

LANKA

GUARDIAN

Vol. 14 No. 8 August 15, 1991 Price Rs. 7.50 Registered at GPO, Sri Lanka QD/09/NEWS/91

SENSELESS WAR

A little light at the end of the tunnel

— Mervyn de Silva

A bus ride to Ho Chi Minh

— Rajiva Wijesingha

INDIA TODAY

- **Assassination — Anirudhya Mitra**
- **IMF's perestroika — K K Sharma**
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- **Ayodhya — Ashgar Ali Engineer**
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POLLS ANALYSIS

'88, '89, '91: Voter Turnout — Dayalal Abeysekera

South Commission: — Saman Kelegama

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Briefly . . .

UNANIMOUS SUPPORT

● Opposition (SLFP) MP Mangala Moonesinghe's motion calling for a Select Committee of Parliament on the national question was passed unanimously by the House. The motion said: This Parliament is of opinion that a Select Committee of Parliament be appointed to arrive at a political solution to the question involving the devolution of power to the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

TULF HAILS SUPPORT

● The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) issued a statement which said that "the support of the government and the SLFP (for Mr. Moonesinghe's motion) are positive developments". The TULF also said that it would canvass the views of all parties that are now represented in parliament on the need to provide for the adequate and effective participation in the select committee of recognised political parties which are not in parliament.

KITTU CHALLENGES EXPULSION

● Kittu, the LTTE's London spokesman announced that he would challenge the order expelling him from Britain. Kittu was given ten days to quit Britain for a country of his choice.

AGAINST MEDIA COMMISSION

● The Opposition in the Central Provincial Council has given notice of a motion calling on the Central government not to go ahead with the proposed media commission bill. The motion in the name of chief opposition whip Lal

Wijenayake says that the bill is yet another step towards destroying democratic freedoms.

BLOCK IN ANALYST'S DEPT.

● Four hundred narcotics cases are stagnating in the Government Analyst's Department due to an acute shortage of staff. Only 18 personnel are functioning where a cadre of over 30 is needed.

The department received 620 cases last year, a sharp increase compared to 333 cases in the previous year.

Another reason for the backlog of cases is the need for the Government Analyst to make repeated court appearances in connection with these cases.

OBEROI TOO TO BE PEOPLED

● The government's share of Hotel Lanka Oberoi is to be sold under the "peopling" program. The government through the CWE and the Treasury own 51 per cent of the shares.

GOLD FOR RUPEES

● The Central Bank has begun selling gold for rupees. Earlier gold was sold only for foreign currency. Announcing this at a media conference Central Bank Governor Neville Karunatilke said that the ultimate aim was to make the rupee convertible.

"It is gold of the best quality. You will get value for your rupees. Anyone can buy gold at our counter" the Governor said.

And, no questions will be asked.

NO JOBS IN JAPAN

● Answering a question in parliament, Labour Minister G. M. Premachandra said that

there were no indications of employment opportunities for Sri Lankans in Japan, or Greece. Mr Nimal Siripala de Silva asked the minister whether the government would implement an impartial scheme of recruitment for foreign employment as it had been reported that there were many opportunities for employment in the Middle-East, Greece and Japan.

The minister said that recruitment was done by private agencies.

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Price Rs. 7.50

Published fortnightly by
Lanka Guardian Publishing Co. Ltd.

No. 246, Union Place,
Colombo - 2.

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Printed by Ananda Press
82/5, Sri Ratnajothe Saravanamuttu
Mawatha, Colombo 13.

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Moves to end "the senseless war"

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

LTTTE guns went silent at Elephant Pass on Monday. The day before President Premadasa paid a rare tribute to ALL the democratic parties in the island for "closing ranks in a bid to stamp out violence". The President had already urged the LTTE to give up the path of violence and return to the negotiating table. The appeal came 24 hours after the Armed forces had broken the 25 day siege at Elephant Pass. "I hope at least now the LTTE will give up the terror campaign and save innocent lives. In war, no one wins. All are losers".

It was an Opposition MP's motion which had earned praise from the President. And Mr. Mangala Moonesingha is an SLFP MP, a member of the main Opposition party and the ruling UNP's traditional rival. For the first time in our political history, the two leading parties had at least agreed that the possibility of a "political settlement" to the island's harrowing ethnic conflict should be studied by a bipartisan parliamentary Select Committee, and an Opposition MP from the SLFP, had introduced the resolution. In that same political history, the SLFP had been identified, certainly since 1956 as the authentic spokesman of Sinhala-Buddhist interests. It was the victorious SLFP which had made 'Sinhala Only' its principal campaign slogan in '56.

The recent speech at the Kotelawela Defence Academy by former National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali had brought out rather forcefully that debate had introduced three this schools of opinion, once 'Tiger' terrorism had grown

into a major insurgency and, considering our army's capacities, a 'mini-war'.

- a) The J. R. "Murgayo marauw" school or TOTAL WAR strategy.
- b) A primarily social-political problem needs a negotiated solution but from a position of military strength. (Lalith Athulathmudali and like-minded straddled these positions, shifting this or that way, according to the fortunes of war and the political situation.
- c) The "political solution" peace-niks, mainly NGO's and westernised Sinhala-Tamil elite opinion.

Mr. Mangala Moonesingha had placed his motion on the Order book long before the fortunes of the recent battle for Elephant Pass were clear. Mr. Moonesingha, incidentally, belongs to the moderate (pro-Anura) group. (The state-owned *Sunday Observer* however believes that there are 3 groups. See MIDDLE GROUP).

The thrust of Mr. Moonesingha's motion suggests that "devolution" and recognition of the specificity of the "north-and-east" region are the main issues that demand discussion and hopefully, a parliamentary consensus. President Premadasa chose to "salute" the democratic parties for their attempt to end "this senseless war".

Mr. Mangala Moonesingha's motion could not have been better timed. He had been discussing the question long before the Battle for Elephant Pass (what Prabhakaran chose to call 'The Mother of All Battles') had begun. It was the timing and the fortunes of war which none-

theless made his initiative so important, and possibly a turning point in Sri Lanka's (post-IPKF) EELAM WAR 2.

"It was Prabhakaran who set the stage for this operation and he boasted that he could defeat the forces. That was obvious when he called it the mother of all battles". Now the people will know the real position of the LTTE. Prabhakaran's concern is NOT for the people. History will tell if this is the turning point of the war" said General Denzil Kobbekaduwe, the northern Commander, in an interview with Dinesh Watawana, military correspondent of the *Sunday Times*.

In the same paper, Brigadier Wimalaratne added: "The LTTE has thrown in all it has to fight us. Thousands are being conscripted and thrown into the front. Civilians are being taken forcibly. This is likely to be the decisive battle. This has totally changed the complexion of the war. It will now be a fight to the finish".

The armed forces have not had all the material they would have liked but 8,000 troops in a combined operation, (the first amphibious) made OPERATION BALAVE-GAYA, the nearest action that the Sri Lankan armed services have mounted that assumed the character of conventional war. And this of course was the LTTE's tactical blunder based on an over-estimation of its fighting capabilities in that kind of warfare.

What is happening behind the enemy's lines? What do the Tamil people really feel? Is their war-weariness and their bitterness over LTTE's

(Continued on page 6)

Anura: "Save SLFP"

The National organiser of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and Member of Parliament Anura Bandaranaike, has told party MPs and organisers that it is his intention to embark on a course of action to save the SLFP from conspirators and forge ahead with vigour and vitality to ensure a resounding victory for the party at the next elections.

In a letter addressed to party MPs and organisers, Mr. Bandaranaike has stated that he had decided to write to them with a view to focussing their attention on a plot and conspiracy against him by a few individuals within the SLFP itself. "It is my duty to inform my fellow MPs and organisers who had worked with dedication and devotion, about this conspiracy," he has stated.

Mr. Bandaranaike says, nobody will be allowed to drag the SLFP either towards the rightist groups or to the left. The SLFP is a party which

had chosen the middle path. This had been clearly enunciated by the founder of the party. It is the duty of our Party to change with the times taking into account the swiftly changing political and economic trends. There were people with wide political knowledge and experience in the SLFP parliamentary group, the Central Committee and among party organisers."

He says he has called upon MPs and party organisers, he met during the last few days

to take strong action against such saboteurs.

Several steps that should be taken in this regard is now being considered by him. The party must be saved from those plotters and strict action had to be taken against them in order to secure a definite victory at the next election, Mr. Bandaranaike has said adding that his proposed course of action would be discussed in the coming weeks.

(Island)

Govt-Opp Entente

Hard on the heels of developments on the battlefield have come certain tentative moves in the political sphere prompting a war-weary nation to look hopefully for light at the end of the tunnel.

The success of the State security forces in beating back the LTTE assault on Elephant Pass is an indication of the limits of the Liberation Tigers' capacity for territorial expansion. Having explored these limits and having been firmly taught a lesson in conventional strategy by the security forces, the LTTE will now need to act politically on the basis of its current strengths. A continued stalemate will allow a further build up by the security forces in the enclave they have gained in the northern

sector thereby bringing more pressure on the LTTE.

President Premadasa's quick initiative in calling for a renewed dialogue has done much to clear the atmosphere of the smoke and din of battle and pave the way for civil political processes towards peace.

The subsequent moves towards facilitating a dialogue made by the parliamentary opposition and the positive response by the government are the most significant political developments since the LTTE resumed hostilities a year ago.

The inability of the government and parliamentary opposition to cooperate in evolving a peace package has long been one obstacle to a tension-free negotiating process aimed at resolving the ethnic conflict.

(Island Editorial)

"Middle Group"

Perhaps, the rise of the "middle group" may be the reason for Mr. Anura Bandaranaike to smile his way through the Group meeting like a fat cat and not utter one single word. He did not declare his hand, one way or another. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, on the contrary, was attempting to steer the Parliamentary Group towards her line of thinking. She was hoping that the motion to resolve the question of devolution of power should be moved by the joint opposition with the Speaker, Mr. M. H. Mohamed, spearheading the Select Committee. The Opposition, by and large, was not happy with the private member's motion moved by Mr. Mangala Moonesinghe. They wanted it to be in the name of the joint opposition. This was agreed in behind-the-scenes political discussions with all the Opposition groups.

(Sunday Observer)

Scrambled Sophomore (1958)

*Mean the position of the Theravadins
On the remission of sins.
During the university strike
We got no help from Ludowyk.
Poets looked up to the Russian,
Not the failure of a revolution.
Wordsworth is disappointed now
The star failed in Moscow.
One works out one's salvation
And to hell with the nation.
Bambi of the tennis court
Is now eminent on the Supreme Court.
Revolutionary Rufus married a capitalist's daughter
And history is troubled with laughter.*

Patrick Jayasuriya

A Dubious Twist

Anirudhya Mitra in Madras

The crack team probing Rajiv Gandhi's assassination would have done well to turn the spotlight of investigation on itself last fortnight. That Shanmugam, a prize catch in the case, escaped from the SIT's custody only to be found hanging the next morning, was an unforgivable lapse. But worse still, circumstantial evidence in the death of the key LTTE contact knocks the bottom out of SIT's escape theory and the suicide verdict of the hasty post-mortem report.

According to sources, the gaffe has even more disturbing implications as it points to a death-in-custody, and a more deep-rooted conspiracy. That no prompt action was taken to bring the guilty to book suggests SIT has since been trying to cover its tracks.

The information suggests that in all probability Shanmugam died of asphyxiation, and was perhaps the victim of a calculated murder. For Shanmugam, squealing to the SIT, had begun to implicate many local politicians and officials. Police sources say that fearing more revelations, someone could have ordered his killing. Perhaps the LTTE which had threatened last fortnight to 'rescue' its members from SIT custody.

The Tigers would certainly not have wanted Shanmugam to reveal more about Sivarasan, whom he had harboured along with human bombs Dhanu and Shubha. The dark, curlyhaired Shanmugam, 40, a rich landlord and smuggler operating from the coastal town of Vedaranyam in Thanjavur district, was a mine of information on the LTTE as he was providing them logistical support in Tamil Nadu. He knew Sivarasan since the time the explosives expert had come to Madras to eliminate EPRLF leader Padmanabha

last year. After his arrest on July 17, Shanmugam was cooperating with the SIT and helped unearth huge amounts of explosives and communication equipment.

The SIT's version is that Shanmugam had his dinner brought in by his uncle Seetharaman around 9 p.m. on July 19 at the Traveller's Bungalow in Vedaranyam where he was being held. Then under the pretext of washing his hands, he went to the backyard accompanied by a lone guard. And in the dark disappeared scaling the compound wall, leaving behind his Khadi dhoti and white shirt. Next morning his body was found hanging from a tree in a nearby park. A blue lungi was found at the spot.

The post-mortem was conducted the same day at Nagapattinam, 40 km from Vedaranyam. The report, taking note of the saliva, emission of semen and stools, declared it a suicide. But the SIT story and post-mortem are riddled with loopholes that militate against forensic wisdom:

- * There was no rope mark or bruise on the victim's neck which the rope would have positively left if he was alive at the time of hanging.

- * The tongue wasn't protruding.

- * The face was not congested with a rush of blood. And the eyes had not popped out if he was hanged.

- * The saliva, stool and semen discharges could have happened in the event of his being strangled too.

- * No scratch marks on his thighs — a sure sign of a hanging — for in the last-minute

struggle and pain, the hands, unless tied, instinctively scratch the thighs. If Shanmugam was tied up, how could he commit suicide? Neither were skin particles found in his nails.

- * The only way he could have hanged himself was by climbing the tree, putting a noose around his neck and jumping. The impact would have broken the neck bones or ruptured the arteries which was not the case.

- * The rope from which he was hanging was 14 feet long. Where did he get it in the dead of night?

These are clear pointers that Shanmugam's death did not occur due to hanging. The evidence suggests the death took place in custody as even the escape story sounds dubious. Firstly, why were Seetharaman and his driver allowed to visit Shanmugam, bring him dinner and sit with him when earlier even Shanmugam's lawyer was denied permission to be present during his interrogation since he was held under TADA? Then, if he escaped, it was by giving the slip to one DIG, two SPs and more than 20 armed policemen. And if such high security was earmarked for the key suspect, why was he not kept handcuffed or padlocked? Because he was 'cooperative', justifies the SIT. Stranger still, why did the guard accompanying Shanmugam never raise an alarm? CBI officials following the investigation from Delhi observe that either the guard was not carrying his gun or he sensed the man was fleeing when it was too late. In that case, why was just one unarmed guard escorting a key prisoner? Moreover, if the red alert was sounded soon after the escape, how could he hang himself in the park just 50 yards from the bungalow.

According to one source present at the bungalow on the night in question, it was a typical death-in-the-lock-up incident. He reconstructs the events thus: Shanmugam's uncle Seetharaman, a local landlord and money-lender, had brought food for him. Seetharaman, though considered an LTTE sympathiser, was liaising with the SIT from day one of their arrival near Shanmugam's village, Kodiakadu. Seetharaman's taxi driver, Das, was also with him. Before dinner Shanmugam had an altercation around 9 p.m. with his uncle. Seetharaman accused him of settling scores with rivals in the area by falsely implicating them with LTTE activities or the assassination conspiracy.

The argument went on till about half past ten. The DIG and the SSPs had already gone to sleep. At one point of time, only Shanmugam, his uncle, his driver Das, and two unarmed constables were left. Suddenly, the constables, supposedly at the instance of Seetharaman, started thrashing Shanmugam. No one intervened.

The source continues: "All we know is that he collapsed. We suspect that it was a case of asphyxiation. The senior officers were informed only when the man was dead. Yet a party was sent out ostensibly to search for Shanmugam even as his body was very much with us. His clothes were taken off before the body was hanged. But in a hurry and panic, we forgot to remove his wrist watch. The lungi found at the spot actually belonged to Das. Some-time after 3 a.m. the body was hanged."

The post-mortem was conducted at Nagapatnam and not in Madras where there are better facilities — fearing resentment from locals. The body was also handed over to Shanmugam's people immediately for cremation. Something never done in a sensitive case like this. Consequently nobody could challenge the suicide verdict.

Clearly, the SIT has something to hide. That is why not a single policeman was suspended. Nor had Das and Seetharaman been arrested. Because then SIT would have had to come on record explaining their role in Shanmugam's escape or possible killing.

Union Home Minister S. B. Chavan has said the Government is determined to get at the root of the incident. For the purpose, the CBI's additional director was holding an inquiry. But Shanmugam's bizarre death, with its hint of a wider conspiracy, has put the credibility of the entire investigation into doubt, and SIT at the moment needs to answer as many questions as it is asking.

(INDIA TODAY)

The senselesswar...

(Continued from page 3)

methods, mainly conscription of teenagers from every family, made them less hostile to Sinhala-dominated governments and the Sinhala political estab-

lishment? If that is the case, the changing mood in Colombo as reflected in Mr. Moonesingha's resolution and the all-party response, can emerge as a major factor in that large national-political, political-military equation necessary for Sri Lanka to resolve 'the national question'.

Externally, too, the climate is most helpful. By this, I refer to the Tamilnadu scene and the on-going crackdown in Madras — not just by S.I.T. by the Indian Ministry of Defence, after the visit to Tamilnadu of Defence Minister Sharad Pawar, but by the AIDMK administration and the State police.

International opinion too has swung in Colombo's favour. The Gandhi assassination has been too deadly an essay in international terrorism for the international community to tolerate. The deportation order on Kittu by the UK authorities is a striking example.

Assassination in the South

*Uncle Ho said, Behold
This multitude, antlike,
Bearing their slain leader.
They grieve, in parliamentary language
For much that can again never be.
The roads they strode together,
Wondering his strange unconcern
For their laughter at triumphs
Or their bitter days of defeat.
Yet sensing his detachment liberating them from themselves,
Sensing his vision lightning
Flash his world momentarily on theirs,
Slipping back into the darkness of many cravings
They could't make him share.
They bore him forth, just as they now bear him away
But they could't bring him to the death he dreaded,
The death of the fight in the blood within him,
Class surrender to money & complacence
The neo-imperial death sentence.
Uncle Ho, said, wait
This century is not yet over.
Other multitudes will rally
To those who rose to its Dawn
And who will not grow old.*

U. Karunatilake

Indian perestroika courtesy of the IMF

K K Sharma

The new minority Congress government of Mr. P V Narsimha Rao has taken just 34 days to make radical economic policy changes that have been overdue for several decades and could transform the country's industrial structure.

This unusual alacrity in a country long used to lakadaisical movement found its stimulus in the need for immediate and urgent IMF assistance so that the country could avoid the stigma of being branded a defaulter on its huge foreign debt.

Whatever the reason for the brisk speed, India's perestroika has transformed the country much in the manner in which the Soviet Union has sought to introduce a market economy.

The difference is that, unlike the Soviet Union, India already has a thriving private sector and does not need to fumble with novelties. Dr. Manmohan Singh the minister for finance, said he did not fear India would lose out in its search for funds from abroad at a time when it is in competition with the Soviet Union, eastern Europe and the Middle East for foreign investment.

Dr Singh believes that, with its 870m population, India provides a huge, ready-made market and has the necessary skills to use the investment because it has the third largest technical manpower in the world. What was needed was the right policies to attract investment, both by Indians and foreigners and these have been initiated.

In discussions with the Japanese, he revealed, they have said that Japan alone would provide \$2bn (£1.1bn) a year given the right policies.

This is a measure of what he expects from the world now that market forces have been given freedom to operate and industry and trade have been freed from their bureaucratic shackles.

Dr Singh says the measures taken to bring about structural

reforms in the economy are a part of "a comprehensive vision a cohesive strategy and a well-thought-out action plan" that will take the country on the path of growth and thus tackle its appalling poverty through development rather than hand-outs.

The measures taken in the last month started with the 20 per cent devaluation of the external value of the rupee and enabled the government to dismantle controls on trade and shed export subsidies worth Rupees 30bn (£698m) a year.

These were followed on by a new industrial policy that swept aside throttling regulations on investment, internal and foreign, and a budget that has reduced the fiscal deficit from 8.4 percent of the gross domestic product to the IMF's requirement of 6.5 per cent through bold measures like abolition of subsidies.

The most revolutionary changes are in the area of industrial policy and have been widely welcomed, although there are many industrialists, long used to a sheltered market free from competition, who fear that the operation of market forces will harm them.

Harm is bound to be done and is part of the "difficult" and "painful" path that India has now chosen for itself. Bowing to pressure from politicians and businessmen with vested interests, however, a striking omission from the industrial policy was the much-criticised "exit" clause that would have permitted closure of unprofitable units.

Officials say, however, that closures will be unavoidable in the new regime, even though the minister for labour fears considerable unrest because of threatened unemployment. Curiously, the minister was not involved in the discussions on formulation of the policy.

Foreign companies will not of course rush into India simply because they are now allo-

wed a 51 per cent share in joint ventures.

Indeed, the previous limit of 40 per cent was a deterrent only to some since experience has shown that control of a company is possible with a smaller percentage of equity.

However, there are many companies which want total ownership before investing in India. But majority control is certainly an attraction. More important, foreign companies will now not need the scores of government approvals that bred corruption and prolonged delays as proposals were held up for years by a bewildering array of committees and officials.

These have not been totally abolished even now but "automatic approval" for investment proposals in a list of 34 areas of high technology will require, for the most part, discussions only with their Indian partners.

For investments generating exports, the path will be even easier. Much more important for Indian businessmen is their release from having to obtain industrial licences and the abolition of controls on so-called "large monopoly houses" in a manner so sweeping that it has made virtually redundant the controversial Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTP) Act, or at least the hated clauses in it that curbed investments by those most capable of making them.

An era of deregulation has truly been initiated, even though this leaves many sheltered industrialists somewhat apprehensive of the operation of competition.

The government has now reserved for itself only 18 industrial groups, mainly of strategic importance and mining and Indian businessmen will now need licenses only for such sectors as cars, coal, petroleum and 15 others.

The policy on the public sector remains ambivalent. Areas

(Continued on page 10)

INDIA

Indo-US Relations In A Changing World

Chintamani Mahapatra

While the post-Gulf War world is somewhat different from the post-Cold War world, ups and downs in the US-USSR relations in the backdrop of fundamental structural changes in the international system will be the key factor in world politics and international relations in the future. By no stretch of the imagination can one conclude that US-Iraq relations will have far-reaching implications over international politics. And at the same time, no one can exclude the important role that the Soviet Union will continue to play in shaping the rapidly changing world politico-security and economic environment, notwithstanding the current spell of turmoil the country is undergoing.

Since the entire gamut of post-World War II relations among nations got directly or indirectly affected by the nature and intensity of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, leaders and scholars of many nations in today's post-Cold War environment have begun to deliberate on and discuss the possible course of their relationship with the two superpowers in the coming times. Indo-US relations since India's independence have faced many ups and downs. Washington's India policy in the early years of the post-War period was targetted at preventing Communist influence of any kind, especially closer relations between India and the Soviet Union. Although India has all along maintained its democratic tradition and has even permitted Communist Parties to participate in the democratic political process of the country, close relations between India and the Soviet Union have been a political reality, particularly since the early 1970s.

As the US policy makers were apparently disturbed at the growing Indo-Soviet cooperation over the years in various fields, the Indian rulers were clearly concerned about the US policy towards Pakistan and China. However, a marked improvement in Indo-US relations has taken place, especially since the world began to witness rapid changes in the politico-security environment in the latter half of the 1980s. Is it going to last long? What may be the nature of Indo-US relations during the last decade of the present century? In order to make a proper analysis of the possible future course of the New Delhi-Washington relationship, one perhaps ought to start with a brief journey into the past.

Journey into the past

India is an old civilisation, but a new state. The United States of America is a new civilisation, but an old state. The interaction between these old and new civilisations at an intellectual and philosophical level predates the birth of an independent Indian state. But the relationship between these old and new states is of recent origin. As India achieved a decolonised democratic republic status in the aftermath of World War II, the United States emerged from the same war as the most powerful nation in the world. That there will be divergence in the foreign policies and perceptions of a newly independent but potentially powerful state from that of a matured state with a newly acquired superpower status was soon clear. The mutual misperceptions of Indians and Americans that had existed before only exacerbated this divergence.

World War II was still on when the strategic thinkers in the United States began to calculate how best to ensure the post-war security interests in various parts of the world. Considerably confident of ultimate victory in the war and aware of a vital need of access to strategically located overseas bases for furtherance of US security interests, the strategic planners had begun their study in the midst of the war. While mapping out the future strategy, these planners had visualised the emergence of a "militant Asia, or an Asiatic-European coalition" that might hamper American interests in the Pacific region.

At this time, uppermost in the minds of the Indian leaders was the massive task of nation building, on the one hand, and the issues of colonialism and imperialism, on the other. Jawaharlal Nehru was clear in his mind that unless colonialism and imperialism ended and the newly independent countries stood on their own feet, no real progress in any field would be possible. In the first ever Asian political conference of the post-War period, known as the Asian Relations Conference, Pandit Nehru declared: "For too long have we of Asia been petitioners in Western courts and chancelleries. That story must now belong to the past. We propose to stand on our own legs and to cooperate with all others who are prepared to cooperate with us. We do not intend to be playthings of others." After about two years, Nehru convened another conference of Asian countries to discuss the Dutch military action against the Indonesian nationalists. During this conference, partly as a reaction to the "cooperative impulses" ap-

pearing in other parts of the world and partly with a view to minimising external influences, the Indian Prime Minister floated a suggestion for the setting up of a machinery for Asian regional cooperation.

Pandit Nehru was, of course, aware that the "cooperative impulses" in other parts of the world, especially in Western Europe, were inspired and aided by the United States — a party to the Cold War. While the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was largely an American creation, Washington played no little role in the economic integration movement in Western Europe. The well-known Marshall Plan launched by the Truman Administration was, after all, a massive economic programme aimed at, among other things, maintaining Western Europe's financial, fiscal and political stability. As far as Asia was concerned, the United States was not prepared to assume responsibility for the region's economic welfare and development. There was no Marshall Plan for Asia. Washington, in fact, made efforts to discourage such a policy for the Asian continent and used the Economic Commission for Asia and Far East (ECAFE) as a "forum in which to instruct the Asian members of that organisation as to the necessity of their learning themselves."

It is debatable whether Nehru would have welcomed a Marshall Plan-type aid programme for this region, had there been such a programme. On the other hand, he was opposed to military bloc formations, such as the NATO. Nonetheless, an Indian proposal for the establishment of an Asian Cooperative Forum, surfacing at a time of consolidation of Soviet power in Eastern Europe and the imminent success of the Communist forces in the Chinese civil war, perhaps created concern in Washington. The two conferences sponsored by India appeared as pan-Asiatic tendencies to the Western eyes.

These events strengthened further the apprehensions in Washington about the possible emergence of an unfriendly and "militant Asia." The added concern arose out of the fact that Asian (and later African) nationalism was primarily targeted against America's European allies whose cooperation in the ensuing Cold War against the Soviet Union and its allies was deemed essential. As a result, the role of Jawaharlal Nehru in the events that seemed to be harbingers of pan-Asianism was bound to create strains in Indo-US political relations.

With the intensification of the Cold War in the 1950s and 1960s and India's persistent policy of following a non-aligned path in international relations, Indo-US relations suffered many setbacks. New Delhi and Washington did not see eye to eye on a variety of international issues, such as the Japanese Peace Treaty, recognition of China and its membership in the United Nations, the Korean war, the Indo-China war, and regional alliance systems like South-East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) and central Treaty Organisation (CENTO).

While there was no meeting of minds on political and security issues between the Indian and American leaders, economic interaction between the two countries, along with the cultural one, continued throughout the Cold War period. The US economic assistance to India was neither guided by altruistic motives nor was it granted on highly favourable terms to India. American obsession with the containment strategy was, in fact, a major factor that led to Indo-US cooperation in the economic field. The American economic assistance policy, in other words, had been designed to achieve certain politico-security goals. In the words of George C. McGhee, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and African Affairs:

"Were South Asia to pass to the Communist orbit, either

by subversion or conquest, there would then be in the Soviet orbit some 1,300,000,000 and we would be reduced to some 900,000,000. I just point this out to show... the sheer mass of people in this area... and I gave that background (to show) the importance we attach to the continued orientation of these people toward the free world.

"There are, in addition, in this area, great mineral and other raw material resources... We do, for example, obtain some 36 per cent of our total manganese requirements... and we obtain some 87 per cent of our mica in strategic grades from India."

Such was the thinking of American policy makers, especially after the Communist victory in the Chinese civil war. They would not just ignore India, the large resource-rich landmass with a massive population in the South Asian subcontinent which "dominates the vital communication lines between Europe and the Far East." A pro-Western political orientation, if not an anti-Communist one, of the people of this region was considered essential. Certain amount of economic aid to India, as to many other countries, was granted to instill a pro-Western orientation at best and to prevent a pro-Soviet leaning in the least, of the government, as also of the people at large.

Regional factor

The most significant regional factor that was largely responsible for shaping the Indo-American mutual perceptions in the post-War period was, however, the ups and downs of US-Pak security cooperation. At a time when the rising Cold War tensions and the growing Non-Aligned Movement stood as major obstacles in the development of a mutually beneficial trust between New Delhi and Washington, Pakistan was only too willing to align itself with the United States. The

Pakistani ruling elites, otherwise unable to maintain a political identity of their country, had begun to perceive almost a perpetual threat emanating from New Delhi and seemed prepared to bear any political cost to strengthen Pakistan vis-a-vis India. While Washington viewed its security cooperation with Islamabad in Cold War terms, the latter, in spite of its membership in SEATO and CENTO, sought to give the impression that India, not the Soviet Union, was its principal enemy.

The United States-Pakistan strategic relations have had a direct impact over the years on the state of Indo-American relations. New Delhi remained unconvinced of Washington's assurances that the US security cooperation with Pakistan was not targeted against India. However, during both the major wars fought between the two countries, Pakistan used all the weapons supplied to it by the United States. The US government did nothing to prevent the use of such weapons by Pakistan notwithstanding the assurance given earlier. The US government was aware of Pakistan's intentions. As Chester Bowles, the former US Ambassador to India, put it:

"If the Pakistan Army were actually designed to become part of a US sponsored defence system to discourage a Soviet or Chinese military movement through the Himalayas or the Hindu Kush mountains, it would be seeking equipment appropriate for fighting in the mountain areas. However, the equipment we supplied Pakistan — tanks, motorised artillery and the like — was suitable for use only on a relatively flat terrain, in other words, on the plains of north India. Moreover, from the outset, the Pakistan government had itself made clear that it had no quarrel with either the USSR or China and privately admitted that its military build-up was, in fact, directed against India.

"To balance the increasing strength of the Pakistan Army and Air Force which we were equipping with F-86 and F-104 fighter planes and Patton tanks, the Indians dipped into their limited foreign exchange reserves to buy Centurion tanks and Hunter fighter planes from the British and Mystere fighter planes from the French. The fact that India's purchases were limited reflected its continued trust in the United States' pledge that under no circumstances would we permit the equipment given to Pakistan to be used against India."

However, the United States took extremely cautious steps during the Indo-Pakistan wars and did not extend support to Pakistan's war efforts to the extent expected from an alliance partner. As a result, relations between the United States and India never suffered a rift and continued through ups and downs. During the decade of the seventies, the socio-cultural relations and a modest degree of economic interaction went on between the two countries, but divergence of perceptions of political and security issues persisted, and now and then got accentuated. The Sino-Soviet rift, however, widened during this period with no signs of rapprochement.

The Nixon Administration was cultivating China with the objective of using the latter as a counterweight to the Soviet Union. Pakistan, which had acted as the go-between in the process leading to Sino-American detente, was, during this time, administering highly repressive policies in the erstwhile East Pakistan. The crisis in East Pakistan had adversely affected India and a war climate was hanging over South Asia. The emergence of a hostile security environment in the region induced India and the Soviet Union to establish a stronger relationship to deal with the situation. Washington viewed with great suspicion India's closer relations with

the Soviet Union. Richard Nixon, a former US President, has commented in his book, 1999: *Victory Without War*: "That a democratic nation such as India can have a pro-Communist foreign policy is one of the geopolitical paradoxes of this century. It is the only major non-Communist country that has not condemned the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and is one of the few nations to have full diplomatic relations with Kabul."

Incidentally, Nixon himself was at the helm of affairs when the US government began the efforts to open up the line of communication with China. The evolution of Sino-American relations since then is no secret to the world. And by 1988, when Nixon's book was published, the United States had become the second largest trade-partner of Communist China and its private investment in that country constituted the largest among the foreign countries. Significantly enough, by the year 1988, US-USSR relations had achieved a breakthrough reflected in the conclusion of the Geneva Agreement on Afghanistan and the INF Treaty. One wonders whether such US policies should not be termed the "geopolitical paradox of this century."

(Next-Recent Trends)

Indian perestroika. . .

(Continued from page 7)

such as essential infrastructure exploration for oil and minerals and industries "crucial to the long-term development of the economy and where private sector investment is inadequate" still remain in the public domain.

Privatisation of the many unprofitable public enterprises has not been explicitly accepted partly for political reasons and the commitment of the Congress party to Nehru's policy that the public sector should be at the "commanding heights" of industry.

But many expect that the new industrial policy will diminish the importance of this dogma.

The Storm Signals from Ayodhya

Asghar Ali Engineer

THE Ayodhya dispute has claimed a heavy toll. Was this conflict worth it? The reply obviously would be in the negative. Apart from the fatalities and hardships for many in other ways, it also greatly damaged our political processes. The secular consensus of our post-Independence era was seriously damaged. The BJP used this issue to make a serious bid for power at the Centre and it did not succeed.

Let us remember that for a multi-religious society like ours democracy and secularism are *sine qua non*. The Nehruvian model of secularism was and is still relevant for our polity. It does not make much sense to say that it has lost its vitality, much less its relevance. It had created a secular consensus and served us well all these years. It cannot be thrown out today saying it was only promotion of pseudo-secularism all these years. The Prime Minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, was right when he said on assuming the office of Prime Ministership that the alternative to the Nehruvian model is fascism.

We did witness traces of fascism in the last few years, specially since Mr. Advani's 'rath yatra' and the VHP's high voltage campaign for construction of the Ramjanmabhoomi temple at Ayodhya. No one could imagine just a few years ago that a large army of sadhus and trishuls would be used for election campaign in India. Mr. Gulzari Lal Nanda, when he was Home Minister in the late sixties, had tried to use sadhus for anticorruption campaign. Even though the issue was corruption, the measure was strongly criticised and it had to be given up.

Religion for political ends

It was unfortunate that the BJP and the VHP went to such an extent in making use of

religion for political ends. It is often said and rightly so that Hinduism is not an organised religion and is not amenable to being used in politics such as Islam. However, everything depends on the context. There cannot be immutable propositions in such matters. Islam too is not monolithic in the sense it is projected, but Muslims, depending on the context, can unite for political action. The BJP sought to do that with Hindus too for its own political interests. The Buddhists sought to achieve the same end in Sri Lanka. Thus everything has to be seen in the proper context.

When religious unity is sought to be achieved, it is more often for political rather than religious reasons.

The history of Islam is full of such instances. Jinnah also sought to unite all the Muslims to achieve Pakistan. The religious leaders too seek to unite their followers not to serve religious ends, but their own interests. But whenever such an attempt was made either by religious or secular leaders, it has led to conflict and bloodshed. The competing interests contributed to this. Such a unity leads to greater sectarianism, dogmatism and fanaticism. It is often unhealthy for intellectual health of the society. Change and progress require accommodation and openness of mind.

It is highly dangerous to seek political unity on the basis of religion. It would be unhealthy even in a unreligious society and much more so in a multi-religious society such as India. Medieval ideas, institutions and symbols can be a soothing balm for their followers, but hardly a solution for complex problems of a modern society. What is worse, religious leaders and priests are not even prepared for a rethinking on these ideas and symbols. And yet these ideas and symbols are

being projected as essential for national unity. They, on the contrary, will bring about greater division in the society.

The Muslims sought to use the Shah Bano case for forging unity among themselves and failed. The progressive and the conservative among them were polarised though the progressives were outnumbered. The unity among the conservatives too was illusory. There were competing interests among them too. Moreover, Pakistan has not succeeded since its inception in forging unity in the name of Islam. The Pakistani society is deeply divided on ethnic as well as sectarian lines apart from political polarisation. It is so when Islam is thought to be more amenable to unity.

How can then Ramjanmabhoomi bring about 'national unity'? It cannot bring about even Hindu unity. And yet, the BJP leadership repeatedly claimed that Ramjanmabhoomi is a symbol of national unity. It would not have served this purpose even if India had been purely a Hindu country. India's diversity is not only due to the presence of non-Hindus. Diversity exists within the Hindu society itself and a rich diversity at that. Again, it is not only due to castes, but it is also regional, cultural and linguistic in nature.

It is only unity in diversity which is a valid political as well as social doctrine for India. This doctrine clearly implies that each religious, cultural and linguistic community should be ensured full autonomy and scope for its full flowering. It is this approach which would ultimately ensure true democratic unity, a unity not imposed from above, but one which grows from the hearts and the minds of the people. India is not a nation in classical Western sense: it is neither unilingual nor unreligious nor uncultural. It is on the contrary,

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an 'agglomeration of nations.' Still the people of India voluntarily decided to come together and formed a nation.

The unity of our country, therefore, very much depends on a secular consensus. Nothing should be allowed to disturb this consensus. It has been achieved after great sacrifices and steadfastness of our national leaders. We resisted the temptation to become a Hindu nation even in the face of the grim challenge, from the two nation theory of jinnah. Let us not give in to that temptation now after more than forty years of process of nation-building.

No shifting or Masjid

I am saying all this as the Ayodhya dispute is still a grim challenge for us and for our national unity. Let us not labour under the illusion that now that the BJP has come to power in U.P. it would try to defuse the issue and thus behave more sensibly. Even if it wants to, it would not succeed in the prevailing climate of its own creation. The VHP would not let it do that. It is true that Mr. Kalyan Singh, on becoming the Chief Minister of U.P., said that he would try to resolve the Ayodhya issue through dialogue with the Muslims. However, no such dialogue is possible as long as the BJP and the VHP insist on "respectfully shifting" the Babri Masjid. The Muslim leaders are not prepared to accept shifting of the mosque. The dispute would have otherwise been solved long before. Mr. Kalyan Singh's stand is nothing new. The BJP and the VHP leaders have been talking for long about "respectfully shifting" the mosque.

The VHP leaders are not even sincere about shifting of the mosque. Their leaders are on record on having said that "what is there in the mosque now "to shift except the plaque inscribed by Mir Baqi." According to these leaders the Babri

Masjid has already been converted into a temple since Ram Lala is being worshipped there since 1948. To us it would be seen that the VHP leaders do not take their own proposal to shift the mosque seriously. The Muslim leaders rejected this proposal from the very beginning and have rejected it once again. And Mr. Kalyan Singh has not mooted any other proposal. So where is the question of any dialogue?

The Muslims also did not take kindly to the fact that the entire BJP Cabinet had gone to Ayodhya after the swearing in and resolved that the Ramjanmabhoomi temple will be constructed where the Babri mosque stands. Though the BJP's compulsions to convince its voters that it is serious about construction of Ram Mandir is understandable, Mr. Kalyan Singh should have behaved more tactfully. It provoked Muslims into taking a more rigid stand as it convinced them that the BJP would now use its Governmental power to bulldoze the mosque and thus they could hardly be expected to take the BJP Chief Minister's offer of dialogue seriously.

Thus, the Babri Masjid Action Committee has issued a warning to the Kalyan Singh Government that "if the disputed Ayodhya shrine was acquired and any attempt was made to damage or destroy the Babri Masjid and construct a temple in its place it would be opposed and resisted with full force. This, it said, would have national and international repercussions. "The former SJP Minister, Mr. Shafiq-ul-Rehman, went a step further and warned that even the Congress(1) Government at the Centre that "if it remained silent and passive over the Ayodhya adventure of the BJP Government, it too would be held squarely responsible for the 'bloodshed' which would follow."

The Centre has already indicated that it intends to keep its promise made in its mani-

festo that it would introduce a Bill to maintain the *status quo* of all religious shrines and places of worship as they existed on August 15, 1947, except, of course, in the case of Babri Masjid as the dispute is in the Court. Even if the BJP accepts this — though it is not all that certain — the VHP would certainly not and the BJP may not be in a position to ignore the VHP's stand.

It can assume very serious proportions again if all of us do not make an honest attempt to resolve it. While it is highly necessary to respect the religious sensibilities of both the Hindus and the Muslims, we should see to it that it is not blatantly politicised by both the sides once again.

No peaceful solution to this tangled problem can be found until the BJP and the VHP, on the one hand, and, the Babri Masjid Action Committee, on the other, continue to monopolise the issue. Their positions are too rigid to yield any meaningful solution. We can break the ice only if eminent personalities — both religious as well as secular — who have so far been uninvolved, step in and consider various alternatives with an open mind.

There are powerful vested interests on both sides. Money and power are also involved. A section of the print media is also controlled by vested interests. The intelligentsia in both the communities is also strongly opinionated. The challenge is really great. But as historian Toynbee said the greater the challenge, the greater should be our resolve and creative powers to meet it. It is a real challenge before the people of India. Their unity and survival depend on a peaceful resolution of this problem. And peaceful resolution should not be so far removed only we realise that no temple or mosque is more sacred than human life. If it is, there is something wrong with our religion.

POLLS '88, '89 and '91

Dayal Abeysekera

If the 1988 presidential poll was unprecedented in the annals of Sri Lankan election history because of the 'uncast vote' (see, Madanayake in LG, 1st January, 1989), democracy could, perhaps, enjoy a sigh of relief after witnessing the voter turnout at the local government polls held on 11th May. From the depressing levels of slightly over 50 percent of the registered voters casting their vote in '88, the local government polls soared to 72.9 percent for the 17 districts in which the elections were held. This was well within the range of normalcy for Sri Lankan voters who have turned up between 70 and 86 percent during the past 35 years at major elections.

This brief paper will attempt to present the comparative electoral performance of the

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United National party and the Sri Lanka Freedom party during the three electoral polls of 1988, 1989 and 1991 in respect of Sri Lanka, minus the Northern and Eastern provinces. To round off the performance, a third residual category of 'other parties' is also included in the paper. While the geographic unit of the '88 and '89 elections was the electorate, the '91 poll was local government area specific. Thus, the comparison of the three polls necessitated the selection of a different geographic entity, which obviously was the district.

Before delving into the statistical data, it is important to remind one's self of the background of the 1988 and 1989 contests so as to be aware of the limitations of the comparability of the data. The presidential poll of '88 was a straight fight between UNP, SLFP and SLMP without an explicit

electoral arrangement between the parties. However, the left of centre parties (i.e., LSSP, CP, MEP and NSSP) backed the SLFP candidate implicitly by not putting forward a candidate of their own. This backing was not found in the parliamentary Election of 1989 with most of the parties going their own way, except for the coalition of USA between SLMP, LSSP, CP and NSSP. The 1991 Local Government poll saw a further break-up of the USA and the constituent partial no-contest pact between the SLFP and some of the left of centre parties like the MEP, LSSP and CP but this did not hold consistently throughout the 17 districts. The UNP fielded candidates in almost all of the 237 constituencies except 3, 2 of which they deferred to the CWC in Nuwara Eliya District while an independent group fully supported by the UNP were in Akuressa Pradeshiya Sabha.

TABLE — 1
Percentage distribution of votes received by UNP, SLFP and 'Other Parties' and percent voting during 1988, 1989 and 1991 Elections.

Electoral District	UNP %			SLFP %				'Other Parties' %				% Voting			% change in regd. votes '88—'89
	1988	1989	1991	1988	1989	1991	Plus coali. 1991	1988	1989	1991	Minus SLFP coali. 1991	1988	1989	1991	
Anuradhapura	42.7	56.4	55.0	55.1	36.1	40.0	41.5	2.2	7.5	5.0	3.5	40.0	53.5	75.9	8.0
Polonnaruwa	55.5	62.3	53.5	42.4	33.3	43.1	43.1	2.1	4.4	3.4	3.4	29.7	45.8	72.6	8.5
Monaragala	63.2	52.4	56.2	34.5	43.7	39.5	39.5	2.6	3.9	4.3	4.3	16.9	62.2	75.7	10.8
Badulla	60.1	59.0	63.6	37.4	35.4	30.4	31.3	2.5	5.6	6.0	5.2	41.8	75.5	78.7	-4.9
Ratnapura	51.7	57.9	48.8	45.7	36.4	42.8	47.8	2.6	5.7	8.4	3.4	76.6	78.6	77.8	10.5
Kegalle	57.1	61.1	54.7	40.5	28.3	29.9	32.2	2.4	10.6	15.4	13.1	67.7	69.4	73.4	7.3
Kandy	54.9	61.7	57.4	43.5	31.9	35.1	35.8	1.6	6.4	7.5	6.8	68.2	56.4	74.2	8.5
Kurunegala	51.1	58.5	52.2	46.9	36.3	37.8	37.8	2.0	5.2	10.0	10.0	50.0	72.9	74.7	4.9
Matale	57.9	63.8	57.9	40.3	32.8	27.4	32.5	1.8	3.4	14.7	9.6	29.8	70.3	77.6	9.9
Nuwara Eliya	62.0	63.3	60.1	35.9	27.2	24.4	32.0	2.1	9.5	15.5	7.9	80.2	81.5	75.7	46.8
Puttalam	55.9	62.6	54.6	42.3	32.2	34.3	40.6	1.8	5.2	11.1	4.7	70.5	73.9	71.0	7.2
Gampaha	48.2	54.1	50.4	48.8	41.3	41.9	46.2	3.0	4.6	7.7	3.4	74.5	76.8	71.9	-0.9
Colombo	49.3	51.7	47.7	46.1	28.3	21.6	43.0	4.6	20.0	30.6	9.3	67.0	69.8	66.9	8.2
Kalutara	46.8	49.8	46.8	49.5	40.9	40.1	41.4	3.7	9.3	13.0	11.7	63.9	59.9	73.9	5.5
Galle	44.7	50.4	48.3	53.1	41.7	38.1	40.6	2.2	7.9	13.6	11.1	48.9	68.0	73.8	5.0
Matara	42.9	56.1	52.4	54.3	35.3	34.9	45.6	2.8	8.6	12.7	2.3	23.7	19.2	68.7	3.4
Hambantota	49.7	55.9	48.4	47.4	39.7	46.1	46.1	2.9	4.4	5.5	7.1	29.3	20.6	69.5	4.4
Sri Lanka	50.1	56.3	52.2	46.1	35.2	35.0	40.5	3.8	8.5	12.5	7.3	46.8	64.3	72.9	7.7
(Mins North-East)															
Column	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii	viii	ix	x	xi	xii	xiii	xiv	xv

Thus, the percentage distributions presented in Table 1 refer to these different alignments of the parties. The 'Other Parties' of 1988 refer to the votes received by the SLMP; during 1989 it refers to the votes received by USA, MEP, SLMC, ELJP, EPLF and Independent candidates. In 1991, it refers to the totality of non-UNP, non-SLFP, non-CWC votes excluding also the independent group of Akuressa. The most consistent throughout the three elections is the performance of the UNP; the SLFP had the left parties' support almost totally (except SLMP) in 1988, lacked this support totally in 1989 and regained some of it in 1991. As a consequence of this, the SLFP's 1991 performance is provided in 2 columns, Column (vi) where only SLFP's votes are given and Column (vii) which gives SLFP plus its no-contest pact partners' votes where there was a bona fide appearance of a no-contest at the Local Government area level. In similar manner, 'Other Parties' performance during '91 is given in two columns; Columns (x) provides all non-SLFP, non-UNP parties' vote while Column (xi) provides all non-SLFP and non-UNP parties' votes minus the instances where 'Other Parties' or Independent Groups have appeared as the major contender against the UNP candidate (with no presence of a SLFP candidate).

The data has also to be viewed with the backdrop of the massive fluctuation in voter turnout which at the district level ranged from as low a level as 16.9 percent (Monaragala '88) to 81.5 percent (Nuwara Eliya '89). The percentage distribution of the voting population is provided in Columns (xii) through (xiv) and Column (xv) gives the percent increase in the registered voters. There were 7.7 percent more voters during '91 than at either '88 or '89. Thus, in perhaps the most affected (fairly well populated) District of Matara, there were 86,633 voters casting their

ballot in 1989 while in 1991 there were 321,133 who made their way to the polling booths, an increase of 271 percent (though sparsely populated, Monaragala was more drastically affected with a 397 percent increase). Within a short span of two years, one might say that the voting constituency of Matara '89 was almost incomparable to that of its 1991 constituency in sheer numbers alone. In contrast, Ratnapura changed minimally from 350,137 in '88 to 393,105 citizens casting their vote in '91, a mere 12 percent change.

In spite of these widely fluctuating constituencies, what is most visible at a first glance of the two major parties' performance during the three polls is the remarkable consistency with which they have secured a relatively non-fluctuating level of votes. In this regard, the UNP displays a much more stable performance than the SLFP. At the national level (meaning the 17 districts excluding the North and the East of the country), the UNP secured between 50.1 and 56.3 percent of the valid votes while the SLFP held between 35.0 and 46.1 percent of the votes. At the district level the widest range for the UNP was a 14.3 percentage points in Anuradhapura (42.7 vs. 56.4 percent); for the SLFP (party alone) the difference was 24.5 percentage

points in Colombo (21.6 vs. 46.1 percent). When the SLFP and its coalition partners are considered (Columns iv, v and vi), the difference reduces to 19.0 percentage points, visible both at Anuradhapura and Matara.

In terms of the relative vote securing strength of the two parties, a clearer picture emerges in Table 2. The percent polled by each party within each of the districts during the three polls is categorized by 5 percentage point cut-offs and presented in their frequency and percentage distributions. While the 'SLFP only' uses Columns (iv), (v) and (vi), 'SLFP + Coalition' uses Columns (iv), (v) and (vii) of Table 1 to derive its data.

Table 2 clearly shows that during the three elections under consideration, the UNP consistently secured more than 40 percent of the cast valid votes at the district level while the SLFP alone could do this only in less than half the poll-districts (23 out of the 51); SLFP with its coalition partners performed better by securing 28 out of 51 poll-districts above the 40 percent range. Similarly, SLFP with or without its coalition could not secure a single poll-district above the 55 percent range while the UNP was able to secure 24 out of the 51 poll-districts (i.e., nearly one half) within this range.

TABLE 2
Vote securing strength of Major Parties at District Level during the polls of '88, '89 and '91

% Votes Secured	UNP		SLFP Only		SLFP + Coalition	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
20.1 — 25.0	—	—	2	3.9	—	—
25.1 — 30.0	—	—	6	11.8	3	5.9
30.1 — 35.0	—	—	7	13.7	9	17.6
35.1 — 40.0	—	—	13	25.5	11	21.5
40.1 — 45.0	3	5.9	13	25.5	17	33.3
45.1 — 50.0	10	19.6	7	13.7	8	15.7
50.1 — 55.0	14	27.5	3	5.9	3	5.9
55.1 — 60.0	13	25.5	—	—	—	—
60.1 — 65.0	11	21.5	—	—	—	—
	<u>51</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>100.0</u>

The Road to Vietnam

Rajiva Wijesingha

Lundy had a great time inviting them over to join me laughing at their reactions and mine (the latter affected too by the awareness that, not having wanted to change any more precious dollars, I had money just for two dinners, but certainly not for three, and probably not even for the extra drinks the girls were expected to consume while giving us the pleasure of their company).

It was clearly a lucrative profession, for we found that one of the girls had in fact come all the way from Vietnam to ply her trade here. Many tables had at least one of them sitting down, while what seemed dozens more bustled around, both in the main hall, and steering skilfully in between the tables on the balcony, where we sat overlooking the lake. What was equally noteworthy perhaps was that all the tables were full, which had almost been the case too at the quieter restaurant on the lake where I had dined alone on my first night in the city. There was clearly a class of entrepreneurs making quick money, and keen to consume it quickly too.

There were of course other levels too. Earlier in the evening Lundy had taken me to see some friends of his. The father of the family was a retired school principal, who had done quite well in Pol Pot's time, Lundy told me and was now obviously making good money by other means, for the house was new though small, he had a very modern and quite sophisticated sound system, and he even offered me whisky. He spoke English adequately, and French even better. His children however, a whole range of them were much less fluent in their English, and much more inhibited than Lundy about trying to practice it. Presumably they were more typical than he was — and suggested an area in which

assistance to the new nation might be invaluable. Clearly the capacity to communicate with the world at large has to be built up, and this is perhaps an area in which we as well as India, if we swiftly build up our base of English facilitators as we can so easily do, will be in a position to make a positive contribution to the region.

But there are other areas too much less complicated ones one might hope, in which means of communication need to be improved. Lundy wanted me to write to him but, as he began to put down his name, he realized that his house still had no number. Evidently they did not receive mail, perhaps because there was no one to write. He would try to get a number soon however, he said, and he took down my address, to write himself. As yet however there has been no word. My own postcards home have long since arrived, and with no very great delay, so the post itself clearly can function. I suspect however that I should give my hope of ever receiving an address for Lundy.

* * *

The next morning at dawn I set off for Vietnam. The distance was less than two hundred miles, and upto the Cambodian border we moved fairly fast, with even the crossing of the Mekong by ferry taking less time than anticipated. That all was not well however should have been clear from the smart young lady who sat in the driver's compartment, with a big bag full of notes and packets of American cigarettes, which she dished out to the soldiers, the bus sometimes not even bothering to stop, at checkpoints on the way.

Nemesis was at hand. What we were carrying I have no idea. The floor of the bus was laden with packets of what

claimed to be some sort of electronic equipment but were heavy enough to be gold bars or something similar. Certainly the quantities of money being dished out suggested that they were extremely valuable; and the Vietnamese soldiers turned out to be quite aware of the short of thing that was going on. Our stop on the Cambodian side of the border was long enough, but on the other side we had an even longer wait, while protracted negotiations place took place and more wads of notes changed hands at intervals; and the process was repeated again at the customs house just beyond. We spent over six hours altogether at the border, and it was night before we were allowed to leave.

Only about forty miles more remained to Ho Chi Minh City, but our hopes of completing the journey in a couple of hours proved abortive. There were more checkpoints, on either side of the villages on the way, and a few miles from the border we were stopped again. That negotiation took a couple of hours; and then, on the other side of the same village, the process started again. That was the last straw, and the foreigners on the bus, four Americans, an Englishman, and myself, shifted to another bus, that stopped there, where we were welcomed with cans of Heineken.

That should have warned us. The first bus left, but the second now turned out to be as much an object of suspicion. Meanwhile the cars and vans that passed, sometimes barely stopping, clearly had no problem. Finally, in desperation, I jumped off and asked the driver of a van that had stopped briefly whether I could have a ride to Ho Chi Minh. Despite having no common language we understood each other, the Englishman piled in as well, and off we went. It turned out that in fact the van was only going to the suburbs of the city, but for a couple of dollars each we were taken right into the centre of town. En route we passed the original

bus, stuck at yet another checkpoint, with the passengers spread out on the road while the smart young lady argued her case.

Ho Chi Minh turned out to be very different from the Hanoi that I remembered from my 1984 visit. It was much more lively and more modern, more developed too than Phnom Penh, with a very active and quite elegant commercial area in the centre. In theory one's movements were not quite as free as in Phnom Penh, for the hotel thought that I had to register with the police within a couple of days of arrival, but that turned out to be unnecessary. Conversely, the only restrictions the hotel itself thought fit to impose on guests by means of a notice in all rooms seemed to me quite reasonable —

*Customers are not allowed —
To take prostitute into hotel —
To cook and iron clothes in room. Please don't change room and increase people voluntarily.
In case of great burning fire, please do not run but crawl towards the rescue exit/ladder.*

As a tourist centre the city was fun to explore, if not especially impressive. The museum was interesting enough, but nothing like the extensive

collection in Hanoi, or the wonders of Phnom Penh. The pagodas that were highlighted on the tourist guide were relatively new, but a friendly monk at one of them did direct me to a couple of historic temples, both of them calm and beautiful and imposing, one with foundations dating back a couple of millennia on which excavations were just beginning. In addition, I was quite thrilled to see the former American Embassy, from the roof of which helicopters had taken off the last fugitives as the finally triumphant Vietcong entered the city in 1975.

Even more forcefully evocative of that period were the tunnels of Cu Chi, reached after a twenty mile trip through the countryside on the back of a motobike (and the journey was even longer, for the rider had not understood at first what I wanted, and had taken me for a pleasant but purposeless hour long tour of the city). The tunnels formed a vast underground network that the Vietcong had successfully used to stymie various American attempts to isolate the villages from which they operated, and from which too they had launched secret attacks.

So low that they were profoundly uncomfortable to crawl through for even five minutes, they must have required both tremendous agility as well as commitment to have been used so effectively over so long a period. More than anything else on this trip or the previous one, they conveyed the reality of the effort so small a nation had gone through to win its struggle.

On the last morning before my flight to Hanoi I went too to a couple of Hindu temples. There were four altogether in the city, indicative of the relatively large community of Indian traders who had settled in Saigon. I met one of them, whose family had come over early in the century. He seemed to be the custodian of the one temple that was still in active use. There are moves now to restore another, perhaps in the light of the revival of trading connections. Interestingly, the guide at Cu Chi told me that a delegation of Sri Lankan businessmen had visited the tunnels; but who they were, and how large the group was and what its origin, I could not discover.

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Militarization, violent states, violent Society

Sumanta Banerjee

Among post-colonial independent states in South Asia, India seems to have emerged as the classic example of a state trapped by a built-in contradiction. The contradiction is between its self-proclaimed ideological basis and the objective reality of its actions which consistently violate its professed ideology.

The contradiction is built-in because its roots are historical. The Indian state's official spokespersons — as well as official historians — would have us believe that independence was brought about through a non-violent midwife called 'Gandhism,' which is the state's proclaimed ideology. Yet history records the most violent birth-throes which accompanied the foundation of the independent Indian state. The Hindu-Muslim communal riots that preceded the partition of a sub-continent and led to the birth of 'India, that is Bharat', are a historical reality which not only knocks off the Indian state's official and ideological claim to its supposedly non-violent parentage, but also challenges the doctrine of non-violence as propounded by Gandhi as a harbinger of change. In fact, towards the end of his life, Gandhi sought to distance himself from the violent political midwifery which delivered the twins — one called India, the other Pakistan — from a tortured womb. His isolation from the mainstream, tinged by the realization of the failure of his life-long dedication to the doctrine of non-violence at the end of his political career, is well-documented (cf. 'Studies in Gandhism' by his one-time secretary, Nirmal Kumar Bose. Calcutta. 1962). But that is another story!

What needs to be remembered is that the Indian state is a state which was born of violence — and violence still marks its life style. Unless we remember these historical roots of its birth, we cannot understand the violent outbursts that are tearing apart today the fabric of the Indian state, and compelling the centre that runs it to resort to increasing militarization. Is State militarization a desperate response to the violent expressions of the contradictions — religious, class, ethnic, caste and otherwise — that are inherited by the Indian state from the pre-1947 era, but which the post-independence state failed to resolve. Despite the Indian state's declared profession of adherence to 'ahimsa' or non-violence.

In practice the Indian state had resorted to the language of violence all these years in trying to resolve the contradictions that plague Indian society.

The Indian state acquired a military character almost from its nursery days. It started at two levels — external and internal. At the external level, the newborn state sent its troops to Kashmir in October 1947 to fight first the Pakistan-aided tribals, and later regular forces of the Pakistan army in order to protect a territory which was acceded hurriedly to the Indian Union by the then Maharajah of Kashmir. The question of accession remains till today a bone of contention between India and Pakistan, with the people of Kashmir yet to have a chance of expressing their independent option as to whether they want to remain a part of the Indian Union, or of Pakistan (which is in control of nearly 32,000 square miles of Kashmir's original 86,000 square miles), or have an independent status. Despite a ceasefire agreement between Pakistan and India, signed

on January 1 1949, the Kashmir imbroglio has dominated the two Indo-Pak wars till now, and continues to reinforce the military character of the Indian state which deploys contingents of its numerous para-military forces — the CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force), BSF (Border Security Force) — as well as regular army troops in the Kashmir Valley to quell a secessionist movement there. The initial military intervention of 1947 could not solve the basic problem — the issue of the Kashmiri people's independent choice. It has only led India to get embroiled in a perpetual armed confrontation with Pakistan, which taking advantage of the dingruntlement among the Kashmiri masses is making inroads into the secessionist movement by offering it military aid. The Indian state is paying the price for having ignored in the past the need for a democratic solution of the problem of the status of the Kashmiri people.

Three major wars followed the 1947 Kashmir adventure — the 1962 war with China, and the 1965 and 1971 wars with Pakistan — in the course of which the militarization of the Indian state grew by leaps and bounds. From ten divisions in 1962, its army's strength went up to 21 division in 1965, and further to 25 in 1971. By 1988 there were 37 divisions, which is expected to reach 50 by 2010 A.D. Similarly the annual defence expenditure has gone up from Rs 3,125 million in 1961-62 to Rs 1,57,500 million in 1989-90 — 50 times increase in three decades. Apart from the three wars, the extra-territorial military adventure in Sri Lanka has cost India dearly both in terms of army manpower and military prestige. Three years of the so-called peace-keeping operation left the Sri Lankan Tamils (whom the Indian Peace Keeping Force was

Paper presented at seminar on "South Asia" organised by P.R.I.O. and held at the Marga Institute.

supposed to protect) thoroughly hostile to the Indian troops which has to retreat without achieving 'peace' to the war-torn island, carrying back home the bodies of their dead comrades, and themselves maimed by LTTE mines.

The entire Sri Lankan episode epitomizes the Indian state's pathetic search for recognition as a mini-superpower in the subcontinent. It is in this ambition that the roots of militarization lie. In 1962, a megalomaniac Nehru nursed the naive notion of defeating the Chinese in a jiffy, which set India on a war which need not have taken place and which imposed on it a humiliating defeat from which it is still to recover. Ever since then, the Indian state has been trying to beef up its muscles — which means an increasing pace of militarization. The 1965 war Pakistan started with the fanfare that Sialkot and Lahore were within easy reach — a propaganda that helped to rally Indian middle class public which were still smarting under the humiliation of defeat three years ago. But 'what good came of it at last?' — the question asked by little Peterkin in Southey's poem still continues to haunt us. The Tashkent agreement ended in a stalemate, with India gaining nothing in concrete terms, and left with yet another tally of dead and maimed servicemen. In 1971, Indira Gandhi was hailed on the walls of Calcutta graffiti as the 'rising sun of Asia's freedom', after she intervened in the civil war in the then East Pakistan, and was supposed to have cut down Pakistan to size by dismembering the state and creating Bangladesh. It inflated the ego of Indian militarism. Here at last was a concrete achievement. But finally, what was the outcome? Within four years, Bangladesh was back to square one — with the army taking over (leaving the Bangladeshis with the same plight to which they had been used to during the Pakistan regime — with the only difference that now their rulers were Bangladeshi army generals,

some among whom like the recently ousted Ershad having received their training in military academies in India). One of the fall-outs of the 1971 Indian military intervention appears to be an increasing belligerency on the part of Pakistan. An Islamabad suffering from the humiliating defeat of 1971, must have its revenge. The only way it can carry it out is by paying back India in the same coin — in other words, fishing in India's troubled waters. Just as India sheltered, trained and armed the 'freedom fighters' of the then East Pakistan, Pakistan also feels justified in doing the same with the Khalistani and Kashmiri insurgents who have taken shelter on its soil.

But the problem of violence in Punjab and Kashmir cannot be simply shirked off as Pakistani machination. Even if tomorrow New Delhi arrives at a rapprochement with Islamabad and succeeds in cutting off the insurgents in those two states from the source of their military aid in Pakistan, the armed secessionist trends in Punjab and Kashmir will continue, albeit less vehemently for some time perhaps. We have seen in the past how in spite of China's cutting off aid to Naga insurgents (following a thaw in Beijing-New Delhi relations), the underground armed Naga movement after a brief lull has again emerged as a force to reckon with in Manipur and other parts of the north-east. The source of the basic problem therefore is not some external enemy — whether China or Pakistan — but internal. The troubled waters in which the external enemy likes to fish is India's own creation.

This brings us to the internal sources of violence and militarization in India. Historically again, soon after its birth the state resorted to military tactics to suppress its own people. In 1948, it sent troops to Telengana in south India to take over the princely state of Hyderabad, and in the process unleashed a reign of terror on poor peasants who had been waging a guerilla strug-

gle against the ruling Nizam of the state. Under the leadership of the then undivided Communist Party of India, they had liberated wide areas and distributed land among the landless. The Indian troops struck at these gains of the peasantry by crushing the guerilla squads and assaulting their peasant followers. To quote one of the participants: "People were made victims of severe violence and repression... They were beaten with lathis and bayonets and tortured to the extreme — like peeling the skin in the design of the hammer and sickle... Arrested comrades were tortured most brutally and shot dead in the presence of the people."

The Telengana operation of 1948 was one of the earliest indications of the Indian state's attitude towards the underprivileged and of its determination to violently suppress any form of self-assertion by these sections of the population. A few years later — in 1953 — the same policies were extended against an ethnic minority group when the state sent its armed forces to Nagaland to suppress the Naga demand for independence. Since then, attempts at self-assertion by other minority groups (e.g. the Sikhs in Punjab, the Muslims in Kashmir) have invited mounting state reprisals. The core of conflict between these various groups on the one hand and the Centre on the other has more to do with the basic problem of finding an amicable solution of relations between the central authority and the different regional communities that inhabit a multinational state. Failure to find such a solution within the present constitutional framework of the Indian Union has generated the conflicts. They have been aggravated by the Indian stubborn refusal to acknowledge the failure and by its infantile belief in solving the conflicts through military suppression. We must keep in mind the various dimensions of this basic contradiction between a centralizing authority represented by the Indian state on the

one hand, and the independent aspirations of the numerous regional, linguistic, ethnic communities who are supposed to constitute an Indian nation on the other.

Let us come back to the issue of built-in violence in the Indian state's structure which unleashed its fangs right from its birth. A repressive apparatus, consisting of the police and the army, which the state inherited from the former British colonial rulers, has been augmented all these years by increasing inputs of militarization. In 1949, it raised the CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force), modelled on the British government's plan of Crown Representatives Police Force. Since then, the number of central para-military forces has been steadily increasing with the formation of the BSF (Border Security Force), Assam Rifles, Indo-Tibetan Border Police, CISF (Central Industrial Security force) the National Guard, and the 'Black Cats.'

Most of these para-military forces have been used all these years — and still continue to be used — to tackle civil disturbances within India. The CRPF and the BSF, for instance, have been deployed in the past to suppress the Naxalite peasant uprisings in West Bengal (in 1970-71 period) — and are being used in Kashmir today to quell the secessionist movement there. Reports by civil liberties groups suggest that their actions in Kashmir are marked by indiscriminate arrests and torture of innocent citizens who are not involved in the secessionist movement. Incidentally, this is not confined to Kashmir. In any part of India, whenever the state deploys its police or para-military forces, or the army, it is the innocent citizens who suffer the most — a fact brought out by documentary evidence through on-the-spot investigations by numerous human rights groups in India.

The roots of such arbitrary and mindless state violence against

ordinary citizens lie embedded in the Indian state's attitude towards popular grievances. The pattern of state response to such grievances follows a common sequence of policy decisions and actions — whether in relation to poor peasants and industrial workers or of ethnic minorities. At the initial stage of any demonstration of popular demands, the state decides to ignore them. When accumulation of the ignored grievances manifests itself in desperate militant agitations, the state decides to treat them as law and order problems and deploys its police to suppress them. Such deployment often helps the state to temporarily contain the outbursts and prevent them from exploding into armed insurgencies in what is known as the 'heartland', i.e. the central areas of India. But it is a different situation in the border states in the north and the north-east. While the Indian state has been able to contain the Naxalite movement in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar within the confines of sporadic and brief armed encounters, it has to reckon with more well-armed and well-organized insurgencies in Punjab, Kashmir, Manipur and Assam — all border states. There is of course a basic difference between the political character of the Naxalite armed movement and that of the insurgencies in Punjab, Kashmir and the north-east. While the former seeks to base itself on the politics of class-conflict, the latter are concerned with general issues and concerns which relate to their respective communities, irrespective of the class differences that might otherwise divide their communities. They are trying to bring to the fore the sectarian politics of community-based shared experiences and beliefs (whether based on the religious identity of the Sikhs in Punjab and Muslims in Kashmir, or the linguistic identity of the Assamese in the north-east, or the tribal identity of the Nagas and Mizos). Attempts to bind together members

of each community around its respective historical identity quite often prevail over attempts to forge a unity of the depressed sections among all these communities around the common goal of ending class differences. Apart from this advantage of community-based sympathies that the secessionist movements command in their respective areas in the Indian border states, in terms of military tactics also they enjoy benefits of a military catchment. In the north-west, Pakistan provides direct aid to the Khalistani and Kashmiri secessionists, while in the north-east, the no-man's land in the bordering areas of Burma has become an ideal shelter for the insurgents of Nagaland, Manipur and Assam.

The Indian state's efforts to suppress these insurgencies through the same methods of repression therefore have proved to be less successful. Guided by the initial approach of treating the expressions of mass grievances in these areas as simple law and order problems, the state has had to escalate the pace of repression. Such repression invariably directs itself against the readily available innocent citizens instead of the invisible armed insurgents. The innocent victims of state repression get increasingly alienated and many among them join the insurgents. According to the Indian government's own admission, the number of terrorists both in Punjab and Kashmir have gone up over the last few years. And this, in spite of deployment of para-military forces in increased strength in these two states. The military apparatus is getting bogged down in a futile civil war. Temporary successes — like the cleaning up of the Golden Temple in 'Operation Bluestar' in 1984, or the arrest and killing of a few 'terrorist' leaders in Punjab, or the claim of flushing out terrorists by burning entire villages in Kashmir — leave a trail of destruction in the furrows of which a new generation of

insurgents is born. Thus, the cycle of violence continues.

The rebels were offered amnesty in exchange of their surrendering their weapons and accepting the Indian Constitution. But this did not solve the problem of Naga insurgency. Other members of the Naga National Council broke away to form the NSCN (Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland) which is still carrying on armed resistance against the Indian state in pursuit of its goal of an independent Nagaland.

Following the same approach, the new government of India under Chandrashekhar which came to power in November 1990, sent overtures to the insurgents in Punjab and Kashmir for talks. At the time of writing this article, preliminary talks have begun with a Sikh leader — Simranjit Singh Mann — who claims to represent the militant outfits of Punjab. But several militant groups have already threatened to disown him if he goes back on the demand for an independent Khalistan. Thus, even if any accord is signed and some of the militant groups surrender their arms, there does not seem to be any likelihood of an end to the cycle of violence that has enveloped Punjab.

The history of the Naga insurgency and the increasing spread of terrorism in Punjab and Kashmir in recent years prove the resilience of such violent trends even in the face of powerful state offensive. Ironically, while Mao's followers in India — the Naxalites — have so far failed to carry out successfully his motto: 'power flows from the barrel of the gun' (barring a few spots in Andhra Pradesh in the south), the truth of his saying is being proved every day in Punjab by the religious fundamentalist Khalistanis who at gun-point can force government

officials to toe their line, can terrorize the common people to support them, can extort money from the rich to buy more weapons, can impose their fundamentalist norms on the citizens (like making women give up wearing jeans, or keep their head covered) — in short be able to run their writ across vast stretches along the border.

The language of the gun is becoming a decisive force in political discourse in India. It is gradually edging out debates on democratic terms and suppressing dissent of the traditional humanitarian variety. Both the Indian state and its armed opponents in Punjab, Kashmir, Assam and the north-east refuse to provide any neutral space for expression of disagreements. In fact, this trend of intolerance of democratic dissent was inaugurated in Indian politics by the post-Independence state itself in general, and the Congress party which had run it for the last 44 years in particular. The Indian state set the precedent of violating democratic norms when in 1959, Nehru's government at the Centre dismissed the first democratically elected Communist ministry in Kerala, after his own Congress party ganged up behind the upper class, privileged communities there who mounted an agitation against the Communist ministry's efforts at changing the status quo in education and agriculture which threatened the vested interests of these communities. Since then, the Congress-run Centre had dismissed non-Congress state governments in India on one pretext or another.

At the level of political relations between the ruling party and the opposition, the Congress and later its variant, the Congress(I) replaced the language of democratic debate with that of violent confrontation. This became brazen-faced during Indira Gandhi's prime-minister-

ship, particularly during the Emergency period, when her party goons under the leadership of her son, Sanjay Gandhi, went around snuffing all signs of dissent. Congress musclemen virtually dictated the law in those days. The Congress culture of violence manifested itself in the most murderous way in November 1984, when following Indira Gandhi's assassination, her party men organized a full-scale massacre of 3,000 Sikhs in the streets of Delhi. Both human rights groups and affidavits submitted by survivors of the massacre have named leading Congressmen like H.K.L. Bhagat (who still remains the secretary of the Congress-I) and Sajjan Kumar, as responsible for organizing the killings. Till today, none of the accused Congressmen have been prosecuted!

Thus, while on the one hand the Indian state fails to punish those guilty of mass killing of members of the Sikh community, on the other had it indulges in violent reprisal against the Sikhs in Punjab on the official plea of 'suppressing terrorism.' As Simranjit Singh Mann, the Sikh leader who is at present negotiating with the Centre, stated bluntly in his memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister: "...while in Punjab people can be shot by the police on the vaguest suspicion without any process of law, those guilty of killing Sikhs in 1984, freely roam the streets of Delhi." (December 28, 1990).

It is against this background of the Indian state's acts of omission and commission that one should examine the growth of 'terrorism' in Punjab, as well as in Kashmir.

Some Reflections on the South Commission Report

Saman Kelegama

A new agenda for the South was long overdue. The South Commission — perhaps the most impressive third world "think tank" hitherto established — has fulfilled this task by bringing out its report entitled: "The Challenge to the South". Most of the scattered information available on the South's problems and prospects have been put together in this Report. It analyses the global situation and the position of the developing countries in today's world and suggests steps that could be taken by the countries of the South both at a national level as well as at an international level to improve their current status. The members of the commission should be congratulated for the task they have performed, for it has not been an easy job considering the financial and other constraints under which they worked.

The basic theme of the Report is well captured in the Preface: "Underlying all the Report's recommendations is our recognition, and clear statement, that responsibility for the development of the South lies in the South, and in the hands of the peoples of the South". The Report, therefore, mainly concentrates on the South, its potentials, capabilities and the required action. There is the firm belief that with self-reliant people-based development, the South can break away from the misery of underdevelopment and dependency. Instead of putting the blame fully on the North and expecting a change of attitude on the part of the developed world, the Report calls upon the South to utilize

Discussion paper presented at a seminar organized by the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science on "The Challenge to the South: The Report of the South Commission", 12 June 1991.

its own human resources effectively and advance South-South cooperation to ensure the type of development most suitable for them. At the same time, the interdependence of all partners in today's world is recognized, and a need for a global programme of action is stressed.

At first glance the recommendations of the Report appear somewhat conventional. But some important new areas stand out and they are: (1) People-based, self-reliant development strategy, (2) Greater emphasis on regional cooperation, (3) Proposal for a South Bank, and (4) Proposal for a South Secretariat. It is worth examining these areas closely in order to obtain a clear view and also to explore the prospects and challenges they present to policymakers.

(1) People-based, self-reliant development strategy

It is well known that the 1980s is now referred to as the "lost decade". It was a decade of adverse external fortunes where there was too much of one-sided focus on the efficacy of domestic policies in developing countries. It was argued that proper domestic adjustment was the only way to get these countries out of the morass into which they had fallen. These adjustment programmes were sponsored by the World Bank and the IMF. At the beginning

of the 1980s these institutions said that there should be adjustment with growth, then during the mid-eighties it was said adjustment should take place with a "human face". Now in the 1990s it is said that adjustment should take place along with poverty alleviation (see World Development Report, 1990). All these changes in emphasis indicate that these adjustment-based development strategies have not sufficed by themselves to push developing countries towards rapid development.

Adjustment packages have many shortcomings. One factor is that as long as the external environment remains unfavourable, adjustment measures become very painful. The other factor is that these adjustment programmes assume that the supply response in the Southern countries are rapid and therefore such responses can offset the short-run adjustment costs. It has been the experience of a number of developing countries that this is not the case, and that the adjustment cost is one of the major factors that act as an impediment for developing countries to further integrate with the global economy. These points have been identified in the Report before it goes on to suggest an alternative development strategy.

What has been emphasized in the Report is sustainable development. Now, sustainable development requires more rather than less resources. But is the South receiving more resources? It has been estimated that because of the debt servicing and the decline in commodity prices and the terms of trade, the net flow of resources is not from the North to the South as it should be but in the reverse direction to the tune of US dollars net 60 billion per year. All the inflows of aid and new borrowing are offset by

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outflows to service and repay past debts, and also by the losses caused by falling commodity prices. It is true that developing countries have been borrowing large sums from the capital markets of the North, but a good proportion of this has found its way back to the financial centres of the North through capital flight for which the citizens of the developing countries themselves have been responsible. Sustainable development cannot therefore take place in developing countries unless the existing situation is drastically altered. This feature too has been recognized in the Report, and it is by considering all these flaws in the prevailing development strategies that it has come up with people-based, self-reliant development strategy.

A strategy of self-reliant people-based development will need to be guided by certain common principles and objectives. Each country's development strategy must necessarily be specific to its stage of development, size, resource base, cultural heritage, and other national characteristics. Thus, emulating the development strategy of another country can lead to problems. So each country in the South will have to fit in this new development strategy according to its initial conditions. The development strategy a country should aim at should provide high rates of growth with equity, while being at the same time environmentally sound.

Although people-based, self-reliance, etc. are more in accordance with inward looking strategies, they should not be dissociated with outward-looking strategies which are now the norm. The Report appears to be arguing on these lines. Of course, the new development approach is more micro-level oriented, and the implementation requires massive foreign aid, as has been clearly demonstrated by Sri Lanka's Janasaviya programme. The important point to note is that the receipt of foreign aid even for such people-

based programmes have many conditionalities attached to it which are applicable more at a macro-level. These conditionalities can take various forms such as, devaluation, tariff lowering, dismantling inefficient public enterprises, privatization, reduction of state expenditure on certain projects, and so on. It is worth noting that these conditionalities are in accordance with the adjustment packages of the IMF and the World Bank. So what is confusing here is how to integrate the micro-level development strategy with the macro-level adjustment policies.

The Report has not come out strongly on this issue and this remains an area which has to be looked into by policy-makers. It is not clear to the reader whether the Report is assuming a new international economic order for the implementation of the new development strategy. If it is the case, then a new order has to be established for the smooth implementation of the new strategy. If not, the above question is bound to arise and ways and means have to be found for the purpose of macro-integration.

The South was at one time engaged in a debate of outward-orientation vs. inward-orientation, public sector vs. small ones, modern technology vs. traditional ones, and so on. The Report has very correctly avoided this debate which appears no longer relevant. The requirement today is to have the best of both. That is, a country should find the right balance. We must have modernization but at the same time people-based, self-reliant development. These are not mutually exclusive, except in the crude free market framework. So in order to find the right balance we have to redefine the role of the state, and in this regard the Report seems to have clearly identified that role.

The role of the state should be (1) to maintain order and macroeconomic stability, (2) to be a regulator and a planner

in areas where the market fails, and (3) to act as an entrepreneur. In such varied capacity, the state should be selective and more efficient. Wherever the functioning of the market mechanism fails to summon forth the required factor (market failure), the state has to step in and do the necessary investment. As commonly believed, further liberalization of the economy does not provide solutions to market failures. Selective intervention is required to rectify a market failure. Furthermore, state control should be applied only in strategic areas. The state's role as an entrepreneur is to push and challenge industries to progress, and not to provide assistance so that industries can avoid adjustment.

The identification of these significant areas for the state itself shows that the debate on state vs. market is now over. Of course, the efficiency of the market and its capacity to deliver fast is now more or less universally accepted. But the role of the state has by no means been undermined, but embedded in the market mechanism. There are very few policy-makers today who speak of a free market. Depending on the weight an economy attaches to the above-mentioned three roles of the state, the economies may be called a 'regulated market economy', 'competitive market economy', 'social market economy', and so on. So in this regard the Report has done an excellent and praiseworthy job.

Next: Regional Cooperation

The Road...

(Continued from page 16)

In Hanoi I had just one day, more for old time's sake than anything else, to walk through Lenin Park again at dusk, and visit the pagodas where nuns lived, and the little pagoda on the lake with the massive tortoise in its glass case. I found the city, if a bit more lively now and busy, as charming as ever with its elegant French style avenues and rows of shade trees.

Correspondence

Eric Heffer

It was with great sorrow and grief that I belatedly learned of the tragic and untimely death of Eric Heffer. As a member of the British Parliament, he represented Walton, Liverpool, for 27 years and was a member of the Cabinet headed by Harold Wilson. But above all he remained throughout his life a genuine friend of the international working class and uncompromising social democrat.

My links with Heffer are entirely ideological. I have neither seen him, nor I listened to him. I have read some of his writings and am aware of some of his political work. The positions he took up on various issues were well known and are commendable. He resigned from the Cabinet of Harold Wilson because he did not want to compromise his beliefs. At the 1985 Labour Party conference, he walked off the platform as a protest against Kinnock's witch hunt of the Labour left. He lived and died as a radical social democrat.

Speaking at the funeral service, Tony Benn said that the press tried to portray Eric Heffer as an old time socialist, a voice from the past. 'But this is quite untrue. Eric was the voice of the future of socialist ideas.'

He was an internationalist in the true sense of the term and was convinced that the future of any country lies in an integrated international community. He believed that a even limited goal of a reasonable level of development with social justice cannot be achieved in isolation. But he wanted a democratic socialist world not a capitalist one. He wrote in referring to European developments;

There is clearly a choice before the Common Market, whether it becomes federalist or not. Either it continued and is strengthened as the bastion of competitive capitalism, leading to a new European impe-

rialism, or it must be transformed into a community based on genuine socialist principles.

He defended socialism in a period in which most people in Europe were talking about its gradual but permanent demise. He always stood for a kind of socialism which is well worth fighting for and which could be defended as a better system than capitalism. In his words;

Socialism is democratic and internationalist or it is nothing, yet it must take account of the legitimate demands of peoples who seek national identity and freedom within a wider... unity.

Socialism, in this sense, is qualitatively different from the bureaucratic communist rule which turned the individual into a slave of the totalitarian masters and led to the hypertrophy of the state in all spheres of human life. He also believed that a society which is democratic, just, peaceful and humane can be built in place of capitalism. Radical Social Democracy embodies a programme on which such a society can be built and maintained. To end this short tribute, it is appropriate to quote the following words of Heffer;

When I was young, we had a vision of society, a new world based on human fellowship. A world in which fellowship would be the first principle of one's daily intercourse. If that vision is lost then socialism is lost. But socialism is not dead. It is bureaucratic Stalinism that is rightly finished. A beginning has to be made and as democratic socialists we must try to convince our own parties to put forward such a perspective. ... No doubt the 'realists' will say this Utopian and unrealistic, but surely, 'Man's aim must far exceed his grasp, or what's a Heaven for?'

Sumanasiri Liyanage

Ludowyk and Gehan Wijewardena

I think that a teacher of English should write correct English or (if that is not easy to define), at the very least, intelligible English. Gehan Wijewardena

thinks a teacher of English can write any way he likes and that it is up to the reader to figure out what he is trying to say. Thus, when Ludowyk writes that his "little knowledge of Sinhalese faded with no great sense of loss" Gehan thinks it is "indeed sad" if the reader finds it difficult to figure out what this means. Take another sentence from Ludowyk's book: "She was ready to feed us ourselves." If you cannot understand what this means it is your fault! Gehan also thinks that when writing for "a wider audience" (readers outside Sri Lanka) it is not merely permissible but mandatory for Lankan writers to use "purely Lankan locutions which would be incomprehensible elsewhere" because to do otherwise would amount to an "appalling culture cringe". The reason is that such locutions "go to nourish the creativity of the language they use. Among the numerous Lankan locutions that went to nourish the creativity of the language used by Ludowyk in his book are "bare-bodied" and "heaty", neither of which expressions can be found in any dictionary. Although we Lankans know that "bare-bodied" means with the upper part of the torso uncovered, a non-Lankan would translate the words to mean naked. "Heaty" may be interpreted by a foreigner as either causing a burning sensation or of a high temperature. We in Sri Lanka know that it is a medical term used of certain kinds of food and drink. Thus, ice cream is heaty. So in order to nourish the creativity of his language and avoid an appalling culture cringe Ludowyk has to be unintelligible to his foreign readers. I think Gehan's reasoning is very similar to Doric's when he said children who knew English were not real.

V. P. Vittachi

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