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LANKA

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PAX AMERICANA vs ROME

— the V. O. A. war —

Mervyn de Silva

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

UNDERSTANDING IDENTITY CONFLICTS

— *Kumar Rupesinghe talks to Thomas Abraham*

U. N. as tool of U. S.

— *James Ridgeway, Sabine Guez*

CREATIVITY, the name of the game

— *Laurel Shaper Walters*

1983 : STATE TERRORISM, NOT RACE RIOT

— *Izeth Hussain*

Premadasa and the elite

— *Chanaka Amaratunga*

J. R. taming the judges

— *Arden*

WITH THE BEST COMPLIMENTS

OF

ELEPHANT HOUSE SUPERMARKET

QUALITY AT AFFORDABLE PRICES

NO. 1 JUSTICE AKBAR MAWATHA
COLOMBO 2.

TRENDS

Tea to Moscow

Now that the Red Capital too has gone consumerist they are setting up a Tea Board office in Moscow, with a resident Tea Commissioner. Back from Russia a delegation headed by Plantation Industries Minister Rupa Karunatilake was confident that Sri Lanka could sell 25 million kilograms of tea this year to the former communist state.

BRIEFLY...

Loans from Japan

Japan has loaned Rs 13.7 billion to Sri Lanka to develop telecommunications, the Colombo port, roads and bridges, the water supply and power projects. The loan is repayable in 30 years and carries an interest rate of 2.6 per cent per annum. Japan is Sri Lanka's biggest aid giver and these loans signed on August 12 were part of aid pledged at the last Paris Aid Group meeting.

No need for UN

Foreign peace moves fronted by four Nobel Prize winners involving a UN Peace Keeping Force have found no favour in Colombo. Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe rejected the move out of hand when it was first announced. The Government-controlled Daily News then quoted unnamed military "top brass" to endorse the Prime Minister's position.

Among the reasons quoted for the rejection:- Nothing can be achieved without the LTTE laying down arms; the UN cannot force the Tigers to a political settlement; no UN force can succeed where the IPKF failed.

They were not there

SLFP National Organiser Anura Bandaranaike, MP, was not present at the joint Opposition Hartal commemoration meeting at Nugegoda on August 12. Nor was there any official representative from the Democratic United National

Front (DUNF), which is also still taken to be an opposition party notwithstanding moves by some of its membership to re-join the UNP.

SLFP General Secretary Dharmasiri Senanayake said that the DUNF was not invited because it was not one of the six opposition parties who had always been together in protest campaigns. Mr Bandaranaike could not participate because he was under suspension from the party for disciplinary reasons, Mr Senanayake said.

But Mr Bandaranaike said that he would not have participated even if he had been invited because it was "far better to watch our great cricketers playing against India than sit on a stage with people like K.P. Silva, Y.P. Silva, Nihal Perera and Dharmasiri Senanayake."

Cabinet reshuffled

In a minor Cabinet reshuffle Mr A.C.S. Hameed got back the Foreign Ministry, exchanging place with Mr Harold Herat who now has Justice.

Among the other changes: Education and Higher Education (held by the President) to Mr W.J.M. Lokubandara; the elevation of Mr Tyronne Fernando to the cabinet as Minister for Information, and the elevation of Mr M.I.M. Aboosally as Minister of Labour (which portfolio was also held by the President).

Safe passage soon

Civilians who now risk their lives crossing the Jaffna lagoon to get away from the peninsula may soon have safe passage under a UNHCR-Sri Lanka Government agreement to reactivate a ferry linking the LTTE controlled Jaffna peninsula with Poonery on the mainland.

The government has already accepted a draft agreement and has signalled the UN agency to enter a separate agreement with the LTTE.

The child remains unprotected

Mr Bernard Soysa, the LSSP leader who is also a minister in the

Western Provincial Council, told the 62nd Annual General meeting of the Child Protection Society that seminars are held, resolutions passed, action plans drawn up but the child remains unprotected. The problem was getting bigger daily and it was out of hand, he said.

To change Constitution

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe heads a parliamentary Select Committee on the Constitution. The other members are Messrs B. Sirisena Cooray, K.N. Choksy, S. Thondaman, Wijayapala Mendis, Wimal Wickremasinghe, A.C.S. Hameed, E.P. Paul Perera, Chandra Ranatunga, Harindranath Dunuwille, M.H.M. Ashraff, Dinesh Gunewardena, D.M. Jayaratne, Stanley Tillekeratne, K. Premachandra, Athauda Seneviratne, Basheer Segudawood and Dharmasiri Senanayake.

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DRUGS ?

Doctors are aware that Market Oriented Drug Policies are not always desirable.

The main reason is that out of a bewildering variety of derivatives that proliferate from a single scientifically validated compound, only one or two finally remain in any Rational Formulary. This means that many claims advanced for marketing purposes fail under extended scientific scrutiny.

Before this happens unfortunately irreparable damage has been done in human, economic and medical terms.

Generic drugs that have entered the Pharmacopoeia and have remained there have stood the test of time and have weathered the unceasing search for clinical excellence.

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This great reliance is the biggest factor in our growth and our service to the people and the medical profession.



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Colombo 15

V. O. A. vs Pax Vaticana

Mervyn de Silva

KANDALAMA, the first successfully politicised "environmental issue", is day-before-yesterday's news, hardly a blip on the screen of an Opposition in eager search of rallying cries.

IRANAWILA on the other hand has become such a serious confrontation that the US Embassy, official representative of the sole superpower, has demanded a retraction from the Church-owned *CATHOLIC MESSENGER* of what it suggests are mis-statements, and falsehoods.

In a statement signed by the Bishop of Chilaw and the Secretary of the Pastoral Council of the district, Mr. A.B. Fernando, the government is asked why it is using "an iron" fist to deprive the children of the soil of their elementary right, and acting like a colony of a superpower.

The aggressive language as well as the high moral tone reminds one of the Pope's historic visit to Latin America and his espousal of popular causes mixed with a pugnacious anti-Americanism. More and more, the Pope has been identifying himself with the Third World.

The polemics as well as the anti-Americanism reminds one of the challenge that the US faced from the now defunct Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War. But it is now a unipolar world, the Soviet colossus having collapsed, with its messianic ideology robbed of all magic. While the US seems to think that Khomeinism has replaced communism, the thesis was most succinctly presented by Israel's Shimon Peres as reported by a *Sunday ISLAND* columnist. Our foremost novelist and "Sinhala-Buddhist" polemicist, Gunadasa Amarasekera used the Peres quote quite adroitly in a recent *ISLAND* article where he argued that "intervention", even by the UN, is in fact part of the historic western grand strategy to subjugate the "poor" world.

Is a new militant Catholicism under Pope John Paul posing a direct challenge to PAX AMERICANA? It is interesting to note that the regional power, India, objected to the VOA for "security" reasons — intelligence gathering, "listening in" on submarine traffic in the Indian ocean, rather a powerful propaganda "base" for presenting the American line in different languages to the vast Asian continent.

In a Chilaw Diocese leaflet on "the true nature of the VOA", the charges are more home-grown:

TRUE NATURE OF V.O.A.:

The Government paid no heed to those on going protests, and eventually the V.O.A. work was initiated. It was only then that the full scope and implications of the Project began to emerge. Many people who, till then had remained passive spectators, began to realize the gravity of the situation. The cutting down of several thousands of coconut trees in full bearing, the large scale infrastructure, the increased presence of foreigners, interference with the fishing rights of the people, the strict security measures barring outsiders from approaching the no-go zone, and the breakneck speed at which the operations are going on, make everyone feel that the actual reality of V.O.A. is far removed from the innocent sounding "Relay Station" spoke of by parties interested in the V.O.A.

THE SAYING AND THE DOING:

The Government, making ample use of the Media at its disposal, evidently wants our countrymen to believe that everything is normal in Iranawila, and that there is nothing to fear. For instance, the Cabinet spokesman, Minister Harold Herat recently declared "The people of the area will not be displaced nor their fishing restricted. No hotel, no airstrip, no environmental hazards, no displacement of residents, no ban on fishing" (Ceylon Daily News 23.07.1993).

But, alas, the reality is just the opposite.

- On 21.07.1993, a top American Official of V.O.A. met the Parish Priest of Thoduwa at his mission house, and asked him to inform his people that they should not use the waterway leading from Thoduwa to Pambala lagoon as it was a security zone of V.O.A. and cables had been laid. (That is the area used by our poor fishermen for fishing, and coming to Chilaw.)

- A number of fishermen have complained that while they were fishing in that area as they have always done in the past, security personnel from V.O.A. had come to the scene and asked them to leave the place as it was the security zone of V.O.A.

- Nine families at Iranawila have complained that parts of their properties are going to be acquired (evidently to broaden the approach road to V.O.A.).

- A number of families have bitterly complained that 33 KV High Tension lines coming from Madampe are to go over their properties, causing them damage and pain of mind.

- There is a persistent rumour that a high powered Plant for producing electricity — with environmental ill-effects — is going to be set up in Madampe area.

- It is alleged that V.O.A. Authorities are taking Video pictures of the people even when they assembled for a religious purpose.

- On 23.07.1993, the Parishioners of Iranawila — mostly women and children — wanted to make an open air Way of the Cross, as they had done many times before. A large contingent of Police personnel from the surrounding Police Stations, in full battle gear, blocked their way, and forbade them to move. The Police declared that they had been given orders to shoot if the people proceeded with the open air Way of the Cross. The people then entered the cemetery. There they made the Way of the Cross under the Watchful eye of the Police. In the days that followed, the cemetery was guarded by the Police.

The U.S. Embassy Response

Dear Rev. Fr. Jayamanne:
(Editor *Messenger*)

I must draw your attention to a series of factual errors contained in the article "The VOA and Iranawila," which appeared on the front page of the August 8 edition of the *Messenger*:

1. "On 21.07.1993, a top American official of VOA met the parish priest of Thoduwawa at his mission house, and asked him to inform his people that they should not use the waterway leading from Thoduwawa to Pambalalagoon as it was a security zone of VOA and cables had been laid."

On June 21, a Sri Lankan employee of the Colombo firm contracted to provide security at the VOA site visited Fr. Alex Weerasooriya and mistakenly told him that fishermen could not use the Luna Oya canal. When he was informed of this misunderstanding, Mr. Neal Crenshaw, the American officer in charge of the VOA construction project, promptly acted to try to contact the parish priest and clarify the situation: fishermen are welcome to use the waters of the Luna Oya canal and its eastern bank. They are requested not to land on the part of the western bank that lies within the VOA construction area, as safety concerns dictate that all visitors be escorted by someone familiar with the work going on. No cables have been or will be placed in the canal.

Mr. Crenshaw subsequently called on Fr. Weerasooriya at the parish church in Thoduwawa at least three times. On each occasion Fr. Weerasooriya turned him away without speaking to him. Mr. Crenshaw then wrote Fr. Weerasooriya a letter, dated July 26, 1993. Fr. Weerasooriya refused hand delivery of the letter twice. It was only when the letter was sent by registered mail that he accepted delivery.

2. "A number of fishermen have complained that while they were fishing in that area as they have always done in the past, security personnel from VOA had come to the scene and asked them to leave the place as it was the security zone of VOA."

VOA refuses entry to the construction site to unescorted visitors because of safety concerns. The Luna Oya canal

runs through the eastern edge of the property leased by VOA. Fishermen and others are free to fish in the canal, and to use the island that comprises its eastern bank and that falls within the area leased by VOA. They are asked not to use the western bank, where the construction area begins.

VOA's instructions to its security guards are that they are to ask unescorted visitors they find inside the construction area to leave. There were several occasions when guards misunderstood these instructions to include refusing access to the canal. When VOA management learns that a guard has acted improperly and asked someone to leave the canal, it acts promptly to clarify access policy to the guard involved and to assure the local community that fishermen are able to use the Luna Oya. VOA is having signs made which explain that the canal is open to the public, and which will be posted on the boundary of the VOA site.

3. "Nine families at Iranawila have complained that parts of their properties are going to be acquired (evidently to broaden the approach road to VOA)."

VOA is neither aware of nor involved in any property seizures tied to roadwork or any other activity. An uninhabited piece of land was purposely sought for the construction of the VOA station. No one has been or will be evicted or asked to move to accommodate it.

4. "A number of families have bitterly complained that 33 kv high tension lines coming from Madampe are to go over their properties, causing them damage and pain of mind."

The Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) is installing 33 kva low tension lines from Madampe to supply power both to the VOA site and to the surrounding communities, which are presently without electricity.

VOA management has regular and frequent contact with local residents and always asks for feedback on the project and related activities. The only complaint they have heard about the power lines was that, as plans stood, a pylon would be placed in a spot traditionally used by the village for religious festivals. The CEB immediately

changed the plans when it was informed of this so that the pylon will be placed elsewhere.

5. "There is a persistent rumour that a high powered plant for producing electricity — with environmental ill-effects — is going to be set up in Madampe area."

The only facility being set up at Madampe is a CEB substation which will step down electric power from already existing lines for service at the VOA station and in the surrounding community. Substations like these are commonly found in urban and residential areas and pose no environmental hazard.

6. "It is alleged that VOA authorities are taking video pictures of the people even when they are assembled for a religious purpose."

VOA staff periodically videotape activity at the construction site and the surrounding area to document work conditions for their supervisors in Washington. These videos are useful to VOA in documenting conditions that affect the job performance of contractors and subcontractors. For example, if a subcontractor claims that he was unable to fulfill the work specified in his contract by the due date because access to the site was cut off, a video showing that the roads were unobstructed during that period would be used to counter the subcontractor's claim, whereas a video showing that roads were blocked by a Way of the Cross protest would act to support it.

This article seriously misrepresents the facts about VOA's presence in Iranawila. By lending its credibility to these distortions, the *Messenger* has not only misled its readers, but has done the Iranawila community a disservice by encouraging unwarranted anxiety.

I suggest that the *Messenger* act as any responsible publication would in these circumstances and print a retraction of the statements cited above in its next issue.

I am available to answer any questions you have about the VOA site. I can be reached at the phone numbers given in the letterhead from 8:00 until 5:00, Monday through Friday.

Ann Driscoll
Information Officer

Ranasinghe Premadasa : A Personal Impression

Chanaka Amaratunga

When one looks on the life of a great public personality with whom one was reasonably well acquainted, a detached, impersonal treatment of that life, can be rather misleading, perhaps even dishonest, and certainly would be difficult to sustain. My assessment of the life of Ranasinghe Premadasa, as indeed my assessment of many other Sri Lankan politicians, dead and alive, is based both on public record and private revelation of character. It is therefore only reasonable that both these elements go to shape my view of President Premadasa.

I first met the future President at a dinner of a mutual friend, when he was First Member of Parliament for Colombo Central and Chief Opposition Whip. I was then seventeen. He plunged into a political conversation and was full of an enthusiasm that was infectious. The Opposition was about to move a motion of no-confidence in the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike. When I questioned him about this he immediately asked whether I would like to attend the debate in Parliament on that subject and having received an affirmative response, he promised to send me the required passes. I put this down to politeness, a promise like all politicians' promises. He had, after all, not even asked for my address or telephone number or means whereby I might be contacted. A Premadasa promise, however, as I and so many of our people were to discover, was not of that flimsy material. On the evening before the appointed day the passes were delivered from Mr. Premadasa inviting me to tea. His conversation, which was, of course, entirely about the debate in progress, was devoted to discovering my impressions of the speeches which had been made. The idea of him, put about by his critics, of an over bearing and autocratic man, totally unwilling to listen to, still less to recognize, another point of view, bears no relationship to the man I knew.

Shortly after, he invited me on a political trip to Balapitiya and Weligama. I travelled with him in his car and on the way there and on the return to Colombo which took place the same night, we talked almost continuously. This was the first of six significant conversations I was to have with Mr. Premadasa. The second in 1978 when he was Prime Minister took place at Transworks House where he then had his office, the third in 1980 at the Waldorf Astoria in New York, when he had arrived to address the United Nations, the fourth in 1990 at his office at the Presidential Secretariat when I sought a private meeting with him to persuade him to agree to a Commission of Inquiry into the murder of Richard de Zoysa, the fifth, also in his

office at the Presidential Secretariat in 1991 two days after the motion for his attempted impeachment had been entertained by the Speaker and the sixth, at Sri Kotha on 25th April 1993, the evening before the launch of the UNP campaign at the Provincial Council election and two days after the assassination of Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali. These conversations, conveyed to me an unmistakable impression of Ranasinghe Premadasa, the man and the politician. I saw little contradiction between the man and the politician revealed in his public acts and in these conversations at which except for a small proportion of one of them, no one else was present. But it is undeniable that the man who emerged from these conversations emphasised, complemented, clarified and sometimes even explained, the man who carried out the public acts.

The public acts which form President Premadasa's political career speak of immense hard work and dedication, a single-minded devotion to combat poverty and deprivation, a determined adherence to pluralism, racial, religious and political and a clear accuracy of judgement in recognizing the best means of creating a prosperous economy. He worked longer hours than any other Sri Lankan leader. He had a sense of personal discipline and had organizational skills, highly uncharacteristic of the Sri Lankan race. While he was the first Sri Lankan political leader whose first language and culture was Sinhala and who truly was comfortable in the Sinhala Buddhist milieu, perhaps because of that very fact, he never spoke the language of racism or religious intolerance.

The ranks of the Opposition were never stronger since 1970 than under his presidency nor was criticism of a Government as widespread in a wide variety of newspapers than during his term of office. The two elections that he caused to be held after the restoration of peace and order outside the North and East were accepted by all political forces as being free and fair, a thing which could certainly not be said of any poll conducted during the term of his predecessor since (and including) the referendum of December 1982. During the terrible authoritarian years of the J.R. Jayewardene Government, the Liberal Party greatly feared that Sri Lanka was on a slippery slope that would end in the imposition of a one-party state. It is President Premadasa who made such fears a thing of the past.

All this is related to what my conversations with him succeeded in convincing me beyond a shadow of doubt. In the post 1973 politics of Sri Lanka it was Ranasinghe Premadasa alone who had a vision,

for Sri Lanka. I have spoken to all our leading political personalities, both in retirement and in active public life today, and it has been possible for me to form an impression of their priorities. I find that people reveal their true priorities quite easily when one draws them out in conversation. Every other leading politician I have spoken to, it seems to me, is primarily motivated by office. To them office is an end in itself, they seem supremely disinterested in what they can do with it. They seem quite content to enjoy, in Graham Greene's phrase 'the power and the glory'; of office and devote themselves wholly to its preservation once having obtained it.

Ranasinghe Premadasa was engagingly, endearingly, different. He too wanted office. He had sought it with massive determination and drive of which a lesser mortal would have been incapable — but he wanted office as a means to an end — to alleviate poverty, to generate prosperity, to encourage national unity, to preserve the basic fabric of freedom — in a word he wanted, as his friend and disciple, the UNP General Secretary and Minister, Sirisena Cooray, put it in his speech on the Vote of Condolence in Parliament on President Premadasa, power to serve the people, to serve his country as he saw best.

To me this burning sense of mission was very evident. It was there when he spoke to me of the future of Sri Lanka as I rode with him in his car in 1975. It was burning bright even at his hour of gall and vinegar during the attempted impeachment. It shone through the darkness of his last week on this earth, when he heard the raucous cries of the deceitful and the misled who called him a murderer. He believed passionately in creating a social and economic transformation.

The attitude of politicians to the impeachment was a superb study in contrast. Mr. Premadasa's leading opponents were obsessed with tactics to get to power, and seemed totally indifferent to a programme of action. My attempts to get them to address political reform were wholly futile. While President Premadasa too, showed no interest in our preferred solution of a way out of the impeachment crisis via constitutional reform, when I spoke to him he sounded concerned not only about himself but the absence of a programme or vision on the part of his opponents. He spoke as a man inspired, of what he was trying to do, to make sure that no occurrence such as the JVP uprising would again occur, to make liberal democracy and the market economy issues that were accepted by all and outside the area of political controversy. To me it was evident that he believed in something larger than himself

Dr Amaratunga is leader of the Liberal Party

— something which will survive his own end.

The accuracy of his vision was not in doubt. He was determined to make the unwanted feel wanted and bring, some sunshine into peoples' lives. He drew the correct lesson from the JVP uprising — that it was a revolt against the greed of UNP politicians and the brutal application of the notion that the ruling party and the state were one and the same. It is this realisation, which led to his curbs on the privileges and abuses of UNP MPs, not their love for a democracy that they had earlier helped to weaken, which made them ripe for supporting the impeachment. It was the same realisation which led to greater respect for the Opposition — many are the SLFP MPs who have told me ruefully that they had far easier access to President Premadasa than to their own leader.

This accuracy of vision had another manifestation which much endeared President Premadasa to me. He had no sympathy for the fashionable third world elite belief in socialism, recognizing very early, that the poor had their best chance for prosperity in a strong market economy. In the 1970s when Sri Lanka was ruled by the dogmatic socialist Government of Mrs. Bandaranaike and her Marxist allies, when Mr. J. R. Jayewardene declared the UNP to be a socialist party and ridiculously even styled Sri Lanka a 'Democratic Socialist Republic' and when Mr. Lalith Athulathmudali, (then Minister of Trade, in 1978) declared in Parliament, "east of Suez, everybody is socialist", Mr. Premadasa campaigned at the 1977 General Election on the slogan 'Socialism is a social menace' (Samajavaadaya Samajavadayak). Whereas his predecessor could increase the ratio of the private sector of the economy in relation to the public sector in eleven years by only 4%, President Premadasa increased the ratio of the private sector in relation to the public sector within 4 years by over 29%.

He had great faith in the electoral strength that his work for the people would bring him. This reinforced his commitment to free elections. I was present at Sri Kotha when he addressed the UNP's candidates at that election. He called upon them to scrupulously observe the election laws and emphasised that although there was a time when the UNP had won elections by unfair means that was because it then had a leadership which had no faith in the people. He said that he, on the other hand knew what good work he had done for the people and had every confidence that the people, recognizing his work, would support him. He insisted that the people's verdict should not be marred by electoral malpractice. I have always believed that it is not difficult to judge the sincerity of a person's words. What he said that day he said from the heart.

It should not be misunderstood that Ranasinghe Premadasa was faultless.

This was far from so. His greatest weakness, from which sprang all his other errors great and small, was his tremendous sense of insecurity. Although in a crisis, he was unflappable, he was deeply suspicious of people's motives, which in turn led him to pursue an excessively personalised style of government and to value the blind loyalty of unreasoning admirers and sometimes even of opportunistic sycophants. The young boy who accompanied a Roman conqueror to whisper continually in his ear that he was indeed mortal, is desperately needed by political leaders in the modern world. He was not sufficiently aware of this.

This insecurity came I believe from the hard struggle through which he had to breach the walls of an often cruel and insensitive elite, to reach high office. With it came a remarkable shyness of journalists amazing on the part of so articulate and so intelligent a man, which led him to shut himself off from open comment. His outlook on the media was one of discomfort, except with a totally uncritical medium. As I told him several times, this was exceedingly unfortunate, because he had the best case, the best arguments, which would have scored considerably if he permitted their free clash with other points of view. If he allowed free access to all to the electronic media and permitted greater diversity of opinion in the state-controlled newspapers, he would have robbed his opponents of a potent weapon which they used with considerable success against him.

President Premadasa was the victim of the journalists he had not cultivated of the media which overstated his case by not presenting other views and the elites and middle classes he had chosen to ignore, as being anyway his opponents. We shall never know to what degree the hostility to him was self-fulfilling and to what degree accurate, prophecy.

But that they were willing to believe every wild rumour and every vicious slander, that their double standards, were shameless in the extreme, is undeniable. Many are the occasions when the same people in Colombo society, who, when I objected to the partisan use of Lake House in the Jayewardene years, and the intimidation of other newspapers, patronisingly dismissed me as someone recently returned from Britain who was applying unattainable British standards of freedom to Sri Lanka, a third world country which needed, 'strong' authoritarian government a la Lee Kuan Yew, have passionately denounced President Premadasa for "lack of press freedom" at a time when there were far more opposition papers than there have ever been and there was far more criticism of a Government than had been allowed since authoritarianism began in 1970.

To the charge of dictatorship, President Premadasa used to be fond of replying that he knew of no dictators who held as

many elections in which large numbers of members of opposition parties were elected. A human being must be judged not by the standards of an unrealised perfection, but in relation to his context. Did President Premadasa deprive his opponents of their civic rights? Did he manipulate the constitution for his partisan convenience? Did he meaningfully obstruct criticism? Did he prevent a very hostile opposition press from emerging? Did he extend the life of Parliament by a referendum? Did he pander to racism and communalism? Did he cause Members of Parliament from ethnic minorities to be driven from Parliament? Did he obtain undated letters of resignation from MPs?

The answer is NO.

Did he personally sanction murder (as distinct from excesses, committed in the course of counter insurgency operations, which cannot be attributed to him)?

The report of Scotland Yard gives us a clear and unambiguous answer. The proof of the pudding is truly in the eating.

The man we lost on 1st May 1993 was like most of us a flawed, imperfect man. But unlike most of us he was an extraordinary man, his nation's only leader in contemporary times of consistent and determined vision, his nation's greatest man of action, insuperably bold, unflinching and of immense courage, a man who knew his work and his life will be the object of scrutiny by generations yet unborn, an orator of incomparable power, even perhaps the saviour of his country.

Before him, a nation at peace, eagerly awaiting the promise of prosperity and freedom had been taken charge of in 1977, and bequeathed to him, in ruins, with twin civil wars, a foreign army of occupation on our soil, the whole liberal democratic fabric corrupted and suborned from within, about to be brutally destroyed from without. Although a solution to the crisis in the North East eluded him, he left a country once more secure in the essence (though not the detail) of freedom and pursuing a path of economic freedom and social reconciliation. It was monstrous that he was denied the opportunity to complete his work.

The last days of his life were like the last act of a Greek or Shakespearean tragedy. Cruelly vilified and slandered, this man who had done so much, who could have yet done so much, that was fine and enduring, was brutally killed.

Quite often, I did not agree with him. He was not a liberal. His priorities were often not mine nor mine his. But despite his imperfections I believe with all my mind and with all my heart that Ranasinghe Premadasa was a great, and a good, man. His death was a cruel injustice to him and an appalling blow to our country. The only consolation now is that I am supremely confident, that history's justice will fully vindicate him as it has already begun to do.

A Tale of Two Tigers

Izeth Hussain

Ten years after 1983 the ethnic imbroglio continues, without either the Government or the major opposition parties having the faintest clue about how to get out of it. This situation cries out for what is called a "paradigm shift", that is a new conceptualization of the problem and a new framework within which to view it.

The project of a "paradigm shift" is an obviously ambitious one, requiring indepth analysis of several complex issues. Within the space of this article, I will attempt no more than a mere adumbration of what seems to be required for a "paradigm shift" which could help us to get to grips with the ethnic problem.

The case I want to argue is as follows. The ethnic problem in its present form, that is to say in its present militant form, is the creation of the post 1977 State. It is not the creation of the pre-1977 State, nor of the Sinhalese people the great majority of whom are not chauvinist or racist or communalist.

The ethnic problem has been peculiarly intractable because we have misconceived it or over-simplified it. We tend to believe that it is intractable only because of the intransigence and undependability of the LTTE, and the excessive claims made by the other Tamil parties which are supposed to be unacceptable to the Sinhalese people. We have been ignoring the greater problem of the undependability of the State, which is the consequence of the contempt shown for the most elementary standards of public morality by the post-1977 UNP. I believe that contempt is in turn the consequence of a vicious hierarchical drive in the State, which became quite mad with the savaging of democracy after 1977. In any case, whatever the explanation might be, it will be very difficult for the Tamils to reach accommodation with the State as long as it cannot be trusted to respect the principle of the sanctity and inviolability of agreements.

Since the major part of the ethnic problem is the State and not the Sinhalese or Tamil people, the pre-condition for a solution requires that the people control the State. That will require the restoration

of a fully-functioning democracy of the sort we had before 1970, or at least an enlightened authoritarianism which will show respect for public standards. I believe further that a lasting solution of the ethnic problem will be greatly facilitated by what is called "limited Government", in which the functions of the State are as narrowly restricted as possible.

I will now try to establish that the present militant form of the ethnic problem, with the LTTE organized as a fighting force, is the creation of the post-1977 State and not of the Sinhalese people. It is crucial for this purpose to draw a distinction between a communal riot and a pogrom. In a communal riot there is a significant level of people's participation, the expression of communal hatred between one or more communities. The State, or a ruling Party, may initially organize a communal riot, but it comes to have a popular character. A pogrom on the other hand is an organized massacre, usually organized by the State, the term having its origin in the massacres of the Jews organized by the Czarist State in Russia. It is the expression of State terrorism. There could be some degree of popular participation in a pogrom, but it is mainly an affair of the State. The distinction between the two is conceptually clear enough, and it is one that is crucial for a proper understanding of what happened before and after 1977.

Our ethnic problems began in the late nineteenth century, not in 1956, and during the entire period of seven decades up to 1977 there were no more than three communal riots. They were the anti-Muslim riots of 1915 and the anti-Tamil riots of 1956 and 1958. We might note in passing that communal rioting has not been endemic in Sri Lanka unlike in India.

Shortly after the 1977 Government came into power the first pogrom against the Tamils took place, initiating a new phase in the ethnic problem which reached its apogee in 1983. It cannot be seriously disputed that the so-called communal riots of 1977 were in reality a pogrom. It was carried out with little or no popular participation by UNP bravos who burnt Tamil property and killed 100 to 300 Tamils, including estate Tamils who had

never asked for Eelam. It was in no way comparable to the 1958 communal riots.

The new phase should be regarded as one of State terrorism against the Tamils. If it is objected that the Cabinet made no decision to unleash terror on the Tamils and that the State as such was not involved, then it has to be regarded as UNP terrorism.

In any case, leaving aside problems of nomenclature, the 1977 pogrom has to be seen as a turning point, as thereafter the ethnic problem became totally transformed in character. Hitherto the Tamils had seen themselves as subject to discrimination, but after 1977 they perceived themselves as subject to a State which could burn their property and kill them with impunity. Since death unlike discrimination is not easily negotiable, increased support for the militant LTTE and its later ascendancy over the Tamil moderates had to be expected. The ethnic problem in its present militant form is a creation of the post-1977 UNP.

LTTE militancy led to the dispatch of troops to the North in the latter half of 1979, with orders to put an end to the LTTE nuisance within six months. The operations began with the killing of Tamils and the arraying of their bodies in a public place, which was taken by the Tamils as exemplary killings meant to show what they could expect at the hands of the State unless they stopped their nonsense forthwith. What followed in the next six months led to an aggravation of the ethnic problem. It was an aggravation to which the Sinhalese people and their supposed communalism contributed in no way. It was an affair of the State versus the Tamils.

About the next important landmark in the progress of the ethnic problem, the 1981 burning of the Jaffna Library by police officers, we can be brief. It was a straightforward case of State terrorism.

It can be questioned whether the 1983 "communal riots" can be fitted into the paradigm of State or UNP terrorism. They do have a rather ambiguous character. They certainly began as a straightforward

pogrom, a meticulously organized one with UNP braves going around with voters lists to identify Tamil property detailed for burning. They were assisted by the lumper patriots of Colombo who had quickly sniffed an opportunity for loot. All that was clearly part of a pogrom. What has to be explained is the massacre that took place on Black Friday.

The subject has not been properly investigated, but I am inclined to believe that Black Friday was the result of a fear psychosis among the Sinhalese. Jonathan Spencer, an English scholar who was living in a Sinhalese village in the South in 1983, wrote about the paranoid condition to which the people of that area had been brought by the Government's statements about the terrorist Tigers, so much so that the simple matter of a car back-firing was given a sinister interpretation. It is known that reactions provoked by a fear psychosis can take a frenziedly murderous form. I believe that the rumour about the Tigers having come into Colombo triggered off that kind of reaction because of an already prevailing fear psychosis.

What happened on Black Friday therefore was not strictly comparable to the 1958 riots. In that case there was the assertion of the power of the dominant majority against a minority. Black Friday on the other hand was the expression of a sense of vulnerability among the majority. The so-called "communal riots" of 1983 were in reality a pogrom, a manifestation of State or UNP terrorism, which got out of hand on Black Friday.

The above sketch of the development of our ethnic problem between 1977 and 1983 shows that the actions of the State, not of the Sinhalese people as such, led to the ethnic problem acquiring its present militant form. This view is fully supported by something that has come to loom large in Sri Lankan consciousness ten years after 1983, namely the peaceful interaction between Sinhalese and Tamils at the peoples level in spite of all provocations.

Shortly after the 1983 pogrom a Cabinet Minister advised the Sinhalese people against engaging in any further communal riots because that would provoke Indian intervention. His advice was superfluous, and certainly misdirected. It should have been directed to the likes of himself in the State and the UNP who had been responsible for anti-Tamil terrorism, and not to the Sinhalese people.

The Kent and Dollar Farm and Anuradhapura massacres, and further massacres of helpless Sinhalese villagers, and even of Buddhist monks who are venerated by the common people of Sri Lanka, the Pettah bomb outrage, the assassination of President Premadasa, none of them has provoked anti-Tamil rioting from the Sinhalese people. They were supposed to have been driven to an insensate, uncontrollable, Sinhala nationalist fury over the LTTE killing of thirteen soldiers in 1983. Strangely they have not reacted against the LTTE killing of over a thousand of our security forces in the ten years after 1983. The explanation for this strange paradox is that after 1977 the ethnic problem took the form of State or UNP terrorism against the Tamils, provoking the organized militancy of the LTTE, a process which had nothing to do with the great majority of the Sinhalese people.

That argument postulates a disjunction between the post-1977 State and the Sinhalese people. I must now make some comments on that disjunction in order to clarify my argument.

My position is that the great majority of the Sinhalese people are not chauvinist or racist or communalist. It is a position which can accommodate the fact that a minority among them can be regarded as Sinhala Buddhist chauvinists or Sinhala communalists. It is a mistake to speak in terms of a "Mahawamsa mentality" if by that is meant that the great majority of the Sinhalese are incorrigibly or innately communalist. That notion cannot be reconciled with the fact of peaceful Sinhala-Tamil interaction in the South during the ten years after 1983 despite outrages that have been provocative in the extreme. It is conceivable that the Sinhalese may again take to communal rioting as in the past, but that does not mean they are innately communalist. It means that they can become communalist depending on the situation in which they find themselves, a point on which I will expand later.

It would obviously be a mistake to think in terms of a dichotomy between the great majority of the Sinhalese who are not communalist at all and a small Sinhalese minority who are. It would be more realistic, since group prejudices are practically universal all over the world, to think in terms of a continuum and acknowledge that the Sinhalese as a whole can be expected to have group prejudices and are communal at least to some extent. The point, however, is that communal prejudi-

ces do not necessarily translate into communal discrimination and communal conflict. If the Sinhalese people as a whole are communalist to some extent, it has not constituted a problem in the post-1977 period. The problem has been that of the post-1977 State.

In trying to understand communalism in Sri Lanka we must draw distinctions between different kinds of group prejudices, which are by no means identical or more or less the same. I have in mind particularly the distinction between forms of racism and the communalism that erupted in the 1958 riots. In the case of racism a dominant group can regard another group as genetically or culturally or in some sense lower, and believe that it must be kept lower. That applies to some Western attitudes towards Asian immigrants today, and it applies also to Sinhala chauvinist attitudes towards the Sri Lankan minorities, but I do not believe it applies to the broad mass of the Sinhalese people.

The communalism that erupted in 1958 was the result of a perception that the Tamils were over-privileged while the Sinhala Buddhist majority was peculiarly under-privileged. That perception may have been all wrong, but the point is that there is a vast difference between objection to privilege and racism. The objection to privilege has behind it basically egalitarian and democratic motivations which are the polar opposite of the attitudes behind racism.

The distinction I am making can help us to understand why there were no communal riots between 1958 and 1977. After 1956 the position of the Sinhalese as the dominant majority was asserted, and in subsequent years thoroughly consolidated. The term "dominant majority" describes one of the obvious facts of political life in Sri Lanka and is not meant to suggest that the Sinhalese people as a whole wanted to dominate and push the minorities down. That dominance could not be challenged, and any Sinhalese who believed in 1977 that the Tamils were privileged would have been far gone in mental derangement. The motivation for communal riots had therefore disappeared by 1977. What followed were essentially pogroms, as I have argued, the expression of State or UNP terrorism without significant participation by the Sinhalese people, except for the problematic case of Black Friday.

(Continued on page 12)

Changing Nature of Conflicts

Thomas Abraham

A distinctive feature of contemporary history has been the changing nature of international conflicts. Conflicts now rarely involve States going to war with each other, though the Gulf war was an exception, but are smaller struggles which often spill over national boundaries. The large majority of these conflicts, whether it is in the former Yugoslavia or in the Caucasus are identity-based struggles, around claims for self-determination. Often, these conflicts are fuelled by religious fundamentalism. Ethnicity, identity, fundamentalism, are no longer mere issues which social scientists study to understand the evolution of individual societies, but are a major factor in international conflicts today. The struggle between the West and the Soviet Union which dominated thinking on war and peace in the post-war years, has now been replaced by a new kind of war which involves not the clash of States and ideologies, but rather the clash of peoples within existing States. The international political system, geared to mediating in conflicts between States, has no real mechanism to deal with this type of conflict, as has been made clear in both the former Yugoslavia and Somalia. Dr. Kumar Rupesinghe, a Sri Lankan social scientist who heads International Alert, a London-based organisation which specialises in conflict resolution, speaks to Thomas Abraham about these emerging issues on the global political agenda. Dr. Rupesinghe also provides a South Asian perspective by looking at the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, and the rise of religious fundamentalism in India, and draws some parallels between them. Excerpts from the interview.

Question: How do you see the changing nature of conflict in the world today, and what are its roots?

Dr. Rupesinghe: Let us take the end of the cold war as the point of departure. There was a great optimism at that was reflected in the Francis Fukuyama thesis about the end of history, celebrating the hegemony of neo-liberalism which would not encounter universal opposition. There were also books about the end of war... some of us strongly disagreed with this thesis because we felt that the nature of conflict and war had significantly changed after the cold war and this has something to do with the kind of analysis we can talk about. We have at the moment 35 armed conflicts defined in terms of the SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) year book as having a casualty rate of over 1,000, and another listing would suggest that we have about 150 armed conflicts which are below the 1,000 mark. I would suggest that the

threshold of the 35 is likely to go up to about 45-50 and that there are strong reasons why the lower threshold of 150 might become big wars and that is a subject of research. The interesting factor here is that the international regime which was based and developed on the basis of inter-State conflict has now got largely to deal with conflicts of an internal character. And I think that is an extremely important paradigm shift in international relations. Not only does this mean that the U.N. cannot deal with that issue, but even in terms of a unipolar or multipolar world that is emerging, the whole issue of identity, the way in which identity is articulated, becomes problematic for a superpower like the U.S. As you can see it is blundering in Yugoslavia, blundering in Somalia. This reflects basically its uncertainty of how to deal with protracted ethnic identity conflicts.

You see identity as a crucial factor in global conflict today?

Let's get on to that question of what is identity. People talk about ethnic conflicts, and everything that happens in the Third World is called an ethnic conflict. I would like to go a bit beyond that and talk about the centrality of identity as a focal point for mobilisation. Within this framework, we can talk about three types of conflicts that are likely to emerge today. The first is the ideological conflict. Ideological conflict between classes exists, but universal vision has been replaced, because it has no headquarters either in Moscow or Beijing. Therefore the utopian ideal of the communist vision is dead. But this only means that ideological conflict takes a much more dangerous form. Because since it will not be regulated by an international regime, movements such as the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna or Sendiro Luminosa will have much more of a terroristic object which will have no accountability to any international body. And then we come to conflicts related to governance. Governance, as in how societies are ruled, particularly the problems of governance in transitional societies whether it is in the former soviet Union or in Africa, the transition from a one-party State to a multi-party State and governance issues such as what we now see in Nigeria have become very critical in this particular phase. Another form of conflict is resource-based conflict which will become very, very significant in the next generation. Resource-based conflict in the larger sense is the whole ecological crisis and the crisis of the ozone layer, but translated into depletion of resources, into the greater scarcity of resources, whether it is the forests, the rivers, oil and other resources, for humankind. This will there-

fore lead, I think to conflicts over the control of rivers, river basins, water, oil and so on. why I am suggesting all this, is that when mobilising people around these issues, identity is a focal point.

Many of the conflicts in the world today are fuelled either by ethnic identities or fundamentalism. This is especially so in South Asia. Based on your experience of Sri Lanka, and your study in India, do you see parallels between what is happening now in India and what had happened earlier in Sri Lanka.

I would say that when the Sri Lankan conflict emerged and took its particular form, many friends in India were in a position to look at the problem very dispassionately and were able to say that this was not a problem that would occur in India, this was something very much in the south and I think the Indian concern was to see that there was no demonstration effect in terms of India. India could take the dispassionate role of an honest broker. That was the first phase, and we know that the second phase was the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka accord, and from a dispassionate position India became a party to the conflict. That is the background. But what were the elements of the Sinhala majority and Tamil minority issues which we need to look at again. One is the feeling of a majority Sinhala community that it was in fact a minority, that it was a minority within the larger context of India relation to the large Tamil population across the border. The second element is the indifference of the middle classes in Sri Lanka to the pogroms that were partially encouraged by the Government against the Tamils in 1983.

There are many lessons one can draw from the Sri Lankan experience in terms of looking at what is happening in India. What is critical is that the Sri Lankan intelligentsia never really reflected on the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan intelligentsia was more concerned with the political economy of the country, with underdevelopment, with imperialism, but nobody really expected an ethnic explosion to come from within. I think that this is also the case with the Indian intellectuals in general. And I think the current events basically mean that the space that should have been captured by the Indian intelligentsia in terms of the great changes that are happening in India, the search for identity that was emerging in the Indian situation, the search for a more decentralised form of governance which was emerging in India was actually captured by the fundamentalist movement rather than by the secular movement. Therefore today

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the more secular intelligentsia is running after the event to try and cope, to begin to understand this phenomenon. That is the first important lesson that has to be learned when it comes to ethnicity, identity and fundamentalism. It is always better to have more preventive capability, to be able to build up those linkages among communities which can prevent conflict. But I think what is extremely heartening in the Indian experience, which has not been reflected in the international press, is of course the response of large sections of the Indian people who have tried to defend the secular concept of India, who have organised themselves to address the issue of escalating fundamentalism and violence and who are giving serious thought to that.

One of the features of the rise of fundamentalism seems to be the role that the middle class plays, or its changing role in society..

I think we also need to relate this to the revolution of rising expectations, and the rise of consumerism. I would argue that once the neo-liberal economy begins to take over, when market forces begin to take over, as happened in 1977 in Sri Lanka, there is an enormous increase in the so-called revolution of expectation brought about by powerful television which begins to advertise various consumer goods. In such a rapid transition to the market, one of the things that happens is that the middle classes, and the lower middle classes begin to be seriously affected. All fixed income groups begin to be seriously affected during the transition, they face a drop in income and this leads to what I call the concept of relative deprivation.

It is not absolute deprivation that leads to a desire for change, but relative deprivation in relation to another group which is just close to you. And I think this is a very very important thing in the Indian context as well. Once you open up the economy more and more to foreign influence and consumerism, the sense of relative deprivation and the revolution of expectations becomes so intense in the psyche of individuals that there is a displacement from more secular values to more fundamentalist values. One could begin to explain that from psychological studies when there is greater uncertainty, when there is greater insecurity, when the sense of deprivation to the other becomes more intense, I would suggest that there is mechanism of breakdown. The psyche or the collective psyches are unable to cope with the complexity of modernity.. It is then that fundamentalism thrives.. it provides a vision of purity, it provides a vision of clear, more simple, a more clear cut way out from this complexity and therefore this is the other interesting challenge of modernity. It is in the process of transformation to modernity that fundamentalism has its greatest attraction.

Do you see parallels with the rise of fascism in pre-war Germany?

We need to study this phenomenon more and not be innocent to it. To go back to the Sri Lankan experience, I would think that the Sinhalese chauvinists had built up the ideology of Sinhalese exclusivism from around the Second World War. There was a small movement which had been building itself up, agitating for Sinhala only, and trying to capture the political centre. In the Sri Lankan case they captured the political centre in 1956 through the MEP-SLFP combination and we know what happened then. Then I see three phases in the evolution of fundamentalism. The first phase is the phase of attrition, the formation of the social movement, and it takes in our societies an anti-British, anti-imperialist form. It begins to look at the myth of origin, and to revise those myths of origin, it goes in for a nationalist approach, the question of language, of religion is revived. It is in an agitational movement. The second phase in Sri Lanka was to actually capture State power, and the third phase is the consolidation of the hegemony of the Sinhalese over the State apparatus, taking over the army. This is a process of marginalising the other. Fundamentalism thrives on modernity, it thrives on the complexity of modernity it has a vision and a project of its own and it does not give up that agenda. It continues to develop the agenda, gather more and more space for that vision. The Indian middle class must be aware of the project of the fundamentalists, and be prepared for those projects. There cannot be any sense of innocence, and there cannot be bystanders in this whole issue because this is a struggle for social space, it is a struggle for who is going to take the arena, whether the democratic space is going to be regained by the citizens and the secular forces, or whether it will be captured by the more violent and more fundamentalist forces.

As a solution to many of the new conflicts that are emerging, you have suggested the notion of associative sovereignty, a change in the form of the State. Could you expand on that?

The first point is that the State is now under siege, and there are many expectations on the State. The State is the product of a particular historical evolution, and today there are considerable new demands on the State. The first point is that there has to be a strong State. But it does mean that a strong State has to be a centralised State. The strength of a State is its ability to devolve, to confederate, to give more and more in terms of popular organs. So that the conception of citizenship is not just State and the people, but the State and citizens and different institutions of governance, a multifaceted, strong society. What is a strong society but strong civic institutions, and many

peoples' institutions. In the discourse on the State we must now go away from talking about State security and national security. we must also begin to talk about peoples' security, peoples' identity, and peoples' sense of their own identity. How does one balance the requirements of the State and the requirements of the preservation and evolution of identity and the security of people. This is I think a central issue. Can the State accommodate the new identities that are emerging, and provide them with a framework for their expression, or will the State deny those claims and through that process of denial develop the national security State. This is the problem. At a global level, the United Nations does not even have a mechanism to address the issue of self-determination after decolonisation. Namibia was one case, after that there is Palestine, but other than that there are no mechanisms to address the issue. What we are now beginning to see is the emergence of new people, new definitions of people, and it is extremely important that there is a mechanism which can begin to enable new people to address their issues, present their claims in such a way that it does not result in a bloody war as happens at present.

If humanity has found civilised means of arbitration between capital and labour, if humanity has found civilised means of arbitration between man and woman in divorce, surely the time has come that we need an arbitration mechanism for addressing this issue. We have to make a distinction between minority claims within an existing State, and the claim of people for self-determination. Both these need to be done, but we need a body that can begin to look at the criteria of what constitutes a minority and what constitutes a people.. We need to think through a series of mechanisms at the regional level. One of the things that Europe has done over a period of years is to appoint a High Commissioner for minorities under the CSCE which has been entrusted with the task of preventive diplomacy, of addressing minority issues before they come up. I think this is a very very important mechanism, and a measure of the maturity of the EC. There are no mechanisms under the OAU, certainly no such mechanism under SAARC and ASEAN. It is important that a preventive capability be built up in the region. What I am arguing is that the globe must evolve into a system of States, from a reactive system to a preventive system, that is not merely a system of States, but a system of States with a system of non-governmental organisations, and a system of people's organisations. We are evolving to a much more multi-faceted global system, and that system should be a preventive system. This is the only way we can address the issue of prevention of war.

—Hindu

Conflict Resolution : An Overview

Laurel Shaper Walters

Conflict is universal and timeless. "People have always had fights, and they've always tried to settle them," says Louis Kriesberg, director of the Program on the Analysis and Resolution of Conflicts at Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York.

Although informal efforts to resolve conflict date back to the beginning of human society, the organized field of conflict resolution has taken shape over the past several decades.

Some credit the University of Michigan with initiating the study of conflict following World War II. In 1956, scholars at the university established the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, which is still published today.

Conflict resolution refers to a broad range of strategies for dealing with clashes between nations, individuals or organizations. The field encompasses everything from treaty negotiations between superpowers to mediation of child-custody and divorce cases. It draws on years of experience and study of the negotiation process in an effort to minimize violence and promote peace.

"Conflict has been with us since the beginning," says I. William Zartman, professor of international organization and conflict resolution at the School of Advanced International Studies, The Johns Hopkins University in Washington. "But we now have a much more scientific understanding of the components of conflict resolution. We know more about what works and what doesn't work so we can teach people about it."

Training and application of conflict-resolution techniques are on the increase not only in the United States but also in Canada, Australia, Russia, Europe, and a few Asian and Middle Eastern countries.

The international aspect of conflict resolution is often more theoretical and has deeper roots than more recent and burgeoning domestic applications.

"There's a growing recognition that adversarial confrontation may not be the best way to resolve all our problems," says Roger Fisher, author of the bestseller *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Without Giving In*.

However, the term "conflict resolution" is sometimes rejected in favor of "conflict management" or "dispute settlement." Experts who favor the latter two terms argue that conflict is inevitable and is

rarely resolved completely or finally.

Despite the diverse viewpoints represented in the conflict-resolution field, there are certain areas of agreement. Conflict is not viewed as a negative but rather as a problem ripe for resolution. Once a conflict is redefined as a problem, it can be solved according to the basic interests of the adversaries. Coercion and violence are rejected by people working in this field.

Negotiation and mediation are the basic tools used in conflict resolution. "Conflict management or resolution are the results," explains Professor Zartman. "Mediation, negotiation, and dispute resolution are the means."

The goal in resolving any conflict is to retreat from a "zero-sum" assumption, in which one side wins and the other side loses, to a win-win solution, in which the outcome is mutually beneficial.

Intermediaries who are not directly engaged in a conflict are often called in to participate in third-party conflict resolution. These third-party mediators facilitate communication and look for common ground between the conflicting positions; they usually do not have the authority to impose a solution but try to help the parties reach an agreement.

Alternative dispute resolution generally refers to conciliation of disputes through mediation rather than resorting to the courts. This area of conflict resolution is growing rapidly as the overtaxed United States court system groans under the weight of increasing litigation.

As the field of conflict resolution continues to expand, "we're trying to develop general concepts that apply across the board in labor negotiations, diplomatic negotiations, trade negotiations and personal-injury negotiations," Professor Fisher says.

"It's become increasingly clear that there are some general ideas that are relevant whether you're dealing with diplomatic conflict or family conflict," he says.

Fisher recently gave a talk titled: "Negotiating with the Soviet Union and Your Spouse: Is There a Difference?" The answer, he says, is "there's not as much difference as you think. In each case you want to listen, you want to understand the other party's interests, and you want to separate the relationship issues from the substantive ones."

Fisher helped develop the theory of "principled negotiation" at the Harvard

Negotiation Project. Principled negotiation refers to deciding issues on their merits rather than through a haggling process focused on what each side says they will or will not do.

The idea of common negotiation procedures is a relatively recent development in conflict resolution, Fisher says. However, some experts in the field question whether general negotiation principles can be applied across disciplines. "Some people stress the similarities and others would stress the differences in the settings and the need to modify what you're doing to the specific circumstances", Professor Kriesberg says.

International Conflict Resolution

High-level diplomatic negotiations in the 1970s helped raise the profile of conflict-resolution principles and techniques in the international arena. U.S.-Soviet negotiations on the strategic arms limitations treaty and the Camp David accords between Israel and Egypt gave worldwide visibility to the principles of conflict resolution.

"If you look at the Kissinger negotiations in the Middle East, there were some pretty imaginative solutions that came up over some knotty problems", Zartman says. "It's hard to say that never in history was anything like that done before. But now there's a greater panoply of ways to get out of problems".

Countries in the clutches of conflict often call on conflict-resolution experts to come in and serve as mediators. Fisher was invited to El Salvador several years ago to work with both the FMLN guerrillas and the Salvadoran Government.

"We held workshops for the negotiating team for the guerrillas and then separately for the government before they ever came together for meetings. When the two sides met, they finally negotiated an agreement", Fisher says. He remembers one of the military commandants saying that the two sides had accomplished more in one year of negotiation than in 12 years of fighting.

Cross-cultural negotiations can get even more complex than civil conflicts. "If you have differences of language, it makes communication more difficult", Fisher says. "You have differences of values and perceptions, and frequently differences in time scale. We Americans often are in a great hurry to get something done immediately. Japanese, Arabs and

Africans tend to take a longer-term view of the world".

The end of the cold war has changed global dynamics and had an impact on both conflicts and the role of conflict resolution. "The lid is off", Zartman says. "We are now realizing — somewhat to our horror — that the cold war was a system of world order. It kept down small conflicts. The small conflicts don't have any restraints on them anymore. That makes conflict resolution all the more difficult".

Zartman also sees relatively small nations — such as Togo, Algeria, Tunisia and Jordan — playing a larger role in the conflict resolution process. "We pay more attention to smaller nations as compared to big ones than we ever did before in world history", he says.

"The name of the game in negotiations is creativity. You're continually trying to find ways to get out of or over the problem", Zartman says. "The old studies of negotiations assumed no creativity. [The differing parties] just moved toward each other".

Track II diplomacy, involving nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), also is having an influence on conflict resolution. And the peacekeeping efforts of the United Nations are playing a larger role than they have in the past. "We're developing new mechanisms or agencies for conflict resolution", Zartman says. Foundations and NGOs around the world are offering financial and academic assistance to the field.

The Processes of International Negotiation Project within the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Laxenberg, Austria, is conducting research and providing support to conflict-resolution practitioners.

Former U.S. president Jimmy Carter has established the Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia, which hosts conferences on the issue of conflict and conflict resolution. Carter has also been involved in efforts to resolve several regional and intra-national conflicts, such as the Ethiopia-Eritrea war.

In 1990, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe set up a Conflict Prevention Centre in Vienna to provide help in resolving international conflicts in Europe.

But situations such as the continuing violence in the former Yugoslavia show that conflict resolution is not always a success.

So what keeps those involved in conflict resolution going? "Sunrise", Zartman answers simply. "The need of a job to be done and the hopes that they may be able to do it".

PART 2: Domestic Conflict

A Tale...

(Continued from page 8)

What followed after 1977 has to be explained in terms of peculiar motivations and pathological drives behind the post-1977 UNP State. As the case cannot be argued in full within the space of this article, I will merely provide some pointers about what appears to have gone wrong.

At the time the UNP came to power in 1977 it was confidently assumed that the ethnic problem would be solved without much difficulty because the UNP manifesto itself had acknowledged that the Tamils did have legitimate grievances. All that was required was a settlement of those grievances and a reasonable measure of devolution.

Quick disillusionment followed. The TULF leader Mr Sivasithamparam has been recently reminding us of former President Jayewardene's 1977 statement in Parliament, "If you want war you can have war. If you want peace, you can have peace." It was translated into Sinhala and broadcast every half-hour on the day of the historic pronouncement. The rationale behind it has never been clear because not many Sri Lankans would have imagined in 1977 that any substantial group of the Tamils, who had ceased being a martial people for centuries both in Sri Lanka and in Tamil Nadu, were raring for war against the Sinhalese. There was of course the LTTE, but up to 1977 it had killed only about six persons, all of them Tamil, and that hardly warranted throwing down the gauntlet for war. It is not at all clear that the 1977 anti-Tamil pogrom was necessary or advisable in any way. It seemed inexcusable.

What really were the motives for State or UNP terrorism after 1977? The psychologist Eric Fromm would probably explain it in terms of a necrophiliac complex in the post-1977 UNP, a death-driven rage for blood which eventually came to deluge the South as well as the North-East of Sri Lanka, killing even more Sinhalese than Tamils. It was not primarily a communalist passion that seized the post-1977 UNP but necrophilia, a sick delight in death and corpses, Fromm would say. Any Sri Lankan who, while trying to make sense of what happened to the paradise isle after 1977, reads Fromm's analysis of the ne-

crophiliac drive in Hitler's Germany, will be a little disturbed.

There could be many legitimate ways of trying to understand the post-1977 horror, which makes some kind of sense. I myself believe that it is best understood in terms of a mad hierarchical drive compounded by post-1977 anti-democracy. Let me briefly indicate what I have in mind.

All complex societies, that is to say societies which are developed enough to have a division of labour, are hierarchically structured. It makes sense to believe that in caste societies such as India and Sri Lanka, the hierarchical drive can be particularly vicious. The caste-system is of course being eroded both in India and Sri Lanka, but the caste mentality can be expected to flourish regardless, and it certainly does in both countries. The Indian caste-system is much nastier than ours, but for centuries there have been counter-vailing egalitarian or democratic factors in Indian society which have been notably absent or much weaker in Sri Lanka. In any case, the hierarchical drive is very powerful in Sri Lanka and finds its most vicious embodiment in the Sri Lankan state.

The problem of an exceptionally vicious hierarchical drive in Sri Lanka was compounded by the collapse of democracy after 1977. It meant that State power was virtually uncontrolled, and the predictable result was the very serious erosion of standards of public morality and the seriously weakened grasp of reality shown by the 1977 Government. The vicious hierarchical drive shown in the State and anti-democracy was a heady mix. The power of the post-1977 UNP State can be best imaged in Orwell's description of absolute power, a boot crashing on a human face.

I believe that what happened after 1977 has to be explained more or less along the lines set out above. The ethnic problem acquired a militant form after 1977 because of the madly hierarchical and anti-democratic characteristics of the post-1977 UNP State, and not because of "Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism" or the alleged communalism of the Sinhalese masses. I will argue in the remainder of this article that the solution of the ethnic problem requires as a pre-condition the solution of the problem of the State in Sri Lanka.

SLFP hated my guts

— Justice Colin-Thome

Arden

In an angry retort Wimalaratne J. said: "I think a case has been made out to review all the judgments given by this judge in his wayward career... It is a pity that under the cover of privilege this man is permitted even to suggest this kind of libellous falsehood". Samarakoon C.J. and Wimalaratne J. both retired soon after these events, having reached retirement age. But Colin-Thome J. had several years left and he seemed determined not to allow de Alwis to damage his career. In order to do this, he appears to have imagined that it was incumbent on him to establish (1) that he was the contrary of friendly with Felix Dias Bandaranaike and the S.L.F.P. and (2) that he was a loyal supporter of the U.N.P. and an admirer of J.R. Jayewardene. He set about doing this with a will.

Justice Colin-Thome turned up before the select committee with a list of cases where the state was a party, in which he had held with the state. (The select committee had not sought such information). Among the oral submissions he made to the committee were the following:

"Ever since I led evidence under the previous U.N.P. government of the late Mr. Dudley Senanayake before the C.W.E. Commission of Inquiry in 1967, I have been a marked man by the S.L.F.P. I was hand-picked to lead evidence ... of the rackets of S.L.F.P. bigwigs and their henchmen. One of the highlights of the evidence I led before the Commission was that expensive sarees were specially flown from Madras, and these were taken to 'Temple Trees' (the Prime Minister's official residence), to the house of Mr. Felix Bandaranaike, Mr. T.B. Ilangaratne, Mr. Mahanama

Samaraweera, Mr. Badiuddin Mahmud (all S.L.F.P. cabinet ministers) and others and sold under the counter to them. They were so mad with me that they told me to leave the country before they came back to power. I wish to say that in the 1977 election nothing gave me greater pleasure than listening to... the Dompe result. (Felix Bandaranaike's constituency, which he lost).

I want to say this: My relations with His Excellency the president have been very cordial. In fact I know him. I have known the President from 1948 and I have had very cordial relations with him. We have a common interest in history. I admire his culture, his refinement, and it was never my intention at any time to do anything harmful to him personally. We have met at several functions at President's House, at private dinners, and in 1981 he invited me and my wife for his birthday party at President's House. We were very honoured".

Justice Colin-Thome did not stop with that. He went on:

"My community (the Burghers), my family, are his traditional supporters. My father was a worker for Mr. Henry Amarasinghe (a former U.N.P. minister) for years in Galle, and actually, before I joined the Attorney-General's department, I used to work with Rick, the President's brother-in-law, Rick Abeywardene. I think Mr. Wickremasinghe (a member of the Select Committee) will remember the induction of Mr. Harry Jayewardene (the president's brother) as president of the Bar Association in 1976. I was one of two or three judges who specially went to that function and got very

unpopular with Felix. I had a long conversation about the state of affairs in the country at that time with His Excellency the President.

I would like to hand in 12 matters in which I have held for the State. I mark that P.C.T.8.

There are four volumes of the C.W.E. Commission, loads about the S.L.F.P. They hated my guts.

When Mr. Harry Jayewardene's induction took place in Kandy... there were only three Supreme Court judges who made it a point to go and I was one of those three judges. My wife and I made a special point of attending that function. There is a witness here who, I think, would have seen me there, the Hon. Minister of Education. My wife and I made it a special point".

The country was aghast to see a supreme court judge reduced to such straits by the president's meddling.

The select committee's findings were:

1. There was not sufficient evidence of a conspiracy between Messrs. Felix Bandaranaike, A.H.M. Fowzie and/or any other persons conspiring to deceive or induce Mr. de Alwis to enter into a transaction with Mr. Fowzie and thereby discredit the S.P.C.
2. It was not established that there were circumstances which rendered it improper for Wimalaratne J. to have agreed to hear S.C. Reference No. 1 of 1982.
3. There was not sufficient evidence that the decision in that case of Wimalaratne J. was influenced by

any improper considerations of bias against Mr. de Alwis.

4. It was not established that there were circumstances which rendered it improper for Colin-Thome J. to have agreed to hear S.C. Reference No. 1 of 1982.
5. There was not sufficient evidence that the decision of Colin-Thome J. in that case was influenced by any considerations of bias against Mr. de Alwis.
6. The committee were "completely satisfied" that there was no evidence that pleadings filed by or on behalf of Mr. Bandaranaike were prepared in the Chambers of Colin-Thome J.
7. The committee had come to the conclusion that there was "no justification for the failure of the judges to afford an opportunity to the Attorney-General to address them on behalf of the State" and were of the view that "if the court had the benefit of full and complete submissions from the Attorney-General the court may have arrived at a different decision in regard to the issue of a Writ of Quo Warranto which materially affected the Warrant issued by His Excellency the President".
8. The committee thought there was weight to the argument that the affidavit of the two commissioners Weeraratne J. and Sharvananda J. had been disbelieved by the supreme court. They could not agree that this "cast no reflection on the judges"

In March 1986 Justice P. Colin-Thome was appointed chairman of a Special Presidential Commission to probe complaints of bribery and corruption against Ministers, M.P.'s, government officials, Tender Board officials etc. In announcing this appointment, in a speech he made at the Sri Dharmapalamaya, a Buddhist temple in Mt. Lavinia, on 27 February 1986, President Jayewardene stressed that "administrators should lead a clean public life". The president added that "Democracy should be preserved

and protected in the same way a hen looks after its egg". (The Island 28 February 1986)

Jayewardene liked, every now and then, to make such gestures, for cosmetic reasons. It is possible that he considered that a judge who had not hesitated to go on public record as having expressed admiration for him could be relied on, in executing his commission, not to do anything that might embarrass him politically. The commission was inundated with complaints including some against a number of cabinet ministers. Once the commission had disposed of allegations against two or three minor officials, President Jayewardene wound it up. His ministers were safe. No one had seriously expected Jayewardene to permit his ministers' activities to be probed by the Colin-Thome commission. The president offered no explanation to the country for his decision.

The final report of the commission was published as a sessional paper. It stated that, up to 20 September 1987, 1973 complaints had been received of which 634 were being investigated when the commission was wound up. (Daily News 25 March 1988).

Jayewardene had, comparatively early in his presidential career, made it clear that he had no intention of taking serious notice of allegations of corruption made against his ministers and M.P.'s. In January 1981, speaking at the headquarters of the Sucharita Movement, he said (as reported in the Daily News): "If any action of my ministers or of a member of the government's parliamentary party is brought to my notice I will inquire first before accepting the allegation. Any denial or explanation I will accept forthwith". (What he was saying, in his plonking style, was that any allegation of impropriety made against any of his ministers or backbenchers would be referred by him to the person against whom it had been made. If that person denied the charge he would proceed no further in the matter.) He went on to add that it was his experience that this approach "contributed to the smoothest functioning of the wheels of government". He explained that this was in accordance with the principle of British justice that "one

is presumed to be innocent until found guilty". A columnist in the S.L.F.P. paper commented: "Even a schoolchild knows that the presumption of innocence in British jurisprudence does not mean that a man's plea of 'not guilty' is forthwith accepted and that no trial takes place". (The Nation: 13 February 1981). Jayewardene's political foes found plonking of this high order difficult to counter effectively.

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The SAARC Response

Problem and Setting

1. Poverty in the Region in the year 1991, based on the conventional "Poverty Line" estimates in most countries, would be between 330 to 440 million. It is more likely to be in the higher range.
2. Given the present trends in population and economic growth and in the absence of a concerted plan of action at poverty alleviation, the numbers are likely to increase substantially.
3. The problems of poverty are further aggravated by various other social deprivations and discriminations from which the poor suffer as well as by the spatial inaccessibility of outlying, remote and distant terrain which prevent the delivery of social goods and services.
4. The Structural Adjustment policies, which accompany the open-economy-industrialisation strategy currently being adopted by most SAARC countries, are likely in the shorter term, to put further strains on the poor.
5. The Report reinforces the conclusion that the magnitude and complexity of the problem of poverty in South Asia is staggering. When coupled with the multifaceted crisis currently facing South Asian countries, the problem is becoming unmanageable, not only putting democracy at risk but also posing a threat to the fabric of South Asian societies.

Inadequacy of Past Interventions

6. The conventional development interventions over the past fifty years has resulted in a growth rate too low to have an impact on the levels of living and human development of the large number of poor. Though South Asia has achieved an average growth rate of 3.1 per cent over the past ten years while several other regions in the South have had negative growth, such growth has failed to "trickle down" or be administratively redistributed to the poor, except in a limited manner. The magnitude of poverty remains unacceptably high.
7. Excessive dependence on the State for every lead in development curtailed initiatives of the people. Obsessi-

ve preoccupation with capital accumulation, as the driving force in economic progress, resulted in neglecting the capacity of the poor themselves. Concentration on industrialisation/modernisation, as the dominant paradigm of development, created dualities in the system and wide gaps between rural and urban levels of living as well as further polarization within these areas. The poor, wherever they lived, faced the worst consequences of these processes.

8. In making an overall assessment of the results of the adaptations made to conventional development wisdom by South Asian countries, however, there is evidence of a positive side, albeit a limited one, as far as the poor are concerned. These limited positive effects are:

- (i) Some of the benefits did "trickle down" to the poor in areas where there was a systematic emphasis on agricultural development and food production;

- (ii) In a few South Asian countries, or States within countries, where there was consistent investment in social development programmes, a significant level of human development was achieved even by the poor, at low levels of income; and

- (iii) Where massive financial resources were available and the bureaucracy was committed and efficient, poverty was ameliorated through the "delivery of inputs" to the poor in selected sectors and areas.

9. In the past three to four years, all the countries in South Asia have been tentatively attempting to adapt their overall development plans to ensure that social polarisation and poverty reproduction are not exacerbated as their economies are liberalised and adjusted in pursuit of the Open-Economy Industrialisation Strategy. Some are attempting to further decentralise the process of development decision-making, some are placing greater emphasis on social development, and still others are attempting to further increase the delivery of inputs to the poor more efficiently, streamline the administrative redistribution machinery and food systems and introduce safety nets. A few have recently begun to initiate

bolder new programmes of social mobilisation, which fall broadly within a new pattern of development, that enable the poor to contribute to growth and human development and also assert the right to resources intended for them.

10. However, mere continuation of the conventional development pattern with marginal variations, greater efficiency in achieving these limited gains and ad hoc consultation with the poor in the name of participation would not be adequate to reverse the process of poverty reproduction. The sheer magnitude and complexity of the task should not be underestimated. The eradication of poverty in South Asia would require a major political approach in which participation of the poor plays a critical role. A mere technocratic approach is inadequate.

Learning from the Ground

11. In the past ten to fifteen years, a sufficient body of new experience has matured at the micro-level in the South Asian countries which demonstrates that where the poor participate as subjects and not as objects of the development process, it is possible to generate growth, human development and equity, not as mutually exclusive trade-offs but as complementary elements in the same process. An in-depth analysis made of the hundreds of participatory processes on the ground confirm that the poor have contributed to growth and human development simultaneously under varying socio-political circumstances. They also demonstrate that, at relatively lower levels of income, it is possible for the poor to achieve a high level of human development. These experiences provide a material basis for the assertion that a qualitatively and quantitatively significant new element can be added to the strategic options for poverty eradication in South Asia. The few success cases that have been presented in the Report are merely illustrative of how poverty is being alleviated, savings and investment are being increased, assets are being created cost effectively. There are thousands of these in various stages of maturation in South Asia. There is also evidence

(Excerpt from the Executive Summary of the SAARC Report. The first part appeared in our last issue)

that where this process is supported sensitively with adequate resources and mechanisms, the process can be expanded cost effectively.

12. A closer look into the experiences on the ground points to a number of common and specific lessons on what has been achieved through social mobilisation and participation of the poor in development. The lessons and achievements include the following:

- * Building organisations of the poor is an essential prerequisite for poverty alleviation. Through these organisations, the poor can save and invest efficiently.
- * Empowerment of the poor is the means to poverty eradication. Through empowerment, the poor can also assert the right to resources intended for them and enhance their dignity and self respect.
- * Poor women can effectively overcome their double burden through the same process.
- * The need for sensitive support mechanisms to catalyse the process of social mobilisation. A new kind of animator/facilitator who is identified with the poor and committed to poverty eradication needs to be a part of these support mechanisms.
- * Participatory monitoring and evaluation have to be built into the process so that self-corrective action can take place as the process evolves.

13. The experiences indicates the need to consciously expand existing organisations of the poor and create new institutions through which they can participate in development. They need their own institutions as well as the support mechanisms because there are serious systemic obstacles to their becoming the mainstream. How this can be done is now clearer. The Report elaborates in detail on "How" the poor have contributed to growth, human development and equity in the same process. In this process of social mobilisation, organisations of the poor and new kinds of sensitive support mechanisms would implement the strategic options. The sensitive support mechanisms could be varied, e.g. non-governmental organisations, banks for the poor, cooperatives and even decentralised government agencies working with new norms. The State would provide the enabling policy framework, resources and devolve power to the poor.

A Pro-Poor Perspective and New Premises for Action

14. The inadequacy of the past development response, the limited positive results at the macro level and the lessons from the ground have been combined to provide the new premises for action for a strategy of poverty alleviation.

The Perspective which should inform these new premises for action should be unambiguously pro-poor and culturally relevant. The new premises for action is a pattern of development which initially moves on two equally strong fronts:

- (a) The open-economy industrialisation front.
- (b) The poverty alleviation front.

These two parallel strategic thrusts, having longer and shorter term time frames, can be harmonised as the two processes evolve.

15. The Report has concentrated on articulating the elements that should inform the Poverty Alleviation front. They are:

- * Poverty can be eradicated in South Asia by the year 2002, i.e. within a ten-year time frame, leaving only a residual number of poor who would need social welfare programmes. This latter category can be kept within manageable limits and be carried by society until they, too, can become part of the mainstream of development in wider human terms.
- * This would involve a doubling of GDP per capita during this ten-year plan from the current US\$ 300 to US\$ 600 per capita (given a projected population growth rate of 1.8 per cent) This means a GDP growth rate of 9 per cent per annum for the Region. This growth rate of 9 per cent is an ambitious target, but achievable. It can build upon the growth rate of 3.1 per cent in the 1980s which was achieved under very adverse conditions. Each SAARC country can phase its indicative planning targets according to its own potential.
- * Such an increase will have to be produced by a different pattern of development which requires an explicit political commitment of the leadership and the participation of the poor in development. Such political commitment would have to focus on the two conventional targets of growth policy: lowering the incremental capital-output ratio from 4:1 to 3:1 or less and

increasing the marginal saving rates from the current levels to 27 per cent or more. Such a large shift would also require the involvement and participation of the poor through their own institutions and mobilisation of their own savings and that of the non-poor. Lowering of the capital-output ratio would involve a growth strategy based on labour-intensive development, with high productivity and human development.

A key element of the strategy has to be to mobilise the savings of the poor themselves as a first step. South Asian countries have little choice but to use labour, the factor in surplus. The investment activity of the poor is effected mainly not in the form of monetary instruments but as asset creation by transforming labour into capital. Combined with proper organisation, it can help unleash new forces leading to efficient asset creation. The "sharing and caring" characteristics of the poor in South Asia and the values of "simplicity and frugality" can reinforce such an effort. Thus, in addition to the conventional accumulation process by the State and the private sector, there is a compulsion for a new accumulation process.

Lastly, this process must include a net transfer of resources to the poor. Apart from increasing their savings and having access to capital, such a resource transfer can also take the form of improving the social and physical infrastructure for the poor, once again through their own participation. All this requires a major effort at social mobilisation leading to the release of the creative energies of the poor and the building of their organisations.

- * Most of the poor in South Asia live in rural areas and depend directly or indirectly on agriculture; food security is an important component, not only of survival but also of the basic dignity and well-being of the poor. Thus a foremost element of the development pattern is to give a new priority to agriculture with emphasis on food production and a household food security programme. The State needs to make an explicit political guarantee of the right of the poor to food security.
- * The designing of a strategy for small-scale, labour-intensive industrialisation for which South Asia has a comparative advantage, forms a third element. This

strategy would absorb the unemployed and underemployed poor, including youth, into productive activities. Labour-intensive industrialisation is a function of the product mix, technology choice, scale of activity, plant size and supporting institutions.

- * An essential prerequisite of the poverty eradication strategy is human development which guarantees the right of the poor to participate in decisions that affect their lives, the right to food as a basic human right, the right to work and the right to all information services. Literacy, primary education, health, shelter and protection of children have also been included in this list of priorities. Defining and promoting the role and status of women in society and ensuring the full participation of all strata and groups in development decision-making is necessary to make human development holistic. The ultimate objective of economic growth is to bring a higher level of human development within the reach of the poor and thus to expand the range of their choices. In this way development itself is made more participatory and equitable, where growth and human development need not be trade offs.
- * Although, initially, such a pro-poor strategy can be designed and implemented independently of the longer-term open-economy industrialisation and the associated programme of structural adjustment — adopted by most countries, eventually the two strands of the overall development pattern would have to be harmonised with each other. Since they have different time frames, this harmonisation could take place as the two processes unfold. South Asian regional cooperation to create a one billion strong market and a South Asian community can further reinforce the harmonisation process.

An Agenda for Action: A Plan for the Poor

- * Using the Perspective and the Premises for Action as the point of departure, the States in South Asia need to articulate a New Clear Vision for the Poor.
- * The Commission strongly recommends that each SAARC country should prepare immediately, a national-level Plan for the Poor using the Pro-Poor Perspective and the Premises for Action ide-

ntified in this Report. The implementation of such a Plan for the Poor in their respective countries should build on the success cases on the ground and other innovative macro processes currently being initiated in all these countries. New kinds of sensitive support mechanisms should be part of the implementation process. The whole process should be monitored with built in self-corrective participatory measures.

- * In order to achieve this end, a concrete and practical Agenda for Action by the Governments has been recommended in chapter 4 of the Report.
- * Success in preparing, carrying out and monitoring this Pro-Poor Plan would require a re-affirmation, at the Dhaka Summit, of the underlying assumption in the Report of a deep political and administrative commitment by each of the South Asian Governments to the urgent task of Poverty Eradication within the given time frame.

Consensus on Eradication of Poverty in South Asia

6. Conscious that the Sheer magnitude and complexity of South Asian poverty conscious that the sheer magnitude and complexity of South Asian poverty constituted a major political and economic challenge, the Heads of State or Government reiterated their commitment to continue to accord a high priority to its eradication from the region in the shortest possible time.
7. They pledged to overcome this challenge through the implementation of appropriate pro-poor development strategies at macro and micro levels.
8. In this context, the Heads of State or Government welcomes the Report of the Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation established at the Colombo Summit. The Report provided valuable insight and illustrative examples of successful poverty alleviation programmes in individual Member States.
9. Acknowledging that the abiding human qualities of dignity, creativity and productive potential, are eroded by chronic poverty, the Heads of State or Government reiterated their commitment to empowering the poor for enhanced growth, consistent with human development and equity.
10. The Heads of State or Government committed their Governments une-

quivocally to the eradication of poverty in South Asia, preferably by the Year 2002 A.D. through an Agenda of Action, which would, *inter-alia*, embody:

- * a strategy of social mobilization, involving the building of organizations of the poor, and their empowerment through appropriate national support mechanisms, with the assistance of respective Governments;
 - * a policy of decentralized agricultural development and sharply focussed household level food security through universal provision of 'Daal-Bhaat' or basic nutritional needs;
 - * a policy of decentralized small scale labour intensive industrialization, with the choice of efficient and cost effective technology;
 - * a policy of human development, including the enhancement of the social role and status of poor women, the provision of universal primary education, skill development, primary health care, shelter for the poor and protection of children;
 - * a policy to support the above initiatives with adequate financial resources.
11. The Heads of State or Government stressed that within the overall conceptual approach of "Daal-Bhaat", the right to work and the right to primary education should receive priority.
 12. The Leaders also underscored the critical link between the success of national efforts aimed at poverty alleviation and the external factors affecting growth and development. They urged all major actors in the world economic scene, particularly the industrialized countries and multilateral and regional financial institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations to create an enabling international atmosphere that is supportive of poverty alleviation programmes in South Asia. This would require a new dialogue with donors.
 13. The Heads of State or Government agreed to the follow-up action indicated below:
 - * a national level of pro-poor plan to be drawn up by each Member State. This plan is to be harmonized with the open economy and structural adjustment strategies;
 - * to share during the next Summit information regarding the progress achieved.

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The UN — An Instrument of Pax Americana

James Ridgeway and Sabine Guez

New York

There was a time when the United Nations was the last best hope for all mankind. No more. In May this year UN negotiator sold out all those who had hoped the environmental conference in Rio would, at the very least, win agreement for reducing greenhouse gases by a certain date. Instead, answering to the dictates of US policies and sounding like a representative of the American Management Association, the negotiator dropped the timelines that make the agreement meaningful and substituted a wishy-washy, generally worded resolution to reduce the gases.

It was symbolic of what the United Nations is fast becoming. The international organisation that stood between the Soviet Union and the Western allies for 45 years is emerging from the shadow of the Cold War as a new, unexpected, and potentially disastrous presence in world politics — the instrument of Pax Americana in the New World Order.

In addition, since he took over in January, the new secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali of Egypt, has moved to downsize the bulky bureaucracy and completed the process for an unimpeded embrace of free-market economics.

Arbiter

In the minds of most people the United Nations functions at two different levels. First, it is an instrument of Western power — with, until recently, enough of a corrective nudge from the Soviet Union to give it more than the appearance of a true international organisation. Second, since the end of colonialism from the early 1960s on, the UN has been a forum for the debate and promulgation of a set of high principles concerning humanitarianism, health, and environmental concerns that it struggles to persuade the governments of the world to heed. In the latter capacity, over the last 20 years it has been a kind of arbiter for a spirit of cooperation and decency, moderating the excesses of colonial capitalism, racism, and dictatorship. Its economic role has been marginal, but through bodies such as the World Health Organisation it held forth the prospect of true international cooperation against diseases — AIDS, water-borne epidemics — and gave context to the sort of broad international policymaking that is simply impossible to achieve on any other level.

The United Nations has fought for its existence from the beginning. Since Reagan's election, conservatives have tried,

with some success, to cut off funding, and later to change the UN's attitude toward private enterprise. The UN negotiator's compromise on the environment in May, for example, followed the advice of the Heritage Foundation to the Bush administration.

At the same time, the Right has worked to stop the organisation of what little economic independence it possessed and to make sure serious economic matters were decided by organisations clearly under US control — like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Germany and Japan are too consumed with their own priorities to begin to intrude into the UN arena, and the nascent superpowers, like Brazil and Taiwan, are still too small to make a difference.

Since May this year, there have been close to 45,000 UN troops deployed in countries around the world, from El Salvador, where they are monitoring a cease-fire, to Yugoslavia, where they are trying to separate the Serbs and Croats, to Cambodia, where the UN will essentially end up administering the entire country. The UN Charter says the organisation can use peacekeeping forces to resist aggression, but increasingly the UN is plunging into internal conflicts to stop violence.

The year the projected peacekeeping operations will cost over \$2.7 billion, more than twice the regular budget of the UN. That's not much, 'considering millions of people across the world are involved' (Particularly when you consider that Desert Storm cost \$1.5 billion a day), says Brian Urquhart, the veteran UN civil servant and undersecretary-general for special political affairs from 1974-86 who now works at the Ford Foundation. Urquhart is a major proponent of employing UN peacekeeping forces as a tripwire to stop wars before they start. The US pays 30% of the cost of the peacekeeping operations, and even though the UN shows every sign of acting as its lackey, it is slow to pay up.

Over the last two decades the US has sought to avoid the price of fighting foreign wars. After ending the draft, during the Reagan era America tried combining guerrilla operations with a force of mercenary irregulars in Nicaragua. They were following through on the experiments in Laos with hill tribesmen and with Cuban emigres in the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. There was even talk in the heady days of Reaganism of turning the contras, Cubans, and American soldiers of fortune into an American foreign legion to fight

irregular wars in the Third World (with the redeeming virtue that there'd never be any American casualties). The sudden interest in expanding the UN's peacekeeping role brought the unkind suggestion that in this new era the UN can provide that mercenary force for the US, Great Britain and France (three permanent members of the Security Council). To pay for all UN activities — the organisation is already \$1.95 billion in debt — Urquhart says, 'You could put a \$5 surcharge on all international airline tickets. Nobody would notice. There's already a \$36 security-tax on all airline tickets, and nobody even noticed that. That's one way. We cleared the Suez Canal by a 3% surcharge on canal tolls paid by the shipping business in 1957. There's an arms register now, which is supposed to register international arms transactions. You could put a 1% levy on that and you would easily raise \$2 billion a year. The arms trade is the most productive in the world. It makes more money even than drugs. Why not cash in on it?'

But at a time when the Bush administration is resolutely pushing free market economies, the US is against any more taxes — not just at home, but everywhere in the world. 'The Charter readily doesn't provide the UN with taxing authority and you would have to have some kind of convention or treaty,' Dick Thornburgh, Bush's former attorney general who now, as undersecretary-general for Administration and Management, is the US point man at the UN, said in a recent interview. 'I think (the members) would be a little leery of ceding taking power.'

Rather than taxes, Thornburgh looks to the private sector. 'I think that certainly one of the options that would be looked at would be private contributions to help, maybe to create an initial peacekeeping fund that could respond to emergency situations.' He thinks a fund might be set up for 'humanitarian' aid, and while initially the UN looked for support from member countries, Thornburgh now says, 'I think that it's entirely possible that private contributions could be received from corporations, foundations around the world. They have an interest, particularly multinational corporations have an interest in peace and stability in terms of their own participation in economic development.'

Price

Since the Iraq war, the UN's beefed-up peacekeeping apparatus has looked like a Western mercenary force. 'We had to pay quite a price for being independent,' explained Abdalla S Al-Ashtar, Yemen's

ambassador to the UN. Right after Yemen and Cuba voted in the Security Council against the use of force in the Persian Gulf, 'we were told we were going to pay a price for the vote. I was informed in the council chambers by one American official that our vote would cost us dearly. And they delivered. One million Yemeni workers were expelled from Saudi Arabia in one month. Economic assistance from the gulf countries and the US was completely stopped.'

'I think that idea (that the UN has become the west's foreign legion) is nonsense,' says Urquhart. 'I think that every government from the largest to the smallest tries to use the UN as an instrument of its policy, including tiny little countries. But obviously the most powerful countries are the most successful in doing it. But it seems to me that, because of the financial factor, there will be a tendency to cut down on UN activities in countries which are of less interest to the industrialised world.'

When, for example, Somalia asked for UN peacekeepers to monitor a truce in its civil war, the US balked at the prospect of shouldering the cost a time when it already is committed to paying for UN forces in both Yugoslavia and Cambodia, two more popular causes. After all, who ever heard of Somalia?

'The fundamental question which everyone avoids addressing is the limits of sovereignty,' argues Stephen Lewis, Canada's former UN ambassador, who has assailed the UN's involvement in the Persian Gulf. 'But the UN as an organisation simply hasn't come to grips with it so it's a highly ad hoc lurching proposition. In the 21st century there's going to have to be a redefinition of sovereignty which gets some countries to relinquish some sovereignty for the sake of keeping peace, and in the interim it's strictly ad hoc. But to say there is anything fundamental or long-term in it is pushing it.'

'Ironically, I don't think the peacekeeping role is easily sullied, because too many countries have too much interest,' Lewis continues. 'Take a country like Canada. We've been peacekeepers from day one. We've been involved in every single UN peacekeeping activity from the beginning. Even Canadians, surrogates to American policy as we tend to be, would bridle if they saw a real abuse of peacekeeping.'

Corporation executives

Of course, in the New World Order it's butter, not guns, that will win the hearts and minds of consumers everywhere. During the Cold War, when the US saw itself locked in battle with the Soviet Union for influence in Africa — indeed all across the periphery of the 'Soviet Empire' — Americans used to argue the Third World should take up economic pragmatism

against the suffocating dictates of Soviet-style economic command structures. In pursuing the 'rollback' of the imperial Red engine, the Right pushed for democratic pluralism in such places as Nicaragua and Angola.

On the economic front these attacks were aimed at the dead hand of statist enterprise. The Heritage Foundation, with its close access to the inner councils of both the Reagan and Bush administrations, was among the most active critics, publishing pamphlets and books promoting a pro-US reform of the UN.

With the Cold War and the Soviet Union gone, these calls for pluralism and democracy have been replaced by a strident ideological demand for the free market.

'I think the most important thing in the UN is to balance the relationship between the industrialised countries and the developing world,' Urquhart says. 'If it's a purely intergovernmental organisation, let's say in the fields of environment and development, I don't believe it's going to remain very relevant to what is happening because the forces in those fields are not governmental, they are mostly non-governmental, private sector. These are the forces which are going to shape the future. I think the UN will shortly have to have a look at its own political structure and see whether it does not have to build in another dimension. Either that, or I think it will go out of business in some of these fields.'

The new secretary-general is attempting to reform the economic functions of the UN. He has abolished certain entities and merged others into one existing organisation, putting the whole under a new unit, headed by a little-known Chinese diplomat, a move widely interpreted as downgrading the economic functions.

The basic idea is to strip the UN of economic activities that tend toward redressing the balance between the industrial North and undeveloped South. In the past, the UN has advised small countries how to obtain better deals from big international commodities firms and written reports that attack cigarette companies by name for their export policies. This has all been shuffled off into a corner.

At the same time, the reformers aim to widen the import of international corporations within the organisation. As it stands, specialised economic missions from the US are often staffed by executives of corporations. Non-government organisations such as the International Chamber of Commerce provide international companies with built-in lobbies. CODEX is a UN agency, jointly supervised by WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organisation, that develops international standards for food additives, drugs, chemicals, pesticides, and food contaminants. Corpora-

tion executives generally sit as members of the country delegations, and beyond that CODEX welcomes corporate views on standard setting in general. The standards are hammered out in committees, whose activities are sponsored by countries that agree to fund them. The US sponsors several committees and it asks business for advice and counsel on what the standards should be. They might as well have been written by the companies themselves.

This standard-setting mechanism has far-reaching consequences. The CODEX standards are accepted by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the worldwide forum for erecting trade policy, as the existing international standards. These standards can be used to weaken generally tougher US standards in, say, pesticide tolerances. This is a fiendish apparatus that provides the UN stamp of approval to standards that seriously endanger the health and well-being of people everywhere.

It's this sort of thing that Boutros-Ghali has signed onto. 'To make it absolutely clear to the Western public,' Boutros-Ghali told *Die Zeit* of Hamburg last winter, 'I am not all that concerned about financial or technical assistance to the Third World. Your citizens, in any case, are sick and tired of constantly being asked to donate food or money. There is a more important role for the North — that of mediator... For the South, what matters is that the North pay attention, on a political level, to events there. That is more important than financial and technical aid.'

Second chamber

'I don't think that it is a good idea to have private corporations having a large influence on things that are done, but I do think that their advice and experience could be used,' says Urquhart, who more than anyone is an architect of what is to come. 'And I think in some cases, because they benefit greatly from some of the things the UN does, that people should at least consider whether (the corporations) shouldn't take part in financing them.'

It's a little hard to see just how corporations could have much more of a free hand in the operations of the United Nations, since they permeate its life blood as it is. But Urquhart suggests private enterprise conceivably could be accommodated in a 'second chamber of the General Assembly,' or in 'a non-governmental and private gathering of some kind.'

What that would mean is that international policy in the global village would be set by many corporations working together through different nation states — frank acknowledgement of the ideals of the New World Order.

— The Village Voice

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