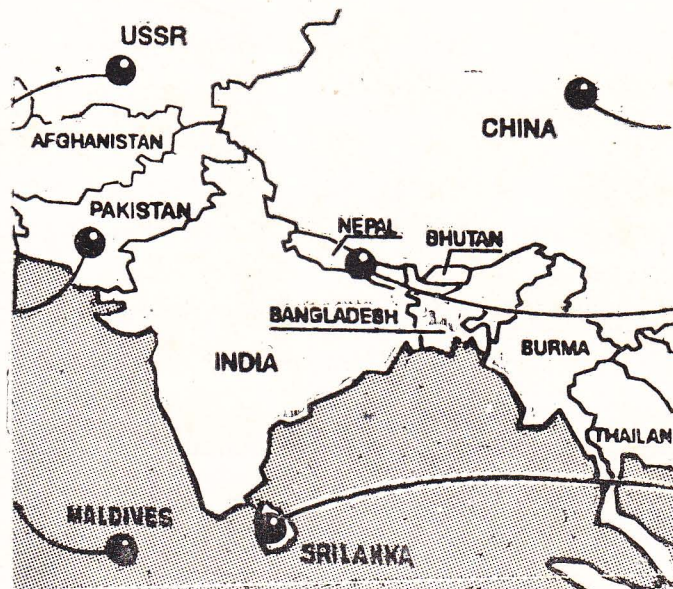


LANKA

GUARDIAN

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India's changing role



INDIA'S REGIONAL REACH

- **Sri Lanka's Distorted Democracy**
— *N. M. M. I. Hussain*
- **Marxist Rethinking on Capitalism**
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TRENDS

THE KILLING FIELDS

Between Aug. 15 and Sept. 15, there were 865 murders committed in different parts of the island, but mainly in the South. Of these, 54 were described as "political" by the Parliamentary Affairs and Justice Minister, Mr. Vincent Perera. He said that these figures included "subversives", 25 police officers and 21 security personnel. The most publicised killings were those of Ven. Wellatota Pannadassi Thero of Matara, Dr. Mrs. Gladys Jayewardena, Chairman of the State Pharmaceuticals Corporation and sister-in-law of former President Jayewardena, Prof. C. Pathuwathavithana, Moratuwa Univ. Vice Chancellor, Mr. Merrill Kariyawasam, former Deputy Minister, Ms. Daya Sepali Senadeera, former MP, and TV artiste Sagarika Gomes.

SPEAKER'S APPEAL

"The statements made here should not in any way interfere with the progress of the A.P.C." appealed Hon. M. H. Mohammed, the Speaker when Parliament debated the Emergency last month. Urging restraint, Speaker Mohammed said that members should bear in mind the importance of the All-party conference, and speak with a sense of responsibility.

JANASAVIYA

The JANASAVIYA Program, Prime Minister Premadasa's vote-winning promise in the Presidential polls campaign will have its formal inaugura-

tion on Oct. 2. The date has been chosen since it is also the World Habitat Day and the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. It will be started in 28 A.G.A. divisions but the ceremonies will be on a "low key" in view of the prevailing situation, a spokesman said.

NO DISAGREEMENT

Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne, Foreign Minister and State

Minister of Defence blamed "media reports" for the confusion about the recent Indo-Sri Lankan agreement on the IPKF pull-out time-table. He was replying to a question in the House. The reports said that the pull-out was conditional — Sri Lanka must guarantee the safety and security of the Tamils of the North. There were no such "links" said the Minister.

PRICE INCREASE

On account of rising production costs which we have endeavoured to absorb in the recent past, the *Lanka Guardian* is reluctantly compelled to announce that from Oct. 1st, the magazine will be priced at Rs. 7.50. The foreign subscription rates will be announced on Jan. 1st.

The journal was priced at Rs. 2.50 when we launched it on May Day 1978. It was increased from Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 on July 1st, 1987.

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CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| News Background | 3 |
| Foreign Reports | 5 |
| Sri Lanka's 'Conquest Democracy' | 6 |
| People's Conference | 8 |
| Letters | 9 |
| The Region | 13 |
| The Culture of Nationalism | 23 |
| Opinion | 24 |
| Women and Capitalist Development | 25 |
| Books | 28 |

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A flicker of light at the end of the tunnel

Mervyn de Silva

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Suddenly peace breaks out? Not quite. A little light at the end of the dark, winding tunnel? Perhaps.

An All-parties conference attended by 21 political parties and groups including the LTTE as observer is the closest we have come to internalise the search for a solution to an inescapably deepening domestic crisis which was 'externalised' in the 1980's by the Indian involvement. (L.G. Sept 15). But now the major or dominant aspect of an all-pervasive conflict — or multiple conflicts — is the violence in the Sinhala South, represented by the J.V.P., and a direct, powerful threat to more than the UNP regime. It is more than a threat to the State too. It has greatly undermined the social order with the prospect of Sri Lanka slipping into chronic anarchy.

Nonetheless, it was heartening to see the ferocious 'Tigers', one of the most feared guerilla organisations in the world, send two delegates in pleasing white trouser and tunic instead of their customary battle fatigues. The 'Tigers' and all the Tamil groups were there to suggest that the northern ethnic issue is perhaps less resistant to negotiate settlement than the JVP problem, the cutting edge of the national conflict. Thus, the ISLAND editorial was right when it said that the absence of the JVP was like Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark, though exacting bardolators may have had their doubts about the accuracy of the analogy.

On the principle that jaw-jaw is better than war-war, President Premadasa has put his own maxim of "Consultation,

compromise, and consensus" into practice in a desperate effort to relieve the mounting pressure on both regime and system.

The month-long consultations were likely to ease the pressure, Mr. Premadasa obviously calculated, and to some extent, he has proved correct. At least the middle-class breathed a little more freely and middle-class confidence is vital to the survival of the system. A middle-class without much courage or resilience had more or less given up, totally incapable of coping with the crisis. Business confidence had quickly collapsed. The panic-stricken business and professional communities were already so demoralised that a flight of capital and skills had started. The slight improvement in the share market soon after the APC opened was the first sign of slight recovery.

RECOVERY PROCESS

The recovery process was strengthened by the two cease-fires — ceasefire in the North between the IPKF and the LTTE, and a cessation of hostilities in the South. There was of course a big difference. The ceasefire in the North-East was the direct outcome of an inter-governmental agreement, India and Sri Lanka, with the Indian government ready to pull-out the IPKF by December 31, once certain conditions were met. The conditions did **NOT** include a firm, direct linkage between the pullout and the devolution process, a diplomatic victory for the President and his two top negotiators, Foreign Minister Ranjan Wijeratne, who had talks with Mr. Gandhi in Belgrade, and Mr. Premadasa's special ad-

viser, Mr. Bradman Weerakoon in Delhi, who conducted negotiations with top Indian officials, mainly Mr. Gandhi's key aide, his secretary Mr. Ronen Sen.

The most significant development however was the ceasefire in the South. In the first place, it was a unilateral cessation of hostilities by the government, a decision taken by the President himself. But it was limited to 3 days, time to test the JVP's will and its tactics. Secondly, it was fixed for Sept. 27, a week after the announcement — time for the security forces to continue their operations. These details reflected the regime's dilemma, a regime caught between its desire for a political settlement and the need not to undermine the army's offensive. It is the classic dilemma of a civilian regime, particularly one led by a populist President, who has been criticised by influential sections in his own party for taking too "soft" a line on the JVP. The dilemma has everything to do with a development that this journal has highlighted in the recent past — the emergence of the army as an increasingly autonomous actor on the national stage; a typical Third World phenomenon, and the logical consequence of the militarisation process in the 1980's.

The LTTE, we have argued strongly, needed a breather, and the IPKF off its back. Hence, its diplomatic initiative — an opening to the Premadasa government, more decidedly anti-Delhi than its predecessor. It is of course a tactical move. Whether the LTTE will return to its Eelam, separatist platform after the IPKF pulls out or will be content in battling the North-

East pro-Delhi EPRLF administration for the recovery of its once unchallenged political-military dominance is of course the big, wide-open question.

JVP TACTICS

It is equally clear that the JVP too needed time to repair the damage caused by the tough military onslaught since July 29, the deadline the JVP-DJV gave the army. Resign or face the music — not soldiers only but their families. The army took up the challenge to protect not just the lives of its men but to preserve its institutional image, another contributory factor in the steady emergence of the military establishment as an autonomous player.

The appeal of the Mahanayakes, initiated by the chief prelate of the Ramanya **nikaya**, was the major move in the fast-changing scene. Then came the appeal of the five Opposition parties, led by Mrs. Bandaranaike. Nobody missed the significance of the timing. The Presidential Secretariat announcement of the unilateral cessation of hostilities, for three days, came soon after Mrs. Bandaranaike and the Opposition alliance met Mr. Premadasa. While the ceasefire in the North was **not** conditional in the sense of a specified 'trial' period, the ceasefire in the South was for an initial three days after which it will be extended IF the 'armed militants' responded.

On Oct. 1st, we will know what that response will be. The LTTE has accused the IPKF of 'violations', an allegation summarily dismissed by the Indian High Commission. Instead, fire-fights will continue but it is unlikely that the ceasefire will be called off. In the south, the situation is radically different. The balance of forces will determine the JVP's decisions, based on its own tactics and strategy. In my view, it will be a surprise if the three-day ceasefire matures into a prolonged cessation of hostilities.

100 Million weekly loss

Sri Lanka is losing Rs. 90 to 100 million a week from tea due to short supply at the Colombo Auctions and the tea export trade feels that the profits earned from high prices now prevalent will be offset if production is not resumed in certain areas in the Uva and Southern provinces.

A leading tea broker told "In the City" that unprecedented upward price movements were witnessed in the Colombo auctions this week.

"Tea prices are going crazy. We've never seen the like of price movements before" one broker said.

He said that the weekly average which was Rs. 67 last week went up to Rs. 75 this week. The main reason for the price improvement was strong buying by the Soviet Union and South Africa.

The Soviet Union accounted for nearly 50 per cent of the tea on sale.

The broker said that active buying was due to the shortage of tea supply currently experienced in the Colombo market. Everybody is trying to snap up whatever tea is available in the market.

He said that action must be taken to settle the strikes in tea production sector.

He pointed out that a fair quality of tea is available in the pipeline. A total of 3.5 million kilograms of tea have been catalogued for the auction on October 10 which means that there is enough tea for sale from now till October 10.

Meanwhile, the Tea Market Report of Forbes and Walker for the sale of September 13 said that there is much speculation in tea circles as to what decisions India would take to circumvent the problem facing

their domestic sector today. Tea is a sensitive commodity in India and with the general election round the corner the Indian government will have to take a firm decision to stabilise tea prices at reasonable levels in the local market.

It also said the sharp increase in prices is attributed to a shortfall in the exportable quantities caused by a dramatic increase in domestic consumption. Growth in the domestic usage of this beverage has increased tremendously over the past decade or so when compared to increase in production.

"The home market alone absorb about 66 per cent of the total crop leaving only approximately 34 per cent for export. This situation seems to have got compounded during this critical election due to the drought that prevailed during the first quarter" it said.

— Sun

Privatisation project scrapped

The government has decided to convert the Telecommunication Department into a corporation instead of going ahead with the previous privatisation proposal, a senior Post and Telecommunications ministry official said.

He said a directive to this effect has been received from the government and discussions on the proposal are now being held with the various telecommunication unions.

"The question of absorbing present telecommunication employees into the new corporation has been a matter of primary importance in these discussions", the official said.

The new corporation will be formed after the necessary legislation is adopted by parliament.

— Daily News

Ceasefire: why the long notice

Yesterday's big news, that a unilateral three day ceasefire from 6 am on September 27, under which the security forces will halt their anti-subversive offensive, raised the inevitable questions: Why Sept. 27? Why should it take so long to get the ceasefire started.

Authoritative sources said there was more than one reason. First, the government and the opposition wished the JVP and other armed groups to have enough time to meet and consider their response.

Then there was the need for security forces to get the word down even to the most far-flung outpost — not merely by press, radio and TV, but through the "proper channels".

Finally, there was also the need to have the necessary facilities in place to receive those rebels who may choose to give themselves up. These arrangements are already being made, an official spokesman said.

— Daily News

Special team questions

A special Police team has been detailed to question several Tamil youths arrested with arms and ammunition of Talawakella last week. Police suspect that youths have moved into the area to recruit estate youths to undergo weapons training in the North-Eastern region.

Police believe that the youths in custody belonged to a certain political group carrying out a **forced conscription drive in the North-East.**

Senior police officials remained tight-lipped about the arrests which "The Island" learns had been made by a joint Police-Army team. Several sophisticated weapons had also been seized during the operation.

— Island

A.P.C. : Fragile Peace ?

The seven Tamil groups taking part in this week's "all party conference" on peace in Sri Lanka were told by the security guards at the meeting hall to leave their weapons outside. Meekly, they did. If only it were so easy in the country at large.

The day after the conference, Sri Lanka announced that an agreement was near under which India would withdraw its 40,000 remaining peacekeeping troops from the island by early next year. There may be lastminute snags, but India will go. When it does, the conference's strangely peaceful sight — Tamil Tigers sitting down with their arch-enemies of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) and exchanging nothing more deadly than words — is sure not to be repeated. Instead, a fratricidal war is likely to break out in the Tamil north and east of the island, leaving the Sinhalese south, where much of today's blood is being shed, in relative peace.

The Indians had long been planning to leave by January. Their soldiers had been set an impossible task when they went in back in 1987. They were to disarm the Tigers but not exterminate them. The Tigers, who had no interest in giving up the certainties of the gun for the vagaries of the ballot, melted into the northern jungles to be chased fruitlessly by the Indian army. More than 1,000 Indian soldiers have been killed. Morale among the Indians is low, and indiscipline is eating its way in. The Indian army's massacre of 53 Tamil civilians in the northern Jaffna peninsula on August 2nd horrifyingly showed how far the rot has gone.

India's plan for a dignified withdrawal was wrecked by the impetuous speech given by Sri Lanka's President Ranasinghe Premadasa in June, in which he told the Indians to get out by the end of July. India natu-

rally dug its heels in. Mr Premadasa naturally had to back down, and now, after a lot of haggling, the two countries are back to the original timetable.

Although he did not accomplish what he set out to do, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, India's prime minister, is ready to withdraw because of the general election he faces late this year. Provided he is not seen to be forced out, he wants to leave: his opposition is getting enough mileage out of "India's great misadventure" that he will be happy to be rid of it. For his part, President Premadasa stirred up the dispute with India in June to seize the nationalist initiative from the Sinhalese extremists known as the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front). Now he realises the JVP will seize on any old issue to continue its campaign — so why not let the Indians leave in the way they want?

The Indians will reflect bitterly on their experience. They came in, at Sri Lanka's request, to bring peace. They leave behind not only their own corpses and those of the many Tigers they have killed, but thousands more civilians than combatants dead. The political solution has solved little. The north-eastern provincial council to which power was devolved has been boycotted by the Tigers and their backers, and though it was elected in a freeish ballot it has never seemed to win legitimacy. India is resigned to a contest of force: it has been arming the Tigers' rivals and allowing them to conscript fighters in the north-east.

The withdrawal agreement between India and Sri Lanka, which was expected to be signed over the weekend, will probably set up "peace committees" comprising representatives of the Tamil groups and Sri Lanka's security

(Continued on page 23)

Sri Lanka's 'Conquest Democracy'

Izeth Hussain

It is known that when an institution is transplanted from one country to another it acquires a local coloration, and sometimes is even transmogrified into something quite different. A striking illustration was provided by an East European country which in the inter-war years tried to practise democracy. The Government in power, finding that it had lost its Parliamentary majority after elections, proceeded to re-establish it by the simple device of assassinating the requisite number of Opposition members. That was a highly original form of transplanted democracy.

We too have practised a highly original form of democracy, quite unlike anything prevailing in the West or even in a Third World country such as India. In the West it is clearly understood that a democratic Government has to be accommodative of the Opposition and consensual in its approach to problems, or it is not democratic. In Britain, for instance, a Parliamentary Bill quite often undergoes transformations before it reaches final form as the suggestions and criticism of the Opposition are taken into account. And, of course, one never hears of Opposition complaints that insufficient time has been allowed for debates over legislation of the most momentous national importance. The Opposition is regarded as Her Majesty's Opposition and the "alternative government". It will be agreed that in the Sri Lankan version of democracy the Government is not expected to give any quarter to the Opposition.

A democratic Government has also to respect institutions that are essential for the functioning of democracy such as an independent judiciary, and a free

press by which is meant not just an uncensored press but one unconstrained by self-censorship and devices such as the withholding of newsprint and Government advertisements. Democracy where it functions properly is a highly complex political reality, not just a matter of having supposedly democratic constitution. It will be agreed that our Governments have not regarded the freedom of the press, which is essential for the proper functioning of democracy, as sacrosanct.

The reason why democracy has to be consensual and respect democratic institutions is that the ruling party usually gets far less than 50% of the votes. The democratic Government has therefore to bear in mind that it does not represent the majority of the people, who in fact are represented by the opposition parties in Parliament. In Sri Lanka our Governments which came to power with approximately 36% of the votes straightaway assumed that they had the backing of the majority of the people, and thereafter conducted themselves without too many democratic scruples. In 1977 the Government came to power with 51% of the votes and straightaway started shouting about its "massive mandate", forgetting that almost half the people were against it, and what is more could reasonably have been expected to regard the Government with hatred as it is certainly true in Sri Lanka that "Politics is organized hatred".

It appears that because of some sort of hallucination our Governments mistook seats for people. Under our former system of voting, now happily defunct, a Government backed by far less than half the votes or just a fraction over half got 90% and more of the seats in Parliament. The overwhelming majority of seats on the Govern-

ment side apparently led our Governments to believe that they had the support of the overwhelming majority of the people. Westerners, who have been none too respectful of our achievements, observing the behaviour of our 1977 Government in particular might have concluded that we, by confusing seats with people, had instituted "posterior democracy".

Our Governments used to come to power through democratic elections the legitimacy of which was never doubted, but in between elections they tended to behave undemocratically. All the same, our Governments prior to 1977 could have been regarded as at the least quasi-democratic, and their basic needs strategy certainly showed a concern for the mass of the people. After 1977 all that changed with the Government displaying what many regarded as an obsessional hatred of democracy. The facts are known, so that mention might be made at this point only of the deprivation of Mrs Bandaranaike's civic rights, the infamous referendum of 1983, and howling hooligans threatening Supreme Court Judges. Those hooligans were regarded in high quarters as exercising their fundamental right to demonstrate! The disrespectful Westerner would have concluded that ours was a "hooligan democracy".

Perhaps our Governments have really been practising what might be called "conquest democracy", which could explain some peculiar aspects of our political life. The analogy of conquest might explain, for instance, our peculiar institution of post-elections violence which seems to exist nowhere else in the world. When a foreign army conquered a city, the soldiers were usually allowed to loot, rape, burn, trash and kill, the only constraint being that palaces and holy places, with the pre-

The writer, a retired Foreign Service Officer was Sri Lankan Ambassador in Manila.

cious objects therein, were reserved for the conquering king or General and his top brass. In our post-elections violence, party bravos have exercised some of the time-honoured privileges of conquerors by looting, burning, thrashing and sometimes killing. The aftermath of the last elections proved to be exceptional only because the ruling party continued in power.

The analogy of conquest might also explain what happens to our state sector after a new Government comes to power. The foreign conquerors, entitled as they were by time-honoured practice to the "spoils of war", helped themselves to the resources of the conquered country, while our Governments have helped themselves through the "spoils system" to the resources of our vast state sector. They forgot that the resources for running the state sector are provided by the productive activities of all the people, not just the supporters of the Government, and they proceeded to provide the very best to their relations, friends, and political supporters. Our "spoils system" was astonishing even by Asian standards and, as if that was not enough, our 1977 Government put itself in a class apart by exercising the privileges of the conqueror to an extent that was astonishing even by Sri Lankan standards.

The analogy of conquest could perhaps also provide some illumination about the JVP, which in some ways seems to be an oddity. It regards itself as left-wing but no Marxist party in Sri Lanka **or anywhere else in the world** can accept it as left-wing because of its hard line on the Tamil question. Perhaps it should be regarded not so much as a party of the Left as a party of the left-out.

CAMBODIA

It is worth looking briefly at what happened in Cambodia. In that country there were always two peoples, the Cambodians of the rice-growing areas who were

within the framework of Cambodian civilization, and the others who were always the left-out. What happened was that Pol Pot, Ieng Sary Khieu Samphang and others, all of whom considered themselves Marxists and some of whom were Sorbonne-trained, got together with the left-out of Cambodia and hence, according to one theory, the peculiar, vengeful, genocidal horror of the Pol Pot brand of communism. It would of course be absurd to regard our people of the south as comparable to the left-out of Cambodia as they have always belonged within the framework of Sinhalese civilisation, and indeed regard themselves as the proud inheritors of the nationalist traditions of the Ruhuna. But the Sri Lankan brand of democracy, can certainly be expected to breed a sense among a sizeable section of the people that they are the conquered and the left-out, and they can be expected to hit out, convulsively and murderously, without giving a damn for ideology of any sort. It appears that the politics of conquest have catalysed the politics of the left-out in the deep south where the people have been left out of the splendours both of the liberalized economy and the Mahaveli economy.

SEWER, NOT STREAM

We now have to ask what options are open to us to stop the crisis in which we find ourselves leading to cataclysm. The JVP has been invited to join the political mainstream, but it might seem to them that the mainstream is really a sewer. Military action against the JVP can at best provide no more than a temporary respite, as practically everybody seems to recognize. What has to be grasped about the JVP is that those violent young men are not extraterrestrials but that our society produced them, revealing something utterly rotten in the state of Sri Lanka. Something has to be done to stop the rot or we will disintegrate as a nation. It would therefore be suicidal to give way to a mood of eup-

horia should military action against the JVP appear to succeed, and thereafter desist from taking meaningful action against the rottenness which in the first place led to the JVP rebellion.

There seems to be a national consensus for a constitutional change making the leader continuously responsible to the representatives of the people in Parliament. This consensus is easily understandable as so many feel that Presidential powers under the present Constitution amount to an abortion of democracy. However, as argued in this article democracy is far more than a matter of constitutional arrangements.

Our problem really is to make Sri Lankan democracy democratic, and for that practice is what matters not just constitutional tinkering and rhetoric about democracy. The Government must now show that it is willing in practice to abandon the malpractices of conquest democracy by announcing that henceforth no politician will have any say whatever in appointments, promotions, and transfers in the public sector. That certainly will be backed by a widespread national consensus though not perhaps by all the politicians, for obvious reasons.

It might seem to the Western observer that in aping the West by first adopting Westminster-style and then Presidential-style democracy we have proceeded from a joke to a farce. Whatever it might be called, our democracy has in fact been characterized by the unconstrained use and abuse of power, just as in the dictatorships. And unconstrained power has of course to lead ineluctably, sooner or later, to disaster as shown by the fact that the 1977 Government left this country in a more disastrous situation than is faced by any other country in the Third World. We have to learn that unless power is constrained no civilized existence is possible, something that was very clearly understood by the scholar-monk who wrote Sri Lanka's first Constitution, the Mahavamsa.

International People's Conference calls for negotiations

In respect of the People of Sri Lanka it was Resolved:

That in the context of the steadily deteriorating situation in Sri Lanka (the root cause which lay in denying the right to self-determination of the Tamil people) in which both Sinhalese and Tamil people — mostly innocent people — are being senselessly killed almost daily by the Sri Lankan state's security forces, the Indian Peace-Keeping Forces, the several Tamil and Sinhalese armed organizations involved in internecine conflict and by unidentified but well funded and heavily armed assassination squads:-

(a) That the Sri Lankan Government act expeditiously to implement the provisions of the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord of July 29, 1987, which provides for internal autonomy for the Tamil people in their traditional areas of habitation, as a first step towards restoring peace with justice.

(b) That the Sri Lankan Government and its security forces, the Government of India and the Indian Peace-Keeping Forces (IPKF), the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Eelam people's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), the Eelam Revolutionary Organization (EROS), the Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front (ENDLF), the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), The peoples' Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), and other Tamil armed Organizations, and among the Sinhalese the Janata Vimukti Peramuna (JVP or People's Liberation Front), arrive at a ceasefire, and begin negotiations together with the political parties represented in parliament to work towards a solution that would guarantee territorial rights, human and democratic rights, and provide the institutional framework that guarantees the right to self-determination of the Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim peoples, so

*People's Plan for the 21st Century — Alliance of Hope
Japan, August 1989*

INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE (Sapporo, Nibutani, Kushiro in Ainu-Moshiri (Hokkaido) Japan, August 7th — 14th, 1989

that these peoples can live in unity with diversity, preserving and developing their respective languages, religions and cultures and pursue their economic and social welfare, and thereby pave the way for an early withdrawal of the Indian Peace-Keeping Forces. We call for a lasting peace, with justice for all the people of Sri Lanka, especially the poor, the displaced, the refugees, and the victims of violence.

Participants in the International Indigenous People's Conference included people from **Australia, Bealu, Brazil, Canada, East Timor, Guam, Gautemala, Hawaii, Malaysia Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Tahiti, Taiwan Tonga and the Soviet Union.** In addition observers from **India Sri Lanka and Japan** were present. This conference was one among nearly twenty conferences organized in August 1989, by a coalition of people's movements and organizations in Japan concerned with and committed to peace, Justice, human and democratic rights and a world free from exploitation and domination by the industrially developed countries. The Co-Presidents of People's Plan 21st Century (PP21) include well known Japanese intellectuals and human rights activists. Thousands of Japanese and over three hundred invitees from other countries participated in the month long proceedings held in different parts of Japan from the northern most island Hokkaido to Okinawa in the south. PP21 is an attempt to "produce a vision of the future society

which is worth winning together." It is an Alliance of Hope, and is an attempt to challenge the conscience of the Japanese people as Japan takes its place as a global economic superpower having become not only the largest donor of Official Development Assistance, but also a major exploiter of the world's resources and a leading partner together with the industrially developed countries of the west in perpetuating an international system that impoverishes two-thirds of mankind and persists in strategies for "development" that destroys the environment.

PP21 was conceived and initiated by the Pacific-Asia Resource Center (PARC), an action-oriented research, education and documentation centre operating since 1973 to promote people-to-people solidarity mainly with the Pacific-Asia region. In its 1983 International Solidarity Manifesto PARC declared that "the existing relationship between Japan and the rest of the Asia-Pacific people, and Third World people in general, are making compatibility increasingly difficult. The existing relationship rests on Japan's dominance in the region, and deeper commitment to a world strategy that attempts by coercion and other means to stem the growing People's assertion of self-determination." The manifesto also stated in the context of "our encounters" with Asian brothers and sisters, "we (Japanese) discovered the degree to which we have been robbed of richness in the true sense of the word. We have come to

strongly wish for the recovery of a life and culture which permits a greater quietness, simplicity, variety, and fulfillment of mind and body."

The initial PARC proposal was sent to a spectrum of Japanese people's movements early in 1988. The response was positive and enthusiastic. More than 300 individuals, including movement leaders, activists, movement-related academics, and church leaders agreed to take on the work from PARC. The PP21 program was organized not as a centrally planned Tokyo-based campaign. It was an undertaking engendered by the initiatives of community-based and other grassroots action groups and movements.

The International Indigenous People's Conference was held in Ainu Moshiri (land of the Ainu in Hokkaido), from August 7th to 14th. The Ainu, the indigenous people of this archipelago, whose territory was invaded by the Wajin majority (the majority Japanese race), are commemorating in 1989 the 200th anniversary of the Kunashir-Menashi uprising, their last organized armed resistance against the Wajin invasion. Deprived of their land and resources, suffering from discrimination and officially denied the rights of an independent national minority by the government, the Ainu people have long struggled for dignity, equality, and recognition as a people. Their movement has recently been vitalised and has developed numerous international ties with indigenous people's movements throughout the world, and have demanded the right to representation in the Diet.

The PP21 program in Ainu Moshiri (Hokkaido) was built around the commemoration events of the Ainu movement and included traditional Ainu ceremonies commemorating the executed martyrs, presentation and sharing of cultural performances and sharing of Ainu life-style.

The high point of the ceremonies was the colourful launching of a traditional Ainu boat followed by the adoption of the Ainu Moshiri (Hokkaido) Declaration, August 14th 1989 at the final plenary sessions of the conference. The main focus of the discussions was the designing of an alternate people's future for Hokkaido as an immediate and urgent concern for the people and the building-up of an awareness of a multi-ethnic society in Japan. In the perception of the participants from other countries and the Wajin or majority Japanese present the proceedings shattered the false assumption in Japan and abroad that Japan is a homogeneous nation. As Mr. Narita Tokuhei, an Ainu leader said, "for us the program means a search for a situation where we can live together with you all (the Japanese majority). We have to live together, and if so, we have to search for ways enabling Ainu Wajin (majority), Koreans and Okinawans to live together."

The Sri Lanka resolution was one among the several resolutions relating to the rights of peoples participating in the conference, and was adopted at the final plenary sessions. In presenting the resolutions for adoption on behalf of the drafting committee, the chairperson of the final sessions of the conference, Lopeti Senituli, Coordinator, Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific, said that the participants at the conference were deeply saddened about the situation in Sri Lanka and that it was a matter for grave concern. Liberation movements that were committed to defend the rights of the people have now become perpetrators of violence against ordinary people and are engaged in bitter internecine conflict. The immediate need is for a cessation of hostilities, an end to the slaughter of innocent people and a negotiated peace.

Report by
Santasilan Kadirgamar

LETTERS

Shan's Memoirs

Tilak Gunawardhana's review of Shan's Memoirs, under the appropriate title of "Thoughts of Shan" made entertaining reading in your last issue. If Comrade Shan had actually played the role of Sri Lanka's Chairman Mao can be a source of much speculative wanderings and I certainly did enjoy your reviewer's references to the State Publishing House, Red Book and Prof. Kumari Jayawardena as official historian. That approach, I must however, remind Gunawardena, had denied the reader a serious critical comment on the memoirs of a trade union and Left pioneer.

S. P.

Colombo 5.

Brilliant Analyses

I have been reading with rapt attention the brilliant analyses of Dayan Jayatilaka. I hope he will continue to address his mind to similar problems.

(Prof) Jayaratnam Wilson

Political Science Dept.
Univ. of New Brunswick,
Canada.

CORRECTION

In the sentence "I define ethnicity as a cross-class, primordial collective identity, relating to horizontal changes in a social formation..." appearing in Dayan Jayatilaka's concluding article on "Unfinished Wars" (page 10, LG Sept 15) the word "changes" should have read "cleavages."



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New Theories in Moscow and Beijing

Bhabani Sen Gupta

Startingly new perceptions of modern capitalism are articulated by academics of social science centres in China and the Soviet Union. The 'new thinking' fuels perestroika and glasnost in the USSR, and the economic reforms in the Chinese People's Republic. If there are nuances of differences in the two giant communist states' current perceptions of modern capitalism, these relate more to accents than to basic theory and practice.

The new Sino-Soviet appraisal of capitalism sharply changes the nature of the contest between the socialist and capitalist international systems. It explains why the international class war doctrine of what is now described in the Soviet Union as the "Stalin-Brezhnev period" has yielded to the Gorbachevian paradigm of "the integrated interdependent world" where socialism and capitalism must co-exist and compete for humanity's acceptance by resolving socio-economic and cultural-spiritual problems of the world. The new thinking on capitalism opens doors and windows in both worlds to one another for what is likely to develop into an invigorating engagement of the two ideologies the mutually antagonistic relationship between whom has been responsible for much of the revolutionary changes engraved on the great hulk of the 20th century.

The Chinese view of today's capitalism comes from Professor Lu Congmin, of the Party school attached to the central committee of the Communist Party. In its 300-year history, Prof. Lu sees capitalism passing through three stages. The first stage was of liberal capitalism. It endured till the end of the 19th century. Then came the second stage of imperialism. It spawned an

event-packed half-a-century, from the end of the last to the middle of the present. The third, contemporary stage of capitalism is described by Lu as "public capitalism", a concept that is not entirely accepted by CPSU scholars and that may be under the pressure of re-thinking in post-Tienanmen China.

Prof. Lu finds certain "essential features" of the present stage of capitalism that are fundamentally different from the imperialistic stage. First, capitalism has at its disposal a solid material and technological base. It is distinguished by an unprecedented level of production achieved by the latest technologies including computers, nuclear energy and bio-engineering. Secondly, the socialisation of capital has reached a high level as a result of the great development of joint stock companies. Capital has been decentralised and private capital separated from the means of production and from the right to hire and exploit. Transnational companies have internationalised capital.

The third essential feature of modern capitalism, says Lu, is the micro regulation of the economy, making it possible for the State to soften the rigours of simple regulation. State intervention is now aimed at market regulation, checking excessive monopolisation, reducing anarchy in production, softening economic crises, and securing stable development of the economy.

The class structure of the modern capitalist society has also changed profoundly. "If in the past the structure of the society of the rich and the poor took the shape of a pyramid, now it is a prism because there are less rich and poor people than people

with average income. Workers of intellectual labour occupy an important place in society. Both real wages and grants in the social security has grown". The foreign policy of capitalist countries has also changed. "In the past, forces and war were used to exploit developing countries and for consolidation of capitalism's worldwide hegemony. And today, to achieve the same results, the support is taken of modern science and technology and also of the superiority of the market economy". Finally, writes the Chinese party scholar, "the internal policy of a number of capitalist countries is becoming more democratic, legislation more perfect and public and cultural life ever more liberal".

He then explains why he sees modern capitalism as "public capitalism". Modern capitalism has not totally given up exploitation, put an end to monopolies and resolved internal conflicts. However, it has "laid a firm foundation for a transfer from capitalist to a socialist society and offers more possibilities of this transfer". The transfer (by which Lu evidently means evolution) is an "obvious historical process" fuelled by dialectics of changing realities. The "public" character of modern capitalism is manifested in public ownership, workers' participation in management, new distribution of incomes the social security system, and the State's "macro-control of the economy", which is "nothing else than a beginning of planned economy". These manifestations characterise the general condition of advanced post-industrial capitalism with many local variations. **The transfer of capitalism to socialism is a "prolonged, natural historical process, which, taken as a whole, will help promote peace, not war and violence".**

The Soviet view of modern capitalism comes from Yuri Krasin, rector of the Institute of Social Sciences attached to the CPSU central committee. He begins with a quotation from Marx: bourgeois society "is no solid crystal but an organism capable of change, and is constantly changing". Two self-serving walls—the delusions of revolutionary romanticism and the "dogmatic fundamentalism of the difficult years of Stalinism and of stagnation"—prevented Marxist-Leninist social scientists from having clear views of the historical evolution of capitalism.

Capitalism faced a profound crisis on the eve of the October Revolution in 1917 which opened "a new trend for world history". Death throes of capitalism were built into the theory of the general crisis of capitalism. However, while correctly identifying the beginning of a new era, "primitive ideas" were spread about "capitalism as a centre of stagnation and regress". These ideas took support "not so much in reality as in ideological myths".

Yuri Krasin agrees with much of the Chinese party's current perception of capitalism's great inherent problem-solving strength and its continuing evolution as a living organism, though he notes, unlike his Chinese colleague, that the evolutionary development of capitalism on welfare lines is the achievement of centuries of struggle by toiling people. Krasin underlines capitalism's capacity to adapt itself to change and summon the latest fruits of science and technology to solve productive and societal problems. He notes capitalism's use of "neo-liberal policies" to limit direct interference of the State in production, stimulate market relations, competition mechanisms, and the activities of entrepreneurs.

The CPSU central committee scholar sees a good deal of merit in the Chinese view of modern capitalism as "public capitalism," though he finds that it "lacks something"; there is

"no room left for the social and political forces that are struggling for socialism." The evolution of capitalism must be seen in the wider context of the victory of socialist revolutions in a number of countries and the struggles of working people for socialism in the developed and developing capitalist nations.

Overall, however, the complex conjunction of world realities "pulls capitalism into some sort of transfer state". As a profound reordering of economic and sociopolitical structures goes on in the modern capitalist world, "elements of socialist quality gets accumulated". The "transfer" to socialism will not come from class war and revolution, but "quite possibly", from qualitative transformation from within. If capitalism does bring about its "self-negation," it will be because of continuing strugg-

les for qualitative transformation waged by progressive social forces.

The profound, often searing debate that now goes on in the major communist countries on the changed and changing nature of capitalism is not, at this time, matched by a comparable debate in the advanced capitalist countries on the changing nature of Marxist-Leninist socialism. However, a furious debate can be seen in the New Left circles in the West spilling over to the think tanks of European and American social democracy. The debate which will probably lead to a confluence of Marxist-Leninist and social democratic paradigms in the 1990s and profoundly influence human development in the 21st century, is, unfortunately, still to travel to the third world's largest non-socialist piece, India.

'India going back on Siachen agreement'

ISLAMABAD

Several dailies here have charged India with a "negative" attitude to overcoming differences with Pakistan on the Siachen issue.

Quoting "diplomatic," "competent" and "concerned" sources, they said New Delhi had back-tracked on the understanding reached with Islamabad in June.

The Lahore-based English daily *Nation* said on Friday that "calculated leaks" in the Indian press conveyed the impression that India was trying to wriggle out of the understanding reached between the defence secretaries of the two countries regarding a peaceful solution to the Siachen problem.

BEYOND MANDATE

The daily said the Indian side had failed to concentrate

on "identifying" positions held at the time of the Simla Agreement to facilitate redeployment of forces. Instead, the Indian delegations were bringing up issues which were beyond their mandate, it said.

During the five rounds of talks at different levels, the Indian side seemed to insist that "present realities" on the ground at Siachen be accepted in a "realistic manner," the daily said. India also brought up issues like establishing a regime in the area after redeployment, it said.

According to the daily, the Indian military delegation which came here on August 17 adopted a negative attitude by insisting that existing realities be authenticated and, pending establishment of line of control, a "zone" be agreed upon.

(Continued on page 14)

Escaping from the spectres of the past

David Housego

Withdrawals from messy overseas operations are always painful. The US found this out in Vietnam and the Russians discovered it in Afghanistan. The search for an honourable exit from Sri Lanka poses India with its most difficult foreign policy challenge in a decade.

The problem is not just pulling out from the north-east of the island 40,000 troops who are increasingly demoralised by a "dirty" guerrilla war and who are tempted to carry out brutal reprisals against the local Tamil civil population. The risk of a collapse in the authority of President R. Premadasa's eight-month old Government in the south now also raises the question of whether India should take a further step into the quagmire by supporting a national government which could emerge should Mr. Premadasa fall from power.

The prevailing view in Delhi is that India cannot afford to see a fractured Sri Lanka and that it therefore should extend all the help it can, though prior to general election senior officials believe it cannot commit more troops. Yet given the volatility of the situation in Sri Lanka, Indian support could be the kiss of death for any new administration seeking popular recognition.

Sri Lanka is rapidly becoming the first important test of India's ability, as the largest power in its region, to assume a greater peacekeeping role there. In part, India has been pushed into this role by the increasing disengagement of the Soviet Union and the US from South Asia. Russian troops have been withdrawn from Afghanistan and last year the US was willing to countenance the use of Indian troops to thwart a coup in the Maldives which fell uncomfortably close to the American naval base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

India's rapid build-up of its naval and airborne power in recent years—intended to protect offshore oil installations—is also a sign of the country's eagerness to assume a regional peacekeeping role and its belief that needs a "fire-fighting" capacity. Indian diplomats argue with good reason that India was sucked into the Sri Lankan vortex by the effect that Sri Lanka's handling of its minority Tamil problem was having on India's large Tamil population. But it is also clear that India's entanglement there now is the result of errors of policy and intelligence appraisal.

The Sri Lanka crisis has already cost India some of its neighbours' goodwill. It has led to the postponement of the annual summit conference, now due in November, of South Asian—nations a forum, known as SAARC, which is increasingly important confidence building measures among member states and the common development of resources.

More damagingly, the crisis has earned India the reputation of an "imperialist" power maintaining occupying forces in Sri Lanka that the government there cannot eject. This reputation—which fails to take account of India's very real difficulties in dealing with politically weak or obstreperous neighbours—has been reinforced by the belief that India has bullied Nepal in their dispute over trade and transit rights.

The crisis in Sri Lanka could also make domestic political problems for Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, whose options on the island are limited by the Indian election timetable. He does not wish to be seen to be making a humiliating retreat in advance of the elections.

Since independence, Indian Prime Ministers have generally benefited at election-time from a consensus on foreign Policy.

Mrs Gandhi did so most strikingly in the "khaki" election that preceded the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971. Sri Lanka has already begun to erode the current consensus. So has the Indian parliamentary opposition, which has been advocating nationalist rights in Tibet and thereby undermining Mr. Gandhi's policy on China. There is little doubt the opposition will further exploit the Sri Lanka issue if Mr. Gandhi gives it the chance.

By no means least important, the Sri Lanka issue is embarrassing India internationally and damaging its status in the non-aligned movement India values its reputation as a leader of the non-aligned—a cause traditionally championed by the Nehru family—and is equally valued by developing countries for the pressure it can bring to bear on issues such as race relations in South Africa. One former Indian diplomat says: "You can't go around preaching discussion and dialogue and not practise it in your own backyard. This is a fact of life we must face."

Some officials and diplomats think that India should get out of Sri Lanka quickly so that opportunities being opened by shifts in the world's political and economic realities are not missed.

India no longer faces the regional threats to its security that clouded the horizon in the early 1980s. Its fear then was that the Russian invasion of Afghanistan had been the cause of an alliance representing the worst possible threat to its security: a military regime in Pakistan backed by China and armed by the US as part of its conflict with the Soviet Union.

India's fears on this account help explain the substantial Indian arms build-up of the 1980s and the stronger influence of the military in the making of foreign policy.

Since then India has welcomed the advent of a civilian regime in Pakistan under Ms. Benazir Bhutto. Ties with China have improved after Mr. Gandhi's visit to Peking at the end of 1988 and the signing of an agreement that the two sides would pursue normal political relations notwithstanding their border disputes.

Tensions have been reduced by the Russians' withdrawal from Afghanistan. Many Indians believe this will be followed by an increasing disengagement of the US from the Afghan conflict. Early in 1989, the stage seemed set for further regional detente. India cut its defence spending. There was talk of SAARC making headway in regional co-operation. India was going to relate to its neighbours respectfully, rather than resentfully.

Much of this improvement has since evaporated because of the disputes over Sri Lanka and Nepal, Ms Bhutto's political weakening in Pakistan and the crack-down in China. But the long-term opportunities remain.

The second area where the global context has changed in a way crucial to India is in the improvement of East-West relations in the Gorbachev era. Mr Jagat Mehta, a former Indian Foreign Secretary, says India's post-independence security problems "turned vicious because the India-Pakistan issues became enmeshed in East-West rivalry and the global strategy of containment and competition." As a result of detente, India's own relations with the US have much improved, notwithstanding such thorns as differences over nuclear policy, the launching of an Indian medium-range missile this year, and India's selection as a target for potential US retaliation under the "Super 301" provisions of the trade act.

Relations with the Soviet Union are also changing. India no longer looks to it for security and political support in the way it did during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war or in its border quarrels with China. The emphasis is shifting much more to economic concerns.

The third area where perceptions in India changed is in the importance attached to economic power. India had allowed itself to slip behind the economic growth of east Asia partly because of its emphasis on self-sufficiency, industrial protection and resistance to foreign technology. Over the last few years, policy has begun to shift with a recognition of the need to open the economy.

Parallel with this there has been a shift in diplomatic focus towards Japan, Europe (especially West Germany), and the US. It would be misleading to say that India would have responded more rapidly to these challenges if there had been no Sri Lanka crisis and no elections. India is a country weighed down by insecurities that spring from the traumas of partition at the time of independence, the humiliation of defeat by China in 1962, the fears of interference by the US or other "foreign hands" and an abiding sense of the fragility of the Indian union. Senior Indian officials are "beset by spectres," says one diplomat.

In such a context, policy makers put a premium on maintaining Indian military strength and projecting power even at the risk of provoking resentment among neighbours who feel they are treated as "client" states. By contrast, an India that feels threatened by the spectres of its past and more self-confident is likely to be more ready to make the risks to put its relations with its neighbours on a more even footing. It would also be happier about developing joint resources, particularly the water potential of the Himalayas.

Confidence depends on the economy continuing to grow more quickly than it has in the past. It will depend on the strength or the weakness of the government that emerged after the election. But it also will depend on how deftly Mr Gandhi handles the Sri Lanka crisis between now and then.

— *Financial Times (London)*

India...

(Continued from page 12)

BACK-TRACKING

The Islamabad-based English daily *Muslim* said reports in the Indian press accusing Pakistan of "misconstruing" the understanding on Siachen were apparently meant to justify New Delhi's own "back-tracking" on the issue.

Quoting diplomatic sources, it said that at the Islamabad meeting it was clear that while Pakistan wanted a resolution of the dispute, India's intentions for disengaging the two armies were essentially aimed at reducing the cost of its "military misadventure."

With the military-level talks having failed to produce any results, Islamabad now felt that there was need for reconvening the defence secretaries' meeting to take stock of the latest development, it said.

POLL FACTOR

The Pakistani reports said Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, "fearing" the forthcoming elections, had given in to the "hawkish" demands of the military establishment.

They said the military establishment seemed to have convinced the political leadership in India that they had occupied areas on the glacier "with tremendous military effort, from where they could monitor and repulse any Chinese or Pakistani moves."

All the dailies struck a similar note towards the end saying that the two countries should discuss this issue when they get opportunities to meet, like the NAM summit, the UN General Assembly and the periodic SAARC meetings, and make a strong effort to break the current impasse.

India's Widening Embrace

June 5, 1987 Five Soviet-built An-32 transports of the Indian Air Force lumber into the sky over Bangalore and bank southeast, heading for the northern tip of Sri Lanka. As their radars pick up the Jaffna coastline, two Mirage-2000 fighters sweep into escort formation ahead of them. The Jaffna peninsula below is aflame, puffs of smoke dot the landscape. The An-32s release their cargoes of relief supplies and swing homeward.

July 28, 1989. The eve of the second anniversary of the Indo-Lanka accord, under which an Indian peacekeeping force took charge of the island's Tamil-dominated north and east. Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa's call for a withdrawal of the IPKF has been frostily received in New Delhi. A stalemate looms. At 6 p.m., an aide charges into the office of Foreign Secretary S. K. Singh, excitedly brandishing a cable message Premadasa has agreed to send a ministerial delegation to New Delhi. Singh buzzes for Kuldip Sahdev, the top desk official for Sri Lanka. "Be gentle and generous," he orders Sahdev. "Treat them as the most important visitors you've ever had. Give them the longest limousines you can find."

Iron fist, velvet glove: the hallmark of India's actions in the region it dominates. Consider a clockwise sweep of the compass *Pakistan*. Three wars; Kashmir, 1947 and 1965; the creation of Bangladesh, 1971. And one continuing semi-war, on the Siachen Glacier, over the undefined northern boundary of Kashmir. The *Aksai Chin*. A Himalayan plateau captured by China in 1962. *Nepal*. A treaty dispute, a trade embargo, and a warning not to till too closely to China. The *McMahon Line*. Another disputed border, transgressed by Chinese troops in a formidable 1962 advance. *Bangladesh*. More refugees, from a land threatened with watery oblivion by rivers shared with India. *Sri Lanka*. The ultimate field laboratory of India's role as guarantor

of regional security, where the distinction between confederation and sovereignty is receiving its acid test. *The Maldives*. A lightning action to stifle a coup attempt against President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom last November.

"India is the centre of the region," says a senior Foreign Ministry official in New Delhi. "So the region is India, and it is our job to protect it from outside influences." He quotes Nehru: "We have our different sovereignties, but our freedoms are bound together." That sentiment was jolted into wakefulness by China's sweep across the McMahon Line in 1962. Chinese troops routed Indian defences and advanced to within hailing distance of the Gangetic plains. They retreated across the frontier within days, but the point had been made. India's northern borders were neither entirely defined nor inviolate.

Today, as India marks 42 years of Independence, a new assertiveness has manifested itself in its defence policy, spearheaded largely by three army strategists Krishna Rao, K. Sundarji and M. L. Chibber. Rao served as army chief for two years from 1981 and undertook the fortification of the twin wings of the frontier with China. Ladakh in the west, Arunachal Pradesh in the east. Chibber oversaw the high-altitude grab of the Siachen Glacier in 1984. Sundarji in the winter of 1986/87, organised the "Brass Tacks" exercise near the Pakistani border in which a fifth of India's infantry and armoured strength roared across the Rajasthan deserts in the largest military exercise ever mounted in peacetime. A shocked Pakistan mobilised defences. A confrontation was avoided, but it was muscle-flexing of a very stern order. "Political aims and military strength were synchronised to make it possible," recalls retired Lt-Gen. Matheiw Thomas. "The policy has paid dividends with both China and Pakistan."

Because each of India's neighbours shares a language with at

least one Indian state, it has never been easy for New Delhi to see where domestic policy ends and foreign policy begins. Four million Nepalese live and work in India. Recent strife in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh has unleashed a damburst of tribal refugees into northeastern India. At the height of Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, some 130,000 Tamil refugees flocked across the Palk Strait into Tamil Nadu. Such connections have made it doubly awkward for New Delhi to deal with the tendency of some neighbours to call up the Indian bogey in search of internal unity.

Sri Lanka is the prime example. As Tamil disaffection in the island's northeast began to boil over in the early 80s, the government of then president J. R. Jayewardene cast abroad for support. Israel was invited in, and Colombo was said to have considered offering facilities to U.S. forces. "We had the impression that India was a bit jealous of our economic growth," says a diplomat close to Jayewardene. "But I admit that J.R. provided some needless irritants. There was no reason to grant the (Voice of America radio station) such a powerful transmitter, or to get the (Israeli intelligence service) Mossad in."

* * *

But the perception among Sri Lankans is that India's own intelligence unit, the Research and Analysis Wing, was already well-entrenched in their homeland. RAW's hand was seen in the Tamil separatist movement that flared in 1983. And the spectre is alive and well; in late July the Federation of Buddhist Monks accused the agency of attempting to subvert Sri Lankan cabinet officials, security chiefs and intellectuals. The upshot has been a widespread antipathy among Sri Lankans towards their giant neighbour a sad happenstance for an island which, in the words of information Minister Arthur Ranasinghe, "has its culture and the very existence of its people deeply enmeshed with India." Adds a senior diplomat "Most of us in Sri Lanka grew up on (Mahatma) Gandhi and Nehru. Indian heroes were our heroes too."

One reaction among neighbours troubled by India's higher regional profile has been to balance it with China. Sri Lanka's Premadasa has done so, and Nepal's courtship of Chinese trade and is regarded as the principal cause of New Delhi's umbrage. But China is chary of involvement Premier Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Peking late last year set the seal on the Sino-Indian relationship. New Delhi has since remained silent on the Tibetan problem and the Tiananmen massacre. A senior official recognises an "obligation" to China. "They could have played mischief with either Nepal or Sri Lanka. We were mindful of that. But one Foreign Ministry source sounds a note of caution. Peking he says has only kept quiet. "By doing that it gains a lot of leverage with India without losing any influence with its neighbours."

* * *

One Chinese link India has been unable to sever through diplomacy is that with Pakistan. The subcontinent's most fractious siblings continue to pursue distinct lines in foreign policy. But the ascent of Benazir Bhutto to the premiership of Pakistan opened doors to rapprochement. Gandhi was quick to step through, asking Bhutto to address measuras that would heal "irritants that have needlessly vitiated relations between our two countries." But the Siachen issue remains hot.

The equation is less military with Nepal, but acrimony is, if anything, greater. Some Nepalese parliamentarians are now calling for an abrogation of the 1950 peace and friendship treaty with India, while others criticise Premier Manmohan Singh Shrestha for the breakdown in relations. But Kathmandu has broached negotiations even as it has taken its protest to wider forums. Indeed, Asiaweek has learned that ministerial-level talks are shortly to begin. Indian Foreign Minister Narasimha Rao was to lead a delegation to Kathmandu by the end of August, ahead of a meeting between Gandhi and King Birendra at the Non-Aligned

Summit in Belgrade, Yugoslavia in early September. Both countries are aware that their dispute is threatening to spill beyond bilateral bounds. India's fuel embargo is driving Nepalese to strip already depleted forests for firewood, and that spells trouble for Bangladesh: deforestation in the foothills of the Himalaya has been linked to the worsening of that deltaic country's flood problems.

Dhaka's initially amicable relations with New Delhi have been soured by perceptions of India's support of two separate Bangladeshi secessionist movements: a tribal insurgency in the southeastern hill tracts, and a Hindu nationalist uprising in the west. The Indian states of Tripura and Mizoram harbour thousands of tribal refugees, among whom are militants of the Shanti Bahini resistance group. Dhaka believes they receive just sanctuary in India but arms and training as well. It is in the nature of Bangladesh, however, that environmental issues are of overriding concern. Managing the waters of the Ganges is the biggest problem in bilateral relations. A Joint Rivers Commission has so far failed to broach any long-term solutions.

Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, a senior research fellow with the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, is scathing in his appraisal. Says he: "India would leave no stone unturned in exploiting the vulnerabilities of its smaller neighbours. "Such opinions draw the ire of intellectual circles in New Delhi. "If India were a bloody hegemon," says political scientist S. D. Muni, "President Premadasa might not be alive today. India wants to carry along the countries of South Asia, but it requires the others to meet some of its basic concerns."

* * *

Still, the region continues to mull over the demonstration of India's capabilities presented last November, when swift military action was taken in defence of the Maldives administration of President Abdul Gayoom. With-

in hours of Gayoom's plea for help against a coup attempt by Sri Lankan mercenaries, Indian commandos backed by a naval task force were despatched to the coral archipelago. Says Lt-Gen. Thomas: "Both the Soviet Union and the U.S. have concluded that India is capable of settling problems arising in its neighbourhood. However, no South Asian (country) wants to acknowledge this." Foreign Secretary Singh agrees: "Perhaps our neighbours haven't reconciled themselves to the basic change in the situation. I don't think India has changed, but perceptions about us may have."

Analyst Bharat Wariavwalla points out, however, that "the fourth largest military establishment in the world rests on an economy slightly larger than Spain's." India's combined Internal and external debt now totals some \$160 billion. Income disparities are rising, and there is a growing perception in the rural hinterland — home to more than 70% of the populace — that the government is unresponsive to the common man. But government economists dismiss suggestions that India is ill-equipped to cope with an annual defence budget of the order of \$10 billion citing an annual 8% growth in manufacturing since 1980. Yet the balance of payments does not look good, and India's share of global trade is now less than a quarter of what it was two decades ago. Result: a rollback in defence acquisitions.

There is a growing sentiment in New Delhi that the military buildup needs to be tied to India's emergence as a major economic player as well. Says one senior official: "When you pass a certain stage of industrialisation, war ceases to be an effective tool of policy." The key question is whether the region will continue to be bogged down in bilateral disputes, or whether there is hope for a workable alliance of states led by India's military and technological strengths. Most agree that wider co-operation is

(Continued on page 27)

Indo-US defence ties to be strengthened

WASHINGTON

Indian Ambassador to the US Dr. Karan Singh has discussed with US Defence Secretary Richard B. Cheney, ways to expand Indo US cooperation in the defence field which had begun on a modest scale only recently.

During his 45-minute meeting last night, he renewed the invitation, extended earlier by Defence Minister K.C. Pant, to Mr. Cheney to visit India "at an early date."

Dr. Karan Singh also called on US Deputy Secretary of Defence D. J. Atwood to review the existing areas of bilateral co-operation including the light combat aircraft (LCA) project and its extension to new fields identified during Mr. Pant's visit here last June.

Dr. Karan Singh also discussed with the US defence officials the changing geo-political environment.

Prospects of joint efforts in various defence-related fields are rated high. An indication to this effect was available from the speech of US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Triesta C. Schaffer at the first global convention of people of Indian origin at New York last week.

Mrs Schaffer said: "Both governments are encouraging greater exchanges between the military services."

The senior State Department official dealing with South Asia, made it a point to refer to the visit last year to India by US Army Chief of Staff, General Vuono, followed by Mr. Pant's visit — the first by an Indian Defence Minister in 25 years.

Mrs Schaffer, US technicians and engineers were working with India on the design and development of the LCA — India's first indigenously produced fighter aircraft. "This cooperation is still in its early phases but the United States is committed to finding areas where we can assist India's efforts to achieve greater self-reliance in military arms production", she added.

US debates reason for Afghan policy failure

WASHINGTON

The US administration and Congress have begun an internal debate on why the Afghan war is still unwinnable despite the US having poured \$ 2 billion worth of military equipment into it and the role of Pakistani officers who assist rebel groups in their battle against Najibullah's troops.

A senior administration official told the *Washington Post* over the weekend that the reason for their failure to win was that the US miscalculated Mikhail Gorbachev's intentions in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops there.

Instead of letting the Najibullah Government collapse, as the Americans had expected, Moscow conducted a massive airlift of arms and supplies in a so far successful effort to keep that Government in power, he said.

The official claimed that Soviet arms shipments to Afghanistan since January had been worth \$ 200 million to \$ 300 million a month.

CIA BUNGLING

However, Republican Congressman Bill McCullum, who heads a Republican congressional task force on terrorism and unconventional warfare, attributed the failure to CIA bungling.

In a newspaper article on Sunday, McCullum said "The CIA, (which is in charge of the rebel war with help from Pakistan), has secretly pursued a wrong-headed Afghan policy for years. That policy has now culminated in a monumentally incompetent programme of arms procurement and distribution, and worse yet, in the handing over of the fate of the Afghan people to Pakistan's bumbling military intelligence service".

McCullum, who has access to intelligence data, disclosed that Pakistan's support to the Afghan rebels began four years before the Soviet troops entered Afghanistan in 1979.

Pakistani agents trained Afghan Muslim activists eager to overthrow Kabul's then pro-Soviet President Mohammed Daoud. In 1976, they recruited Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, "a firebrand fundamentalist student leader at Kabul University, who is now — apart from Najibullah's Government — the most dangerous threat to the aims of the rebels."

The paper points out that after 1979, Hekmatyar's party received the majority of weapons, money and other support from Pakistan's Interservice intelligence (ISI).

"Afghans wanting refugee status got quicker registration if they moved into Hekmatyar-run refugee camps. Refugees wanting licences for their trucks were stalled six months or more unless they joined Hekmatyar's party. And for the next nine years, roughly half of all weapons provided by America, Europe or the Saudi Government went to Hekmatyar."

The paper quoted McCullum as saying "while it is the largest resistance group in terms of weapons received, Hekmatyar's faction remains small inside Afghanistan."

Unlike the six other rebel groups, the paper says, he has no ethnic, tribal or regional base. The paper also says Hekmatyar seeks to "smash Afghanistan's tribal-family structure and introduce a so-called democratic one-party fundamentalist state with himself at the helm."

LOYALTY

The reason Hekmatyar gets ISI support, said McCullum, "is his unflinching loyalty to ISI, still manned chiefly by army officers installed by former Pakistan President Zia-ul-Haq."

McCullum said: "What is required is a strong decision from the White House to back the Afghan interim Government and to include the former king. The CIA and the ISI have had their turn running the Afghan war, and they have failed. It might be worthwhile giving the Afghans a chance to win it themselves."

New Afghanistan Crisis

Policy dilemma for the West

Fred Halliday

More than six months after Soviet forces withdrew from Kabul, western policy-making towards that country is in grave difficulty, and there is a serious danger of a new international crisis over Afghanistan. The U.S. and Britain, together with China, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and others, provided substantial covert aid to the Afghan resistance during nine-year Soviet presence in Afghanistan. When, under the UN agreement of April 1988, Soviet forces finally left on February 15 last, it was confidently expected in Washington and London that the government in Kabul would soon fall. It was so experts and officials predicted, a matter of months, if not weeks. There was much talk of an imminent army coup in Kabul, and of members of the ruling People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) fleeing with false papers, or clinging to the underbellies of helicopters. In an attempt to unnerve the Afghan government, and so hasten its demise, all western diplomats left Kabul in early February.

Post-war Epoch

This policy turned out to rest upon one of the major intelligence miscalculations of the post-war epoch. Kabul did not fall. The guerilla attempts to seize Jalalabad, near the Pakistan frontier, failed partly as a result of guerilla disunity, but also because the government forces held firm.

The seven guerilla groups in Pakistan formed a coalition government, but held only one token meeting inside Afghan territory. Within weeks of the Jala-

labad debacle, guerilla groups were fighting, and killing each other. The fighting season in Afghanistan lasts until November, and so far no major group or field commander has accepted the offers of the Kabul government for negotiations. But, implicitly many local leaders have agreed to the regime's deal — they will be left in peace, with their arms and local administrations, provided they do not attack government forces.

This unexpected situation has faced the West with a policy dilemma, one it will probably take months to work through. Despite the setback at Jalalabad, western support, routed through Pakistan, continues. Washington officials accept that a quick victory is not possible, but they are talking now of a war of attrition, over two or three years, and are placing their short-term efforts on two related goals. One is military: to provide the guerillas with the technical means to knock out the airfields upon which the Kabul government forces rely. Special mortars, to disable airstrips and planes on the ground, are being sent to Afghanistan. The strategy for the rest of the year is for 'dispersed attacks' in order to prevent the government from concentrating its forces at one point, as happened in Jalalabad. The other front is political: US experts are trying to forge the seven-group guerilla alliance into a more coherent whole, and so avoid the disunity that beset the Jalalabad siege. The appointment of a US official representative to the alliance, Peter Tomsen, is two-edged: on the one hand, he is there to push the guerillas towards a more effective and united policy; on the other U.S. has refused so far to follow Saudi Arabia and the advice of some of its own personnel in recognising the alliance as the legitimate government of Afghanistan.

Policy Failure

Neither of these policies appears to stand much chance of success. As British officials have been telling their US counterparts, there is a simple, traditional antidote to attacks on airstrips: the bulldozer. It is almost impossible to put an airfield permanently out of action. The prospects of unifying the guerillas are made all the more difficult by the new round of intra-rebel fighting in the north of Afghanistan, in which over 20 members on one group were killed in June by the forces of the fundamentalists, Gulbuddin Heckmatyar, while returning to their base areas. The history of other guerilla movements — Palestine, Eritrea, Cambodia, Angola — suggests that disunity may be endemic to such situations, a product of current rivalries over political alignment, arms and territory compounding more longstanding ones of leadership personality, tribe and ethnic identity.

The Bush administration's ability to persist in this policy is, moreover, being undermined by changes in at least three other relevant areas. The first is Pakistan. Ms Benazir Bhutto has been in power for nearly a year and has begun to distance herself from the policies of her predecessor, General Zia. She realises that a guerilla victory in Afghanistan would reinforce Islamic fundamentalism within her own country and strengthen the hand of the military which wants to oust her. She also realises that there can be no solution to the major problems besetting Pakistan, including the flood of narcotics, as long as the Afghan war continues. She has dismissed the man who ran the guerilla support system in Pakistan, the head of the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, Hamid Gul, and on her visits to Washington and London, sought to get western support for a new, more conciliatory, approach to the Soviet Union. Her proposal, for an 'interim' government, i.e., for an interim administration in Kabul to prepare for a broadly-based transition, was not accepted by the

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Bush administration. Washington still wants to pursue the military option for the moment. But despite continued Pakistani support for the guerillas, a definite gap has opened up between Washington and Islamabad.

The second change has been in an actor present in a secondary war on the Afghan front, namely Iran. Iran supported the guerillas against the Soviet forces, but has since February begun to push the claims of its own, smaller, eight guerilla groups against the alliance's seven. Iran does not want to see the triumph of what it terms 'American Islam' in Kabul, and believes that now that Soviet forces have withdrawn, the time has come for a coalition government in Kabul. Teheran is also alarmed at the growing influence of its Islamic rival, Saudi Arabia, within the Afghan resistance.

Iran is willing, as Pakistan is still not, to give the PDPA a role. Iran also helped Kabul by persuading its forces to stop attacks on the government, and by stopping arms supplies into Afghanistan. Iran sees this in terms of its wider improvement of relations with the USSR. It needs Soviet support to help with economic reconstruction and to put pressure on Iraq to move forward with peace negotiations. While Iran cannot override Pakistan or the US-backed groups, it can increasingly play a blocking role in any Afghan settlement.

Key Element

The final area of opinion shift is in Washington itself. Support for the Afghan guerillas was long a key element in US bipartisan politics. But with the Soviet forces out of Afghanistan, and Jalalabad holding out, senior Senate and House of Representative members have begun to call for a "reassessment" of US-Afghan policy. The administration may have bought time till the end of this year, but there are signs that, failing a major guerilla advance, Congress will then question the continuation of aid.

(Continued on page 27)

Dhaka may have to foot next SAARC summit bill

O. P. Sabherwal

The unstable Sri Lankan scenario has had yet another fall-out on the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, an even more serious one than the earlier drama of the SAARC Foreign Ministers' meet not being held at Colombo.

Now, the venue of the next SAARC summit scheduled to be held in November itself is in question — though, to give the Sri Lankan Government its due, it is not Colombo which seeks a change of venue but the consensus of opinion among other SAARC nations. What has prompted this is the rapidly deteriorating law and order situation in Sri Lanka and the administration's apparent helplessness.

Terrorist violence in Sri Lanka now rocks Colombo as well and the security that has to be ensured as a primary condition for hosting a summit cannot be taken for granted. Security considerations in relation to the SAARC summit have been under review for some time both in informal consultations through diplomatic channels among the member nations, and at the SAARC Secretariat at Kathmandu.

It had earlier been expected that since the Sri Lankan Government seemed keen on hosting the summit, a gradual improvement in the country's law and order situation would enable Colombo to do so on time. That hope has now been belied. In fact, present indications are that a sharper confrontation between the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna and the security forces is on the cards. This is apart from the violence in the Tamil-majority areas of the North and the East.

Preparations for a SAARC summit usually take off three months ahead of the actual summit dates. With the time at hand being critically short, the latest review of the

security parameters for the summit has resulted in the conclusion that the venue will have to be changed. With Colombo's reluctant concurrence, the possibility of an alternative venue for the summit is now being examined.

Dhaka appears to be the inevitable choice and it has already made it known that it will be glad to host the summit and make necessary preparations in the short time available. Technical assistance will have to be rendered by Islamabad and New Delhi, and this has already been promised.

None of the other member nations seem to fit the bill. Islamabad is willing to host the summit. In fact, as the current SAARC Chairman, Pakistan should have been the natural choice for hosting the summit in the event of an emergency shift of venue. But the last summit was held at Islamabad, and it is felt that it would look a bit out of place to hold two consecutive summits in the same country.

As for India, New Delhi's reluctance to host the summit is manifestly in the interests of SAARC itself. Taking into cognisance the present state of India's relations with its neighbours, especially Nepal and Sri Lanka, New Delhi has thought it apt not to offer to host the summit.

This leaves only Kathmandu and at one time it seemed to be a possible choice. But the Nepalese Government was reluctant to play host at such short notice — an understandable stand because of the country's economic and other difficulties. However, it would have been possible if Indian technical and material help were sought by Kathmandu. But in the present situation, that is not possible. What happens after the Belgrade Rajiv Gandhi-King Birendra summit is yet in the realm of conjecture — and the decision on the SAARC summit cannot be put off any longer.

DELHI AND NEIGHBOURS:

Hopeful phase

K. K. Katyal

India's ties with the neighbours and its neighbourhood policy are again the focus of close interest. This is partly because of the developments on the ground, with most of the problems unresolved, and partly because of the contacts at Belgrade between the Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, and the leaders of these countries. The outcome of the consultations does not admit of a generalisation, except that the attention paid to the ticklish, complicated issues with emotive overtones, at the summit or fairly high level promises systematic follow-up — and concrete results.

Agreed approach

This is particularly so as regards the live problems with Sri Lanka and Nepal while Pakistan and Bangladesh fall in different categories. The Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne's talks with the Prime Minister served to fine-tune the formulations evolved during the former's discussions in New Delhi seven weeks ago with his Opposite number here, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, and modified during the Sri Lankan President, Mr. R. Premadasa's special envoy, Mr. Bradman Weerakoon's trip to India later. That the agreement reached at Belgrade is being subjected to another protracted round of hair-splitting in Colombo (with Indian High Commissioner, Mr. L. L. Mehrotra, engaged in hectic long-distance consultations with New Delhi) does not detract from the significance of the results achieved there.

The two sides hammered out an agreed approach to most of the contentious issues. The Indian Peace Keeping Force is to pull out by year end — which

marked an end of differences on the deadline, with Sri Lanka earlier favouring September and India February next year. The Indian troops are to cease offensive military operations. The Sri Lankan Government dropped its insistence on their going to barracks in the intervening period and India showed flexibility in giving up the two-phase plan. Under it, the IPKF was to suspend operations for, 15 days in the first instance, to be extended once the LTTE joined the peace committee proposed to be set up to deal

What are the gains India has achieved from its talks with its neighbours at the recent non-aligned meet in Belgrade? — a review.

with issues of concern to Tamils and to promote dialogue between them and the Sri Lankan Government. This committee and another panel, to review and advise on measures for the safety and security of various Tamil groups, were to be the main mechanism for maintaining peace and order during the pullout period.

Mutual understanding

The Belgrade round and subsequent discussions paved the ground for a break-through in the India-Sri Lanka imbroglio after some six months of drift marked by fears of a confrontation. The new phase of candid exchanges and the resultant mutual understanding contrasted with the earlier period when New Delhi resented Colombo's

unilateralism, illustrated by Mr. Premadasa's public demand of an IPKF pullout by July 29, the second anniversary of the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement. To say that all is well in the bilateral field is to close eyes to the harsh realities, but the end of the tunnel does not appear as distant as in the past. A new set of problems will need to be tackled in the post-IPKF period, with Sri Lanka keen on a "balanced" treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation to replace the "onesided" propositions contained in the letters exchanged between Mr. Gandhi and the former Sri Lankan President, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene.

Indo-Nepalese relations were examined at length at Belgrade for nearly four hours, by Mr. Gandhi and King Birendra, the first summit-level contact after the row over the lapsed trade and transit agreements induced uncertainty in bilateral relations. The very fact of their meeting was significant. At Islamabad, last year, on the occasion of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit, the plans for their get-together went awry, following an unsavoury episode. The discussions at Belgrade were comprehensive — this much was evident from the time they spent together and the bits of information trickling from the two camps. What transpired in the one-to-one meetings was not known, though an intelligent guess will not be off the mark.

Poser to Nepal

The two heads could not but have discussed the basic question posed by India — whether Kathmandu wants a special

relationship, as had been the case so far, in keeping with the letter and spirit of the 1950 treaty or to refashion the ties on the basis of strict international norms. India does not appear to have received a clear-cut answer. Had that not been the case, the two Governments would have hurried with the plans for consultations by officials and Ministers for External Affairs and Commerce. Nepal, it appears wants a mixture of both — special dealings in some fields and not in others. India regards the 1950 treaty as a sound, stable basis for a mutually beneficial relationship and is sore about the aberrations that have crept into its working — which it would like to be reviewed. Nepal, however, wants the review to cover the treaty itself and not be confined to its working.

Hints of new thinking

They certainly would have taken up to security issue — the bedrock of bilateral ties, according to India. The assumption beneath the treaty and the letters exchanged at the time of its signing have been questioned, of late, in Kathmandu. Nepal, no longer, shares India's concern — that the security of the two countries is inter-related and that, the Himalayas are the boundary for the purposes of their defence. The official Kathmandu has thrown ample hints of the new thinking — through statements of senior Ministers, the writings in the pro-Government press. Shortly before Mr. Narasimha Rao's visit to Nepal towards the end of August — for preparing the ground for the Belgrade summit — a widely-publicised statement by 857 university and campus teachers demanded abrogation of the treaty while blaming India for the drift. In Kathmandu, as was evident during the recent visit of this writer, there is little doubt about where the inspiration for the statement came from. Nepal, in turn, wants its proposal for a zone of peace to be taken up, as part of the discussions on security matters.

The summit dialogue could not have skirted the differing perceptions, as reflected in the recent public utterances of the two sides. More important, however, is the course to be followed in the near future. The mandate from the top for follow-up discussions contains a promise of advance — if not a patch-up. As New Delhi sees it, Nepal has to be clear on two points. Will it like to conduct its relations with India, in the same way as with Argentina, Spain or West Germany and Japan? Will it wait for the elections in India, in the belief that a sympathetic Government assumes office in New Delhi?

As regards Pakistan, a meaningful dialogue was not possible in the absence of the Prime Minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto. The very reasons for her decision to stay at home have a close bearing on the on-going confidence-building processes, that began in December last year. The challenge to her by her political foes, has grown, of late, in scale, strength and stridency, what with the Opposition, led by the Punjab Chief Minister, Mr. Niwaz Sharif, cashing in on the ill-advised moves of the Prime Minister, getting respectability from the sympathy, if not open support, of the President. Mr. Ghulam Ishaq Khan, and the Army appearing ambivalent in its attitude towards her. The main plank of the opposition is her alleged appeasement of India. A rapprochement with New Delhi — even though personally favoured by her — does not fit with her domestic political agenda.

A new, dramatic move in the bilateral field should, therefore, be ruled out, but this need not cause panic. The no-advance period ahead could be devoted to consolidating the modest gains already achieved. If Ms. Bhutto cannot afford to take initiatives, it does not suit India to force the pace and, thus, add to her difficulties. It will be unrealistic to expect New

Delhi to bend over backwards in mending fences with Pakistan on the eve of election. The slow-down in the efforts to sort out the Siachen problem illustrates the point.

An eloquent commentary

Tipifying the Pakistani compulsions was their Foreign Minister, Sahib Zada Yakub's reference to the Jammu and Kashmir at the NAM conference. India promptly protested against it — it was odd, as the Minister of State, Mr. Natwar Singh, told the Sahib Zada, 'that on the one hand, you extend the hand of love and friendship to us and, on the other, you choose to administer blows. The fire of protest would spread in the length and breadth of Pakistan 'had we not done so', was his reply. An eloquent commentary on Islamabad's domestic compulsions impinging on Indo-Pakistan ties. In the fast-changing situation, the prospects of Ms. Bhutto's visit to India have become uncertain. Sometime back Pakistan mooted the idea of a New Delhi stop-over by her, on her way back from the Commonwealth summit in Kuala Lumpur next month. The earlier enthusiasm for the suggestion has now waned perceptibly.

Positive signals

By contrast, the outlook for the Indo-Bangladesh dealings appears brighter. The Belgrade talks between Mr. Gandhi and the Bangladesh President, Lt. Gen. Ershad were, from all accounts, fruitful. This was corroborated by the positive signals received in Dhaka subsequently by the Minister of State for Commerce, Mr. P. R. Das Munshi. Bangladesh, he was told, would stick to its secular policies and there would be no discrimination against the minorities. New Delhi does not see any cause to doubt Lt. Gen. Ershad's sincerity, any reason to believe that he is doing Zia to India, at a time when Bangladesh's needs for river waters during the lean season is its main concern.

(Hindu)

The Culture of Nationalism

Bruce Kapferer (Professor of Anthropology at the University College of London)

Legends is vitally concerned with both how nationalist ideologies come to dominance and with the problem of how they can grip the imagination. I explain some of this, in common with a great many other scholars, by reference to modern historical social and economic changes. I add to these understandings that nationalist ideology or the "culture of nationalism" is not a mere reflection of such changes, an ideological superstructure floating over a material base as it were. What I stress is that the new interpretations about the past, ideas about identity, the view that Sinhalese are united because they have a common culture, were INTEGRAL within the transformations and became ingrained as part of the process whereby social and political relations were generated and reproduced. This kind of argument has been developed by marxists and others to overcome the crudity of earlier materialist approaches and to approach more satisfactorily the theoretically and practically vexing issue of how it is that some ideologies seem to have such power in individual and group action.

Solutions of the kind that human beings are just not being rational or are simply ignorant or are psychologically overdetermined seem to me to avoid understanding and even to block it. There is a view abroad in Sri Lanka today that the population is gripped in a fear psychosis. People are certainly consumed and dictated by fear but I think that the label "psychosis", implying some mass mental disorder, does little to extend understanding which may be crucial to overcoming some aspects of the distressing situation which Sri Lanka presents.

I developed in **Legends**, a distinction between ideology and ontology. The point of this analytical distinction was to examine the nature of the continuities between broad and overtly conscious reflections and statements on social and political life (ideology), and the logic constituting and orienting the being or existence of human individuals (ontology) in an array of routine social practices. Ideology, in my usage, is all about values, beliefs and interpretations about past and present realities. That Sinhalese may believe themselves to be descended from Vijaya or that they have always fought with Tamils throughout their history comprise ideological beliefs and interpretations. Ontology, in contrast, is not value laden. It is the inner logic or orientational direction which is integral to the composure of ideological beliefs and their practice. Ontology in my analytical usage has nothing to do with morality or ethics. These are the properties of ideologies which constitute value within the logic of ontology.

I stress that different and conflicting ideologies can engage the one ontology. There are numerous and competing ideologies of Buddhism in Sri Lanka yet it is conceivable that they may involve the same logic of orientation. Many middle class in Sri Lanka who are committed to the modern often Western influenced doctrines of the Buddhist revival of the Anagarika Dharmapala or of the Vajirarama (Amarapura Siri Dhammarakita Nikaya) Buddhist centre in Colombo would deny that their practice has anything to do with what they regard to be superstitious exorcism practice in the south of the island. But I think it can be demons-

trated that exorcism and middle class Buddhism while distinct ideological interpretations involve the same ontologic (see Kapferer 1983). An ontology can link a great variety and continually changing ideological interpretations on reality.

What I suggest in **Legends** is that a dominant ideology or interpretation can gain wide acceptance not merely because of its overt statements but because of the ontological ground within which it works. I also suggest that certain distorted visions of the world and new interpretations of past history (like modern nationalist interpretations of the *Mahavamsa* legends) can have the ring of fact or truth because of the ontologic they ingrain and not because of the "validity" of the statements in themselves. In this way interpretations can achieve their factuality or a quality of incontestability, and human beings can thus be given to defend them with all the fire and passion at their disposal. All of us as human beings are aware that our commitments to action or interpretation are not born so much of contemplative abstract reasoning reflection (recommended by science and by some religion) but by the chord it strikes in the energy of our being which orients us to our experience.

My focus on ontology also indicated how certain ideological values or interpretations — those nationalist ones, for example, developed by ruling class fractions in Sri Lanka — could link up with other interpretations and eventually swamp them or flood them out. I indicated how metaphors or beliefs in one area of personal experience could be made to link up with values in other areas.

My discussion of the *Mahavamsa* legends and of sorcery was to demonstrate their unity in ontology and not necessarily in value or meaningful understanding. There was additional point. Sorcery, exorcism, and healing rituals in general are ontological par excellence. They are practices in which not only ideological statements are made but in which the being or orientation of the person to the experience is formed or reconstituted. I tried to show that those parts of the *Mahavamsa* selected by nationalists embedded a logic which was part of the ontology of diverse everyday practices. These everyday practices could unconsciously shore up some of the interpretations on the *Mahavamsa* and gain new value along nationalist ideological lines. Much of the present violence, as I will later reemphasise, resonates with the metaphors of the healing rites and gathers its intensity of personal fear and terror accordingly.

Incidentally I did argue that modern Sri Lanka has other ontologies produced, among other ways, in its colonial and post-colonial capitalist transformations. But I cautioned that apparently modern practices could ingrain an ontology which on the surface may not appear appropriate to outside observers, for example, from western industrialized contexts. In Sri Lanka class relations and the orders of bureaucracy can engage an ontology similar to that found in traditional caste practice, religious worship at a Buddhist shrine, or in the dynamics of an exorcism. No statement is made here that they possess the same ideological value. Sorcery in the urbanized centres of Sri Lanka is a modern class practice, frequently engaged in by members of the middle class and political elite. As a modern class practice sorcery reveals a particular class ideology (not reducible to the class ideology in England or other western countries) which grounds some distinct logical elements

orientations to experience which can assist some understanding of current crisis. I was most interested in the ideology of the state present in sorcery practice and the way it linked up with ideologies of the state and of the nation in other areas of practice.

Let me make a few other points clear in order to head off what are likely to be misinterpretations of my position. I am arguing that logics of interpretation can continue through periods of massive historical change. However, this does not say that the meaning or ideological value once developed through the logic continues. Present interpretations of the *Mahavamsa* are likely to be very different from those of the past (see *Committee for Rational Development 1984*). What I do say is that the continuity of the logic can create the impression in consciousness that the present is like the past. The continuation of ontology is a dimension in the production of what marxists call mystification of false consciousness. The continuation of ontology in vastly different ideological meanings and circumstances may influence persons to react to events of the past with all the passion of the present and, indeed, to conflate the two.

I give ontology no necessary or determining function. Sinhalese are not determined to be violent by their ontology which is the message Perinbanayagam seems to draw from my work. The destruction and violence is driven through ideological interpretations grounded in specific historical and political circumstances. The ontology I have explored can give vent just as easily to ideologies of compassion and peace. My approach increases the importance of historical analysis and of a detailed investigation of all kinds of practice. But it is directed to more fully understanding the power of ideologies and how they can emerge into world-destroying totalizing form.

Most generally, the perspective I have developed is concerned to overcome the dangers, common in sociology or anthropology or political science, of structural abstraction or of a descent into psychologism. In the former all sight of human agency seems to be lost. Human beings become mere ciphers and pawns. In the latter, complex socio-historical processes are reduced to the inner workings of the psyche. The psychological dispositions of human beings are made determining. Fault is too easily found in the person and not in the social world in which human psychologies are continually being formed and reformed and outside of which they have no existence. The stress on ontology is to establish the connections between wider structural processes and individual agency and experience.

(To be continued)

A.P.C. . .

(Continued from page 5)

men. They are supposed to substitute for the Indians in preserving order in the north-east. Some peace committee: the Tigers have sworn not to co-operate with "Indian quislings" like the EPRLF.

President Premadasa will be left with the hopeless task of trying to persuade the Tigers to lay down their arms when he restarts the Tamil peace talks that have been stalled for more than two months. For the moment, though, he is feeling less beleaguered than he was during the massacre-ridden days of August. The JVP guerrillas look a little sicker after a ruthless crackdown by the security forces, and he now has new IMF money under his belt. His comfort promises to be brief: this is a phoney peace.

— Economist

OPINION

For the Nonaligned, change brings an identity crisis

Flora Lewis

BELGRADE

Moammar Gadhaifi of Libya provides the only flashy show and firebrand talk of the ninth nonaligned summit meeting. He sent five camels ahead to be milked for him and two horses for mounted guards at the tent pitched in his embassy's garden, and proclaimed he had come "to save the movement."

It is another sign of changing times. The Yugoslav hosts have made an intensive effort to de-radicalize, to lower the pitch—in short, what they call "modernize" the triennial meeting. Revolutionary exhortations and diatribes against "imperialists" no longer win stormy applause.

Fidel Castro of Cuba, who used to thunder for hours, apparently realized it would not be his type of scene anymore and did not show up, sending his brother Raul instead.

The nonaligned nations are facing an identity problem now that they do not really have anybody to be nonaligned with, and the enemy is more likely to be a neighbor than a superpower. Most of the leaders here are more concerned about economics than about ostentatious Third World politics. They realize, as one moderate Arab said, that if you want to talk business you have to talk to somebody, not just shout at your would-be partner.

It is a striking change from the founding summit session here in 1961. There were 25 members and an extraordinary cast of characters, including Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia in his resplendent white-and-gold uniform, India's Nehru with a pink rose on his tunic, Egypt's Nasser, Indonesia's Sukarno, Ghana's Nkrumah, Archbishop Makarios of Cyprus, Emperor Haile Selassie, of Ethiopia was eclipsed by the huge display of assertive charisma.

In the middle of the strident speeches against colonialism and atomic weapons, Nikita Khrushchev ended the Soviet moratorium on nuclear testing and set off a 50-megaton bomb in the atmosphere, at least 2,500 times bigger than the Hiroshima bomb. Radioactive fallout probably still lingers around the world.

But you could have heard a pin drop in Belgrade. Nobody thought of criticizing Moscow. George Kennan, then U. S. ambassador to Yugoslavia, was furious, and that only sharpened the summit meeting's tone of anti-Americanism.

Ten years ago in Havana, at the sixth summit session, Fidel Castro insisted that the Soviets were the natural ally of the nonaligneds.

Now there are 120 members, and they are wondering what their movement ought to be about. Some are showing an ironic nostalgia for the good old Cold War, when they could work up a steam about the East-West conflict endangering the world. They do not quite say so out loud, but they evidently regret the chance to win benefits and importance by playing one side off against the other.

Others, the majority, are relieved that major tensions are easing and ideology is no longer the big issue. But they are worried about being marginalized as East and West groups for accommodation. They do not want to be squeezed out of the political game—even pawns play a role.

The more thoughtful are concerned that the opening East will become such an economic attraction that the West will not be interested in contributing to their development and trade.

All the serious wars and conflicts are among themselves now. It is getting hard to blame the big powers for keeping them going. Their own arms races show up their pious talk about the urgency of disarmament. The embattled ones feel a risk of losing attention for their causes.

One effort to sustain some purpose for a movement that confers a sense of participation is to shift the focus from nonalignment between East and West to North-South engagement, and to latch on to the new issue of the environment, which does require these countries' concern.

The Yugoslavs have taken a clear official position, trying hard to cut out the West-bashing and to focus on "practical, realistic recommendations." But they will have to compromise to reach consensus. There is now a sharp debate in Yugoslavia about whether the prestige of being nonaligned chairman for three years is more trouble than it is worth.

Tito came up with the non-alignment idea as a way of creating a foreign policy and some importance in the world out of the vacuum left by quitting the Soviet bloc but remaining a Communist-ruled country. It gave Yugoslavia support when there were real security fears of Soviet intentions. Now, one tendency here is to say Yugoslavia should look to Western Europe and cast off the Third world bias that the movement imposes. The issue is not settled.

The whole world is having to move into a new era because of the changes in the East, in ways that had not been foreseen. The ripples of disintegrating communism are spreading far.

— The New York Times

Women and Capitalist Development 1977-87

Asoka Bandarage

Introduction

The ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka has diverted attention from many of the other major social issues facing the island today. Among these are the rapid changes in women's roles and the attendant contradictions of gender subordination. This article surveys these changes and contradictions, focusing on the incorporation of women into the processes of capitalist development in Sri Lanka in the 1977-87 period. The article begins, however, with an examination of the plantation or estate sector. Even though this sector is not a product of the new economic liberalization, it warrants our consideration here due to its continued preeminence in the national economy and in the proletarianization of women in Sri Lanka. After discussing women's work on plantations the article moves on to studying women in the Mahaweli Development Program, the Free Trade Zone, labor export to the Middle East, tourism, and import liberalization. These separate sectoral analyses are followed by a brief consideration of rising military expenditures and cutbacks in state welfare provisions and their effects on the survival of women and the poor. The article ends by pointing out some of the major dilemmas of peripheral capitalist development and gender subordination, stressing the need for an alternative model of development that empowers rather than victimizes women.

The 1977-87 period covered in this article has been a time of rapid economic growth in Sri Lanka. The present Sri Lankan government came into office in 1977 with a commitment to opening the economy to greater foreign investment and imports and to "privatizing" hitherto state-owned sectors such as transport and telecommunications. Through economic growth and diversification, it

promised to curb inflation, unemployment, and import shortages, which were attributed to the autarkic policies of its predecessor. The goal was to make Sri Lanka another successful case of export-led growth in Asia, similar to Taiwan or South Korea, although it was the city-state of Singapore that was often cited as the model for emulation. However, 1977 does not represent a radical departure from the island's previous policies and patterns of evolution. Rather, it marks an acceleration of capitalist development that began with the introduction of the colonial plantations in the 1830s. The Mahaweli River Diversion Scheme, tourist expansion, and labor export to the Middle East were begun several years prior to 1977. Even the Free Trade Zone, another linchpin of the current Open Economy, was under consideration before 1977. It is the speedup in absorption into the Western development model and the dismantling of the traditions of state welfare, urged on by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), that makes 1977 a turning point in the economic and political history of the island.

Women's labor economic production is nothing new in Sri Lanka. From the earliest times Sri Lankan women have been coproducers in dry grain and wet rice agriculture, and they have served capitalism from its inception in the plantations, factories, and service establishments. However, women are absolutely central to every one of the economic strategies of the post-1977 accelerated development program. They are its cheapest labor force and, in several sectors such as the Free Trade Zone and labor export in the Middle East, its predominant labor force as well. It is clear that although women have been an important part of the Sri Lankan labor force for a long time, their role has expanded dramatically since 1977, often, it will be seen, with dire consequences for the women themselves.

While all social groups in the island have felt the cataclysmic changes of the 1977-87 period, this article is restricted to the effects of economic development programs on the poorer classes of women. Except for a discussion of Indian Tamil women on the tea plantations

Table 1
Population of Sri Lanka by Ethnic Groups — 1981*

| <i>Ethnic Groups</i> | <i>Population</i> | <i>Percent of Total</i> |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Sinhalese | 10,985,666 | 73.98 |
| Sri Lanka Tamils | 1,871,535 | 12.60 |
| Indian Tamils | 825,233 | 5.56 |
| Moors | 1,056,972 | 7.12 |
| Malays | 43,378 | 0.29 |
| Burghers/Eurasians | 38,236 | 0.26 |
| Others | 28,981 | 0.20 |
| Total | 14,850,001 | 100.00 |

* Source: *Statistical Abstract of Sri Lanka, 1981*

Table 2
Employed Population by Industries (Percentage of Females)*

| <i>Industries</i> | 1953 | | 1963 | | 1971 | | 1981 | |
|---|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| | <i>Total</i> | <i>Percent Female</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Percent Female</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Percent Female</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Percent Female</i> |
| Agriculture, hunting, forestry, and fisheries | 1,584,141 | 27.6 | 1,681,937 | 24.9 | 1,828,977 | 27.4 | 1,863,844 | 23.7 |
| Mining and quarrying | 13,790 | 12.7 | 9,412 | 10.1 | 13,079 | 7.9 | 38,642 | 7.4 |
| Manufacturing | 289,245 | 31.2 | 292,275 | 21.6 | 339,405 | 29.5 | 416,829 | 23.0 |
| Electricity, gas, and water | 3,264 | 5.1 | 7,842 | 1.6 | 9,567 | 2.6 | 15,169 | 6.9 |
| Construction | 56,686 | 5.7 | 85,131 | 1.6 | 103,561 | 1.2 | 124,763 | 3.9 |
| Wholesale and retail trade, restaurants, hotels | 282,852 | 10.4 | 349,108 | 6.8 | 343,768 | 6.8 | 433,307 | 8.6 |
| Transport, storage, and Communications | 104,292 | 5.1 | 137,598 | 1.8 | 178,876 | 1.9 | 198,794 | 4.3 |
| Finance, insurance, and business service | 65,070 | 12.2 | 15,599 | 5.3 | 24,945 | 6.9 | 45,476 | 19.6 |
| Community and personal services | 396,204 | 27.8 | 440,869 | 28.0 | 492,780 | 26.7 | 96,708 | 33.2 |
| Activities not classified | 197,815 | 20.0 | 175,355 | 13.2 | 313,917 | 15.1 | 365,832 | 13.2 |
| Total | 2,993,349 | 24.2 | 3,195,125 | 20.5 | 3,648,875 | 22.2 | 4,119,556 | 20.7 |

* Source: *Census Reports 1953-1981 in Kumari Jayawardena and Swarna Jayaweera, A Profile on Sri Lanka: A Study - The Integration of Women into Development Planning (Colombo, Sri Lanka: Women's Education Centre, Series No 13, May 1986), p. 70.*

and reference to Sinhalese Catholic women in the Free Trade Zone and Muslim women leaving for work in the Middle East, the study is largely confined to the experiences of Sinhalese Buddhist women from the island's majority ethnic and religious group. This bias in the analysis reflects the uneven and unequal nature of capitalist development in the island, especially the concentration of state-sponsored development programs within the majority ethnic group and in the urban southwestern region. Due to the ethnic politics in the country and to some extent the cultural conservatism of their communities, Sri Lankan Tamil and Muslim women have not been incorporated into the Mahaweli Program, the Free Trade Zone, tourism, and other new or expanded sectors of the economy in a significant way.

However, if a unified women's movements is to be built in a multicultural and highly stratified society such as Sri Lanka the separate and unequal experiences of women across the boundaries of social class, caste, ethnicity, religion, region, and so on need far greater investigation.

The limitations and biases of the currently available statistics also need to be pointed out. In Sri Lanka, as elsewhere in the "Third World", women's labor is mostly concentrated in household agriculture and the so-called informal sector. Yet this work, like women's domestic labor the world over, is almost never included in official calculations such as the gross national product (GNP). Cultural biases also lead to underreporting of such phenomena as

female-headed households and violence against women in the workplace and in the home. For now, one must make the best use of available data. In the future however, data collection must be more sensitive to gender dynamics. It is only through such considerations that the complex and fast-changing lives of women can be comprehended adequately.

The Plantations

Given the availability of land, attachment to subsistence agriculture, and abhorrence of wage labor, Sinhalese peasants refused to become the regular labor force required on the British-owned plantations. Instead, they became a shifting labor force performing specialized tasks on the estates. Very few Sinhalese women went to work on the

plantations at first. They were about 6 percent of the estate female labor force in 1891, but due to increasing unemployment and landlessness their numbers steadily rose during the twentieth century. A great proportion of Sinhalese labor, both male and female, works on the smaller rubber and coconut estates rather than on the larger tea plantations.

Beginning in the 1820s, British planters began to import laborers from neighboring South India. At first these poverty-stricken landless laborers came as migrants. Nevertheless, when the island's primary plantation crop shifted from coffee to tea in the 1880s (due to a coffee-leaf disease), a year-round labor force came to be required. During the earlier coffee era, most male laborers came alone, and the numbers of female and child laborers on the estates then were small. With the shift to tea, however, entire families were brought and settled on the estates. The result was that by 1911 there were nearly as many women on the tea estates as men: 222,639 women and 247,559 men. Of the total formally employed female population in Sri Lanka, 351,521 or 43.4 percent were in the plantation sector in 1971. According to data from the early 1980s 93.3 percent of the tea pluckers on the estates were women, and of all officially counted laborers under eighteen years, 62 percent worked on the tea estates and of them 60 percent were females.

The British adapted preexisting caste, ethnic, age, and gender hierarchies for purposes of labor procurement and control. For example, the routinely hired South Indian Hindu headmen of higher caste to recruit and supervise their Indian laborers. These headmen, the *kanganies*, exercised their semifeudal patriarchal authority over the low-caste, downtrodden laborers through such means as debt bondage and sexual harassment of the women."

(To be continued)

India's Widening . . .

(Continued from page 16)

achievable. "It will take time," says Nepal's Foreign Minister S. K. Upadhyay, "but it can be pulled off if goodwill prevails. India is the key to SAARC."

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation remains the preeminent forum for a new order. Technical cooperation is well advanced in such fields as information and agriculture. But SAARC has not helped build any new trade links between India and its six forum partners, 95% of whose trade is with countries outside the region. Politics are an added hindrance: Indian films have been banned in Pakistan since the 1960s. Such moves often go against the grain of public sentiment, however. When Amritsar television screened a popular Hindi film some years ago, virtually all activity in the range of its transmitters ceased. For a couple of hours of song, melodrama and dance, national borders were immaterial. But such incidents themselves raise fears of "cultural imperialism".

However, many of South Asia's ruling elites are awakening to the idea that compromising with India can do much good. Says one senior South Asian scholar: "Our governments will have to accommodate the fact that India is indisputably the leading force in the region". Some will find that easier to do than others. Bhutan Foreign Minister Lyonpo Dawa Tsering, for one, considers it an "eminently sensible" path. India must play a lead role for the progress of South Asia," says Tsering, whose country has long enjoyed amicable relations with New Delhi. "We see SAARC as a ready-made mechanism."

Further afield, however, concerns are rising. Indonesia has expressed anxiety over the Indian naval buildup, and Dr. Noordin Sopiee of Malaysia's Institute of Strategic and International Studies observes that the Andaman Islands "can obviously be used as a 'stopper' to control shipping in the Malacca Straits". Some analysts, he notes,

see that India's naval capability has "expanded beyond what is considered adequate for maintaining a local (or) regional presence." India, he concludes, is "a proud nation in the good and bad senses of the word. In the long term, there can be no doubt that India wants to be regarded as a great regional power."

That belief echoes down the length of the eastern Indian Ocean rim. South Asian diplomats have perceived for some time that India is less concerned with world opinion as its self-assertiveness grows. "The hardest part of growing up is the courage to be unpopular," muses Foreign Ministry official Kuldip Sahdev. "We realise that, without being bumptious blunders, we have to be aware of our size and needs. If criticism is inevitable, so be it."

— Asiaweek

New Afghanistan . . .

(Continued from page 19)

The USSR has provided massive economic and military aid to Kabul since February, and it is the level of this aid which US officials cite as the reason for refusing "positive symmetry" i.e., the mutual agreement by Washington and Moscow not to send in aid. The fact that Soviet aid to Kabul is allowed and US-Pakistan aid to the guerillas disallowed, under the April 1988 Geneva accords receives little attention in the West. Moscow appears committed to continued aid and is urging the PDPA to find a solution with the guerillas. But the government in Kabul is coming under pressure from within its ranks to take a tougher line: rocket attacks on Kabul continue to take numerous civilian lives and elements in the Afghan army are calling for missile and hot-pursuit attacks on guerilla positions within Pakistan. The West of course, might not be unhappy at an overt Afghan-Pakistan crisis, since this would provide a pretext for renewed involvement in the conflict and silence doubters in Washington and Islamabad.

Georges Simenon, Author, is dead at 86

Eric Pace

Georges Simenon, 86, creator of the Inspector Maigret and one of the most widely read authors of the 20th century, died Monday at his home near Lausanne.

The Belgian-born writer had been ailing for some time. He owed his fame largely to the enormous success of his books starring Maigret.

Turning out novels in 10 days or so, he wrote, under his own name, 84 Maigrets and 136 other novels, in addition to 200 novellas written under pseudonyms early in his career. Over the years, his fiction was made into dozens of movies and television series.

Mr. Simenon also won critical acclaim for novels he wrote out-side the detective genre — what he called "non-Maigrets." His writing was particularly praised for its psychological insights.

Mr. Simenon's crime novels eschewed the intricate problems and the ingenious deductions employed by many detective-story writers, and his sleuth was neither brilliant nor eccentric — such as Sherlock Holmes or Hercule Poirot.

Quite the contrary, Maigret was a rather ordinary man, domestic, happily married, fond of a pipe and a glass. In working on a case, he absorbed all the information he could, then mulled it over until he arrived at a solution, in which he relied chiefly on his knowledge of human character.

Mr. Simenon liked to keep his novels relatively short and focused on a few characters. He wrote in a terse French and was skilled at using a few words to describe things seen or felt.

He wrote more than a score of volumes of journals, reflections and reminiscences, including his autobiography "Memoires Intimes." He also found time to write more than 1,000 articles and short stories.

His admirers lost track of the sales of his books after they passed 50 million by 1969, but he is said to have been one of the world's most widely translated authors, with books translated into 55 languages and published in 39 countries.

The first Maigret was written after Mr. Simenon left his adopted home, Paris, in 1929 and went on a long cruise through European canals.

While the boat was temporarily laid up in the Netherlands, Mr. Simenon wrote the book on a portable typewriter perched on a wood crate. It was titled, in French, "Pietr-le-Letton," and, in one English edition, "Maigret and the Enigmatic Lett."

Mr. Simenon began turning out other Maigrets with characteristic speed, and soon the inspector's exploits were being read all over Europe. Maigrets kept appearing for five decades.

Many of Mr. Simenon's characters were lashed by compulsions of one kind or another. As for himself, Mr. Simenon freely admitted that he was driven by a compulsion to work as he did, secluding himself for days while the words poured out of him.

Other compulsions ruled his life as well. For many years he was a tireless philanderer, and he provoked varied responses from critics by saying so in "Intimate Memoirs."

He said he had sex with 10,000 women, sometimes at the pace of three a day. He once wrote: "The goal of my endless quest,

after all, was not a woman, but 'the' woman, the real one, loving and maternal at the same time, without artifices."

Another compulsion made him something of a nomad. All told, he lived more than 30 residences during his life, because, he said, again and again he would get a feeling of emptiness, look at his surroundings, ask himself, "Why am I here?" — and move on.

In the 1940s and 1950s, he spent 10 years in the United States, living variously in Connecticut, Florida, California and Arizona.

From 1963 until he announced his retirement as a novelist in 1973 because of ill health, he lived in a hilltop in Epalinges, Switzerland, above Lausanne.

Among his more highly praised novels were "Act of Passion," in which a physician strangles his mistress under the illusion that he is thus killing her sluttish nature while freeing her frightened-child aspect, and "The Snow Was Black," about a young man immersed in corruption who attracts a virginal young woman with the aim of corrupting her.

Mr. Simenon was the first of two children born to Henriette Brull Simenon and Desire Simenon in the industrial city of Liege in eastern Belgium.

After military service, he moved to Paris and then went to work for two years as secretary to a peripatetic French marquis.

He began writing pulp stories, which he said were "not literature but little stories for the risqué weeklies."

— New York Times Service

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