general elections. The Minister of Constitutional Affairs, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, told a deputation from the Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry of Ceylon yesterday that the only type of private property that could be countenanced in a fully realised socialist democracy will be items such as "tooth brushes". The Business Turnover Tax on synthetic textiles is being doubted with effect from April 1. The promulgation of the new Constitution, which was tentatively fixed for May 23, has been put off again. The Bolivian Government yesterday ordered 119 Soviet diplomats and Embassy officials to leave the country within a week. The US, USSR and Britain yesterday signed a convention on

international liability for damage caused by space objects.

SATURDAY, APRIL 1: The Finance Minister, Dr. N. M. Perera, asserted at a press conference yesterday that there will be no devaluation. An amendment to the Interpretations Ordinance which in effect deprives the courts of the power to grant injunctions or make any order for specific performance against the Crown, a Minister, Parliamentary Secretary or officer of the crown, is now before the Parliament. The Govt. has finalised arrangements to set in operation 23 new development schemes at Rajarata and the Northern Province. Indian Premier, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, in an interview with a leading Ceylonese journalist, said that India had no aggressive designs on Ceylon and described such ideas as absurd and unthinkable. President Anwar Sadat yesterday denounced King Hussein's plan to weld both banks of River Jordan into a Federal State as a US move designed to liquidate the Palestine issue.



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