

LANKA

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Black Knight
It's your move

AND NOW TO THE BIG ONE

Mervyn de Silva

It was a collector's item. The headline read: **NO SUCH TALKS WITH INDIAN OFFICIALS: LIONEL FERNANDO.** The boxed four-column frontpage story appeared in the *Daily News*, the flagship of the state-owned Associated Newspapers. A distinguished member of the elite Civil service, Mr. Fernando was appointed chairman of the Associated Newspapers by the newly elected administration of Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunga.

The *Daily News* report began with a blunt denial. "Information ministry secretary and member of the four-man team which is to hold preliminary talks with the L.T.T.E. in Jaffna this week, Mr. Lionel Fernando denied that his recent trip to New Delhi was to hold talks with Indian officials as reported in the lead story of a week-end newspaper." The *Daily News* "contradiction" was no great help. It may have fuelled suspicion since it confirmed the fact that Mr. Fernando had visited Delhi when Mr. Fernando had visited only Madras. His wife was at Apollo hospital for an operation scheduled in June.

The alibi was watertight but why the agitation? Small island/huge neighbour hypersensitivities offer the obvious explanation. The argument of ancient history, a history of invasions and incursions from South India, has merit too. It is Indo-Sri Lankan relations of the Jayewardene era and the India-Sri Lanka "Peace Accord" which now produce knee-jerk reactions from the Sinhalese middle-class and the English-educated elite. Colombo in particular remembers the nightmarish nights and days that followed prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's arrival and the televised ceremonies connected with the "accord", especially the Sinhalese sailor in the guard-of-honour who tried to smash his skull with a rifle-butt. In Egypt, it was president Anwar Sadat, the co-signatory to a more historic truce, who was assassinated as a traitor.

Here a comrade of the Sinhalese sailor nearly wiped out President Jayewardene and half his cabinet in parliament. Both were admirers of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) of Mr. Rohana Wijeweera,

a graduate of Lumumba University, Moscow. Wijeweera's JVP however preferred to discard the orthodoxy "Moscow line" and embrace a far more appealing and romantic "Guerrillism" by the 1970's. He had the audacity to launch an insurrection against Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike's United Front which included in its cabinet the founding fathers of the local Marxist movement, Trotskyist and Stalinist.

His final avatar is what is most relevant to Sri Lankan politics today. With the "Peace Accord" and the arrival of an Indian Peace-Keeping force (IPKF) twice as large as the Sri Lankan army, Wijeweera's clarion call was ultra-Sinhalese nationalism we should remember, with a strong anti-Indian, anti-Tamil flavour. And so, the Tamil 'Tiger' of the north brought forth the Sinhala lion of the South (Sinha after all means lion). The IPKF did the Sri Lankan state no small service. While it fought an unwinnable unconventional war against the secessionist 'Tiger' guerrillas, the Sri Lankan army decimated their own ethnic kind, the JVP rebels, to the great relief of the Sinhala rich and the middle class.

But Rohana Wijeweera "lives". His ideology and his movement have survived. The man who tried to wipe out the Jayawardene cabinet in Parliament has now a comrade in the assembly, while he himself had fared quite well at the mid-August parliamentary polls. In any case, Opposition leader and Presidential candidate Mr. Gamini Dissanayake has been warned by the Intelligence Bureau of a "Tiger" plan to kill him, while Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunge's security team has been strengthened against anti-Tamil terrorists. As the Peoples' Alliance (PA) candidate she will have to address mass rallies islandwide. What is more significant though is the advent globally of an aggressively self-assertive ultra-nationalism as the strongest shaping force of politics in the twilight of the 20th century. It is this force that explains the phenomenon of proliferating identity conflicts and internal wars in the first post-Cold War decade.

Prime Minister Kumaratunge has

always been a committed advocate of a negotiated settlement with the Tamils, which of course means the LTTE. Now she has no choice. The eleven-year "war" in the north and east has been a bleeding wound. More than a million US dollars is spent each day on the war itself, and another three billion rupees a year on defence-related items. Her P.A. has shuffled off its old "socialist" ideological clothes. It supports market economies. But the government cannot abandon the traditional welfarism (education and health, mainly) that is a firmly inbuilt part of the Sri Lankan system.

Economics is not the only imperative. The P.A. was stunned when it failed to collect fifty (50) percent of the vote at the mid-August parliamentary polls. What's more, the conservative UNP after seventeen (17) long years in office and now

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led by a colourless President D B Wijetunge, who owes his post to the 'Tigers' that killed President Premadasa, collected a surprisingly high 44% percent. The P.A. in turn has to thank the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) and the Tamil vote in the south. The "Indian Tamil" plantation vote went to the UNP.

Candidate Kumaratunge hopes that Mr. Thondaman, the C.W.C. boss, will be smart enough to switch sides. If the peace talks convince Mr. Prabhakaran that a serious deal on regional autonomy is likely, he will permit the Tamils of the LTTE-controlled areas to vote, and vote P.A. in that event, the Prime Minister could double August's majority to approach the magical million mark. But Prabhakaran will not permit any Sinhala leader to fool him. Taking the "Tiger" for a ride is the kind of risk that no insurance company will underwrite. As for Mr. Dissanayake he cannot rely on a strident Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism, the first, not the last, refuge of the Sinhalese politician, in opposition. As the proud co-author of the Indo-Sri Lankan "Peace Accord" it is no credible option for Mr. Dissanayake. □

Airbus probe

The government has appointed a former Supreme Court judge to investigate the purchase of five aircrafts worth \$ 643m (£ 407m) by Air Lanka, from Airbus Industrie, the European aircraft maker.

Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunge, the prime minister who took office a month ago, has asked Mr O M Seneviratne to head a commission of inquiry into the contract, which was signed in August 1991, under the rule of the previous United National Party government.

The purchase has been criticised for being secretive and too costly.

The contract is the largest of several transactions involving foreign companies which are being investigated after widespread allegations of financial irregularities.

Allegations of irregularities by members of the UNP government, which held power for 17 years until its general election defeat last month, played a big role in the election.

Mrs Kumaratunge's victory was due partly to her promises to root out corruption.

Air Lanka originally contracted to buy five Airbus A 340-300 jets — three to be delivered in 1994 and 1995, and two for delivery in 1998 and 1999. The orders were placed amid controversy in Sri Lanka about whether scarce foreign exchange

should be spent on the aircraft.

Whatever the inquiry finds, the newly elected government would find it costly to scrap the contracts because Air Lanka has paid a pre-delivery deposit of \$ 74m.

BRIEFLY...

Human Rights bills

Two Human Rights bills were presented in parliament by the People's Alliance government. One was to make torture a jailable offence (seven to ten years and Rs 10,000 to 50,000 fine); the other was to presume a missing person dead after one year and issue a death certificate, after due inquiry.

These pieces of legislation are expected to meet Sri Lanka's international obligations in this field vis-a-vis the UN.

New BOI projects

The Board of Investment of Sri Lanka has signed six new projects with foreign collaborators since the PA government took office. They total an investment of Rs 288 million. The products will range from prawn culture to shoe making.

Ashraff serves notice

Mr Ashraff, the Muslim Congress leader, has complained of neglect. The seven MPs of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress/SLMC are the contingent that gives the People's Alliance (PA) the slender majority to form the government.

Mr Ashraff has complained, in effect, that his party is taken for granted, and that certain promises held out by the PA leadership before the General Elections have not been fulfilled. The portfolio of Muslim Religious Affairs, it is reported, has been specifically mentioned. Mr Ashraff, a cabinet minister himself (Ports, Shipping and Rehabilitation) has reportedly told the Prime Minister that the SLMC may have to reconsider its continued support of the PA Government if more reciprocal support was not forthcoming.

Two plots

A DIG (Deputy Inspector General of Police) has told the President that the

National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) has bared a Tiger (LTTE) plot to assassinate UNP presidential candidate Gamini Dissanayake in presumably for his advocacy of Indian assistance to deal with the LTTE.

Meanwhile, a JVP (People's Liberation Front) faction led by Dr Subash Chandra Fernando, brother-in-law of slain leader Rohana Wijeweera, has told the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) that another faction of the JVP, which has its leader living abroad, is plotting to kill both Prime Minister Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge, and himself.

Thondaman on CWC's role

Plantation Union boss Saumyamurti Thondaman who controls a sizeable vote bank told a *Sunday Leader* interviewer that the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) was "only a trade union" and he only a trade unionist, not a politician. The role of the CWC was the welfare of its membership, and he had devoted half a century of his life to that mission, Mr Thondaman (81), a cabinet minister for seventeen years in the former UNP government, said.

The interviewer asked him: Are your efforts to stay neutral (now) an attempt to keep the PA (government) happy? He said: I am not here to make anybody happy except the plantation sector. I am here only to make my people in the plantation sector happy. I have been doing the same thing in the past even under the UNP government and I will continue to do so.

The pragmatic Mr Thondaman said that he would have to maintain a good relationship with the ruling party.

The Eelam Struggle

Challenges and Prospects

Sumantra Bose

The idea of Eelam has taken firm roots in the Tamil consciousness. What might yet convince the alienated Tamil population that they have a future within an united Sri Lanka is the reconstitution of Sri Lanka as a highly decentralised multinational state of Sinhalese, Tamil and possibly, Muslims which would entail major institutional restructuring of the state.

A Sinhalese prime minister speaks of rebuilding Sri Lanka as "a country where people can live without fear, a vibrant living democracy of new systems and new institutions". On her new approach to the Tamil question, an aide reveals that Chandrika Kumaratunga was "deeply influenced by her student days at the Sorbonne in the 1960s, where she studied the history of France's colonial war in Algeria and learned the futility of confronting a popular liberation struggle with force". In an unusually effusive response, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's (LTTE) international secretariat in London declares that the Tigers would be "very, very willing and pleased to talk to Chandrika and have a negotiated settlement". Days later, the movements ideologue, Anton Balasingham, confirms this position from Jaffna; significantly, his remarks are given wide publicity in the (LTTE-controlled) Jaffna press. Travellers to the south from LTTE-held territory report seeing Tiger posters announcing readiness for a ceasefire. Finally, Velupillai Prabhakaran, in a rare public statement, reiterates willingness to engage in unconditional dialogue.

After South Africa, Palestine, and now Ireland, is it finally Sri Lanka's turn for peace?

There is a definite basis for cautious and qualified optimism in the recent political developments and that itself is a historic occurrence by Sri Lankan standards. It is well to remember that had the United National Party (UNP) been returned to power, Sri Lanka would probably be making news today for an entirely different reason: the futile bloodbath caused by a government offensive against the north. Peace is finally visible on the horizon, but much remains to be done if its appearance is not to go down in history as a mirage. A glimmer of hope has finally appeared at the end of a very long and dark tunnel, yet that tunnel will still have to be traversed before the hope is actualised as reality. Very formidable obstacles remain to a just and lasting peace, as quickly revealed by the fact that Kumaratunga was only able to effect a partial lifting of the cruel and counter-productive economic blockade against the north. The Tigers' response,

the release of a mere 10 prisoners of war, was equally and calculatedly partial: a total dismantling of the embargo would probably have led to the freeing of a far more sizeable number (perhaps almost all) of Sinhalese POWs in Tiger custody.

What measures and decisions need to be taken to permanently end the civil war and what are the major problems and challenges that must be overcome in the process? The fundamental fact to recognise is that the conflict can only be resolved, short of secession and the formation of an independent Tamil entity, by a radical and comprehensive restructuring and reconstitution of the Sri Lankan state. Attempts to substitute such a far-reaching systemic transformation with cosmetic changes or superficial reforms will not only not work, but will be a waste of time for all concerned.

What might this mean in practical terms? The four-point Tamil charter of self-determination, issued at Thimphu in 1985, demanded that Sri Lankan Tamils be recognised as a distinct nationality; that the north and east be recognised as the historical homeland of that nationality; and that the Tamils' right to self-determination (left deliberately undefined and implicitly, open to negotiation) be acknowledged. For the very first time, we have a top Sinhalese leader, in office, with the will and vision to not dismiss this charter out of hand, but rather accept it as a legitimate basis for negotiations. Her biggest advantage is that the majority of Sinhalese public opinion is clearly in favour of a negotiated settlement. The 1994 election is the first since 1956 in which anti-Tamil 'competitive chauvinism' did not come into play, because the leader of one of the two major Sinhalese political formations finally found the courage to refuse to engage in that odious game. Even a few years ago, courting the Sinhalese vote on a platform that called for direct, unconditional talks with the LTTE leadership (as Kumaratunga did) would have been an invitation to political suicide. This time, exhausted with an unwinnable, prohibitively expensive war that has brought death, destruction and misery throughout the island (not just the Tamil areas) and corrupted and crimi-

nalised Sri Lanka's democratic fabric, a large chunk of the Sinhalese electorate rejected the parasitic chauvinists and warmongers, and their bankrupt fantasy of a 'military solution'.

In acting on this mandate for peace and reconciliation, Kumaratunga must keep in mind not just the constraints within Sinhalese politics that limit her room for manoeuvre (on which more later), but also that the LTTE leadership will, by and large, be negotiating from a position of relative strength. The Tigers have proved to be an extraordinarily formidable and resilient organisation over the past decade. Today, they control some 85 per cent of the north (including the entire Jaffna peninsula), where they have established a *de facto* state with its own police force, judiciary, taxation structure, education department, transportation system and information and broadcasting networks. They have also consolidated significant popular legitimacy by aggressively opposing various social ills and inequities, such as caste oppression and the subordination of women. Even if the Sinhalese armed forces were to retake this territory (which is doubtful), the Tigers always have the option of reverting to the underground guerrilla warfare they waged with such deadly efficiency against the Indian army between 1987 and 1990 (not to mention devastating suicide-attacks in Colombo and other Sinhalese-majority cities). The capacity of the fanatical youth mobilised by LTTE to fight on regardless of punitive costs has repeatedly been demonstrated. In the eastern province, too, the Tigers remain a menacing presence; they are still entrenched there in forested and rural areas. Effective Tamil opposition to the LTTE remains almost non-existent, not just because of the Tigers' ruthless intolerance of political opponents but also because a sorry record of criminality, 'collaboration' and opportunism has debased the anti-LTTE groups in the eyes of the Tamil population. As an 'Indian Peace-Keeping Force' (IPKF) general found in Jaffna, "Eelam had taken firm root as an idea and the LTTE was firmly established in the consciousness of the Tamils... [as their] sole saviour, fighter, hero and representative".

At the same time, the Tigers simply cannot hope to achieve Tamil self-determination through military means alone. The absence of international recognition ensures that 'Tamil Eelam' will remain a juridical non-entity for the foreseeable future. And it is questionable whether an economically decimated Tamil society can sustain an extremely protracted and painful war of attrition indefinitely, at least without losing enthusiasm for the political cause. The LTTE's positive initial response to the new prime minister's overtures indicates that Tiger leaders are not unaware of these constraints and dilemmas. Conversations with LTTE activists based in the west also indicate that the Tigers have considerable faith in Kumaratunga personally, though they remain deeply sceptical of the People's Alliance, which contains many Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and nominally 'leftist' elements with a history of anti-Tamil politics.

Core Issue

What, then, is to be done? The core issue in this conflict is the political empowerment of the Tamil people who live in the north and east of Sri Lanka. Piecemeal 'concessions', and the like, can never address this problem, especially in the extreme circumstances that have come to prevail. What might yet convince the alienated Tamil population that they have a future within an united Sri Lanka is the reconstitution of Sri Lanka as a highly decentralised, multinational state (of Sinhalese, Tamils and possibly Muslims). This would of course entail major institutional restructuring. At the broadest level, it would mean the federalisation or perhaps even confederalisation of Sri Lanka. More specifically, it would necessitate the permanent administrative unification of the northern and eastern provinces under the title of 'Tamil Autonomous Region, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka', or some roughly similar designation. The concept of 'homeland' is certainly problematic, but the practical problems can be minimised by introducing effective institutional safeguards for the rights of the one-quarter of the northeast population that is not Tamil. These are mostly Muslims and autonomous cantonal or municipal assemblies in predominantly Muslim pockets within the region (in Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Amparai districts in the east, Mannar in the north) is one possibility to explore. At any rate, a peaceably negotiated resolution involving Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim representatives would greatly enhance the prospect that minorities, be they Muslims or Sinhalese in the Tamil-majority areas or the significant Tamil community in Colombo, are treated with equality and respect. An at least partial dismantling of recent government-sponsored Sinhalese settlements in the

north-east (under controversial 'colonisation' schemes) would also probably be unavoidable. The Autonomous Region would encompass the entire north, which has an overwhelming Tamil majority, and the eastern districts with the possible exception of Amparai, where Tamils are only 20 per cent of the population. Trincomalee harbour, the prize of the east coast, could be declared a 'free port', to which the Sinhalese authorities and people would enjoy equal and unimpeded access. A recent precedent exists in the Horn of Africa, where newly sovereign Eritrea has guaranteed the Ethiopians access to its Red Sea ports.

The region would be governed by an entity that might be called something approximating Tamil National Authority, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. This authority would enjoy jurisdiction on all matters except those vested in the central government under the federal or confederal model. Even in Sri Lanka, there are important historical precedents for this, in the form of (sadly unimplemented) proposals for wideranging, substantive devolution of power. As early as 1928, the British-appointed Donoughmore Commission urged that provincial councils be formed in Ceylon, with powers of direct taxation (to supplement revenue provided by the centre) and wide responsibility over a variety of subjects including "public works and communications, irrigation and agriculture, medical and sanitary services, education and finance, and general administration". In 1957-58, a famous pact concluded between Kumaratunga's father, prime minister Solomon Bandaranaike, and the Tamil federalist leader S J V Chelvanayakam would, if implemented, have federalised Ceylon and possibly averted the later catastrophe.

This agreement, abrogated by Bandaranaike amidst hysterical opposition from the Buddhist clergy and UNP politicians like J R Jayewardene, would have recognised Tamil as the language of administration throughout the north-east and devolved powers to autonomous Tamil authorities in numerous fields including agriculture, cooperatives, land settlement and development, education, health, industries, fisheries, housing and social services, electricity, irrigation schemes and roads. It would also have given the Tamil authorities the right to tax and borrow independently. In 1965, yet another important (and unimplemented) accord was reached between Sinhalese and Tamil leaders on the sensitive issue of 'colonisation'. This stipulated that land grants in the north-east would be made, firstly, to local landless persons, regardless of ethnicity; secondly, to Tamil speakers resident in the north-east; and

thirdly, to other citizens of Ceylon, with preference given to Tamil citizens living elsewhere on the island. Many prescriptive aspects of these abortive agreements remain relevant to devising and implementing a viable solution today.

Under the federal or confederal formula, jurisdiction over foreign policy, defence and currency and communications typically remain with the central government. This should be generally applicable to Sri Lanka, with one important qualification. The paramount concern of the Tamil population in the north-east is physical safety and security, above all from the depredations of the Sinhalese armed forces, police and paramilitaries. It is thus unacceptable to them that the Colombo government retains (or rather, given the context, regains) exclusive control over police and military power. This contentious issue will have to be thrashed out across the table. Demilitarisation is an essential and most desirable objective, but it has to be gradual and mutual. Demanding that the LTTE surrender its weapons in the absence of a comprehensive settlement voluntarily concluded between the warring parties and without a corresponding reduction in the bloated government forces, will simply not work (this was among the fatal flaws of the Indo-Sri Lanka accord of 1987). During a putative transition phase, one idea might be to withdraw regular troops (on both sides) to barracks, and set up police forces in the war-zones whose composition more-or-less reflects the ethnic make-up of the local population. This might satisfy the security concerns of Muslim and Sinhalese residents of the north-east, in addition to Tamils. Once a lasting peace has been reached, large-scale bilateral dismantling of redundant military forces, and perhaps, absorption of some LTTE units into a much smaller army under joint Sinhalese and Tamil command should not be a problem.

But the most powerful long-term unifying force between Sinhalese and Tamils is likely to be the imperative to economic co-operation, trade and exchange. The north needs resources and products from the south, the LTTE's vigorous efforts to beat the blockade by building indigenous factories for essentials notwithstanding. Tamil farmers and fisherfolk in the north and east need the south's markets, in addition to their own, for their catch and produce, and the Tamil middle class in Jaffna needs access to higher education and professional employment opportunities in the rest of the island. A leading Sinhalese economist, who is a former director-general of the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), has recently commented that the Sri Lankan economy as a whole will not be able to achieve optimal growth

unless the civil war is politically resolved soon. There is thus a compelling case for an integrated (as opposed to centralised) Sri Lankan economy, and this imperative is likely to counteract any lingering 'separatist' tendencies.

Other innovative political structures can be created to strengthen a voluntary, consensual unity built from below. For example, the presently uni-cameral Sri Lankan parliament, elected on the basis of one-person, one-vote and a diluted proportional-representation system, can be expanded into a bi-cameral institution. An upper chamber, called House of Nations or House of the Peoples, might be constituted, with equal representation from the Sinhalese, Tamil and possibly Muslim communities. This house might be specifically charged with mediating and arbitrating any intercommunity and inter regional disputes, and vested with the authority to accept or reject any proposals to change the (con)federal constitution of the state. Numerous constitutional precedents exist in multinational states worldwide. And, acting on a Donoughmore recommendation of 1928, this parliament could convene not just in Colombo, but periodically also in Jaffna. Additionally, it could be constitutionally mandated that if the prime minister is Sinhalese, the president must be Tamil, and vice versa (in practice, the executive post would typically be filled by a Sinhalese).

Peace Bandwagon

Obviously, even the partial realisation of such an ideological and institutional transformation presupposes a process of protracted and quite possibly tortuous dialogue and negotiations. Instant fixes are clearly impossible, and there would be many pitfalls and ambushes along the route. Initiation of meaningful dialogue presumes not just a ceasefire but a more permanent cessation of hostilities. Even this will not be easy. Over the years, a particularly belligerent and blood-thirsty element has grown within the officer corps of the Sinhalese army, navy and air force. The rank-and-file, often recruited from the poorer sections of Sinhalese society, are, by comparison, increasingly motivated to join by the carrot of economic incentives, rather than 'patriotism': this partly explains their poor performance against the Tigers. But many officers have a vested interest in perpetuating the war, to which they owe every thing from public importance to economic affluence (the latter frequently through various forms of war-related profiteering and corruption).

Many of these hardline elements were in the forefront of the campaign to exterminate the Sinhalese ultranationalist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP; People's

Liberation Front) a few years ago, and are greatly frustrated by lack of similar success against the demonised LTTE. They will probably find allies among ultrachauvinist Buddhist clergymen, corrupt bureaucrats, and most dangerously, the Sinhalese political establishment, especially the UNP old-guard. Recall that a year ago, septuagenarian UNP president Wijetunga proclaimed that no ethnic problem (just a 'terrorist' one) existed in Sri Lanka, and ordered the armed forces' command to retake Jaffna militarily. The likes of Wijetunga and his adviser, the octogenarian J R Jayewardene, are understandably apprehensive that a just and peaceful resolution to the crisis will consign them, and the policies they pursued and the politics they represented, to the dustbin of history. Though temporarily sulking and defensive, this cabal is far from spent, and their mischief-making potential should not be underestimated. Recent attacks (usually against civilian targets) by the armed forces in the north seem designed to provoke largescale LTTE retaliation, which would vitiate the climate for negotiations. But the prime minister has done well in choosing Lionel Fernando, a respected non-chauvinist Sinhalese bureaucrat, as her preliminary envoy to Jaffna. There are even rumours that disgruntled UNP parliamentarians close to the slain Ranasinghe Premadasa might desert their party and join the peace bandwagon, if it takes off.

More immediately, Kumaratunga is hamstrung by her wafer-thin working majority in parliament, and by her limited powers under a predominantly presidential system of government. Though committed to abolishing the presidential executive, she might need to run for and win that office in the immediate future in order to consolidate her authority. Moreover, even minor amendments to the constitution require a two-thirds parliamentary majority, not likely to materialise in the present parliament. Thus, a new parliament, based on a realignment of political forces and a clearcut peace agenda may be necessary to advance the peace process.

It would also be unfortunate if the prime minister were to allow the minor Tamil groups that are supporting her primarily for partisan reasons to impede her dealings with the LTTE. The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, her main ally, deserves to be taken more seriously, especially because almost 20 per cent of the north-east population (and a full third in the eastern province) is Muslim. The SLMC seems to have realised that Muslim refugees from the east and north can only return to their homes in security after a rapprochement with the Tamil insurgency.

On the Tamil side, it is far from certain that the LTTE leadership and its militant

following, brutalised by years of violence, have the maturity, wisdom and patience for a lengthy dialogue. The moderating influence of Sathashivam Krishnakumar (Kittu), the LTTE leader killed by Indian forces in January 1993, may be sorely missed. Yet the Tigers too have compelling pragmatic motives to accept a just political solution. Prabhakaran has already established himself as one of the great military leaders of the 20th century. It remains to be seen whether he can discover the capacity to emulate some figures he admires (like Mandela and Arafat) in making peace. The LTTE also needs to explicitly recognise that its one-party dominance in Tamil politics cannot be sustained, except through sheer force, in the longer term.

The post-cold war international climate is conducive to a negotiated peace in Sri Lanka. The US government has expressed the hope that the new forces in Sinhalese politics will 'aggressively' seek peace with the Tamil rebels, opined that this can be done "only by devising ways to devolve power", and rejected the 'terrorism' hypothesis and its concomitant, the 'military solution'. Western aid would be important in rehabilitating the hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced people (the vast majority of whom are Tamils but also including many Muslims and some Sinhalese), and in rebuilding infrastructure in the north-east destroyed by war. Chandrika Kumaratunga has spoken of how "what has been possible in South Africa and between the Israelis and Palestinians" has given her renewed hope. If she survives physically, it is not inconceivable that she may be able to end a conflict her father and mother did so much to create and exacerbate. With her personal history of pain and loss, she can empathise with the suffering of the countless thousands of war widows and orphans in the north-east and indeed, elsewhere in Sri Lanka. The government of India, whose clumsy, contradictory and self-serving policies have had an extremely baneful effect on this conflict in the past, can make a constructive contribution by staying aloof and not hindering any peace process. A positive outcome on the fractured island would create a remarkable precedent for a subcontinent riven by ethnic conflicts. If the opportunity is squandered, a relapse into massive violence is all but certain. Can Kumaratunga and Prabhakaran rise to the challenge?

[For a comprehensive discussion of and theoretical and comparative perspective on the Sri Lankan conflict, see Sumantra Bose, *States, Nations, Sovereignty: Sri Lanka, India and the Tamil Eelam Movement*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, CA and London, 1994.]

(Courtesy E.P.W.)

Yeltsin's call for peace

In the year of 1995 the whole mankind will observe the 50th Anniversary of the end of World War II. The defeat of fascism signified a great victory of the forces of good over the forces of evil. But the victory was won at a high price. The war took more than fifty million lives. Hundreds of thousands of settlements have been razed to the ground. Hundreds of millions people had become homeless and without means of subsistence.

There is no a single family in Russia which didn't suffer from the flames of war. Our anguish and grief are endless, and the sorrow of soldiers' widows is inconsolable. The tragedy of war and the happiness of victory will for ever remain in the people's memory.

The significance of the great victory, won by joint efforts of peoples of different countries can not be diminished even by the time passed. One of its main lessons: to defend peace the united, concerted and active actions of all peace-loving forces are needed. It is especially important now, when there still exist a possibility of military confrontation between states, when blood is continuing to flow in civil, interethnic and local conflicts, when the danger of spreading of mass destruction weapons is increasing.

Russia is of the view that general interests of mankind demand an active work to strengthen the role and effectiveness of the UN organization, as the central element of the system of collective security, in realisation of the high goal proclaimed in its Charter — "to save future generations from calamities of war."

Our people, who carried on their shoulders the main burden of the World War II and sacrificed the lives of tens of millions of their sons and daughters for the victory, consistently stand against the settlement of disputes by the force of weapons. We are confident, that there are no goals that could be justified by unleashing of a war. Preservation of peace is the highest goal our State.

The Russian Federation appeals to all member-states of the United Nations, their Parliaments and Governments to do

everything possible to cease existing armed conflicts and to prevent new ones.

In the memory of millions of people perished in the flames of the World War II we suggest to mark widely and solemnly under the aegis of the UN the 50th Anniversary of the Victory over fascism and to declare the year of 1995 as the "Universal

year of people's memory of victims of the World War II."

Let the 50th Anniversary of the Great Victory give new strong impetus to the safeguarding and preserving of peace. Mankind must finish the XX century and enter the new millenium with confidence in its future.

The Scholar's Tale

Part 19

*And so the Junior Caesars multiplied
Taking up Julius' method but not his side
All tucked their togas to their wobbly knees
They cried War while Julius wheezed for Peace.*

*With the legions barrack shunted to their huts
The patriots rag-tag wielded Clubs and Butts
Each alone with illusions that were Grand
Unwittingly propelled by an Unseen hand.*

*Each puppet played his part in the Unfolding plot
That climaxed as the Vice roy ducked the butt
In cog wheels within Imperial chariot wheels
Our Vizier scented Destiny at his heels*

*So did others, each pliant to his own Fantasy
Writ by the Moving Finger, each did not see
While the Rag-tag shadow boxed the Cholan host
Duttu Gemunu lobbed a grenade over Kotte's moat*

*Though History fumbled with its butt and grenade
The grand Vizier book the Salute at the Parade
Hosts of High Priests sang him to his Throne
Sprinkled with Scripture from his skin to bone*

*Carried in the high tide of Revolution
Revolution by hired assassination
Unorthodox and distinctly Unproletarian
The Vizier was thrust on the Nation*

*Homing in on a Franchise of Terror
The Coronation was somewhat an error
But the Constitution hastily guaranteed
What the Old Caliph with his amendments had waranteed*

*And thus His Excellency Emeritus
Devolved power to dynasty Demeritus.*

U. Karunatilake

Sinhala Buddhist Womanhood

Kumari Jayawardena

Issues of gender, ethnicity, religion and class have figured as topics of significant research in Sri Lanka in recent years. Some connections have been established between religio-ethnic issues and class consciousness, with gender in these cases being ignored or treated as peripheral. Research has also been done on women within categories based on class or ethnic origin, which includes the writings on women workers in the Free Trade Zone or on Tamil plantation women. There remains, however, an important area that has yet to be adequately researched, namely, the multiple and interactive constructions of gender in movements based on religious and ethnic identity as they evolve over time.

Gender can be viewed as a core elements of the ethnic issue. Women are the reproducers of the members of the ethnic group and, hence, control of female sexuality and of reproductive functions becomes a key material and ideological issue. The purity and chastity of women have to be ensured so that the group is not polluted by admixtures from outside; religious and social sanctions are used for this purpose. Campaigns for more children are projected as the "duty" of women to the ethnic community so that it is not "swamped" by other antagonistic groups; in this context, birth control, sterilization or abortion, which put the control of reproduction in the hands of women, are often seen as conspiracies by rival ethnic groups. Women also have a clearly specific task as cultural carriers, signalling ethnicity through dress, ornaments, and modes of behaviour; they play a far more significant role in this respect than men. Women are, in addition, the reproducers of culture and the socializers of the young into an awareness of ethnic and religious identity and of the rituals of the group.

Women thus determine, both biologically and symbolically, the boundaries of the ethnic group. It is true that women within the ethnic group are segmented in various ways and that they will participate in the religious and ethnic processes differently as determined by their class, age or status in the family (Anthias and Davis, 1983). Yet what is crucial is that the ethnic identity of each group is frequently expressed in terms of its womanhood and its vision of the ideal woman. She symbolizes the purity, continuity and exclusivity of the

ethnic group and is therefore central to ethnic discourse.

In many Asian countries, the years of nationalist awakening and of resistance to colonialism brought the issues of both women's emancipation and motherhood to the fore. The identification of motherhood and the motherland also indicated the various ways in which gender became symbolically interwoven with nationalist discourse. But many nationalists and revolutionaries — as, for example, Sun Yat Sen, Nehru, Mao Ze Dong, Kemal Ataturk, Sukarno and Ho Chi Minh — believed that the struggle for independence also involved the modernisation of society, the elevation of the status of women, and the elimination of obscurantist and retrograde practices based on old religious and social traditions. Their message was clear: Women had to be educated, had to come out of their houses into schools, universities, factories and offices, and had to be an integral part of the struggle for national liberation and social change (Jayawardena, 1986).

This momentum, however, did not survive in the post-independence period. The discourse of national liberation against alien rule usually united different ethnic groups and the freedom and equality of women figured prominently in such struggles. This must be sharply distinguished from the fragmented nationalist discourses based on assertions of religious or ethnic identity. These movements are chauvinist, fundamentalist and often antagonistic to each other; a significant aspect of their mobilization is the way in which they have brought women within their compass as upholders of cultural and religious identities and as the progenitors of a pure unpolluted community through their roles as good wives and mothers.

Since gender and ethnicity are closely linked, I argue that control is most specifically seen in the case of women of child-bearing age whose tasks are to reproduce the ethnic group and socialize children into their ethnic roles. The process of control starts from puberty and a girl's first menstruation signals the event. She has grown up; she can be sexually active and get married and have children. She can be a great asset and prize to the community if her virginity and chastity are ensured, if she is married to a carefully selected partner and produces and brings up the next generation according to the demands of law and social custom. On the other hand, she also personifies a threat of disorder to the ethnic group is

she disobeys the tradition; she will then risk 'going astray' and shame the community by producing children of mixed ethnicity who will defile the purity of the ethnic group. After menopause, women are of less concern, and while they are expected to assume the role of the 'good' grandmother, they have some space and mobility denied to younger women.

This paper will consider some implications for gender of the assertion of a separate identity by the Sinhala Buddhist majority in Sri Lanka from the late nineteenth century, paying attention, at the ideological level, to the devising of controls of women during the age of reproduction, and the type of freedom allowed to those who have passed this age.

Gender and the Sinhala Buddhist Revival

The peopling of Sri Lanka has been a process marked by numerous migrations from the Indian subcontinent and also by trade connections with the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Sri Lanka came under the rule of several European colonial powers from 1505 to 1948. As a result, Sri Lankan society today is multiethnic and multireligious. Ethnically, according to the census of 1981, the Sinhalese formed the majority, with 74 percent of the population of 15 million. Tamils comprised 18.2 percent of which 12.6 percent were Sri Lankan Tamils and 5.6 percent were Tamils of more recent Indian origin. Muslims formed 7.4 percent, and there are very small communities of Malays, Burghers and Eurasians. The religious affiliations of Sri Lankans, according to the 1981 census, indicated that Buddhists were 67 percent, Hindus 18 percent, Muslims 7 percent and Christians 8 percent of the population.

In the course of interaction in the historical past and particularly during the colonial period, these different ethnic groups have developed their own assertions of identity, bolstered by their own myths of the purity of their origin. Religion has also entered into the assertion of identity because Sinhala was largely congruent with Buddhist and Tamil with Hindu. The Sinhalese and the Tamils, the two largest groups, were also divided within themselves on the basis of a hierarchically-defined caste structure; the ethnic assertions have, however, been strong enough to weld the various castes into cohesive ethnic blocs.

The Buddhist revival began in the second half of the nineteenth century with

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a movement of monks and lay people to restore the religion, purify religious practices, reform the clergy and give the Sinhala Buddhists a sense of religious and ethnic identity. The lay Buddhists concerned included a section of the bourgeoisie and the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie of school teachers, journalists, clerks, traders and small commodity producers. Their main task was to challenge the dominance of Christianity and the hold the missionaries had over education. Support and inspiration for this project came from free thinkers in Britain, and from the Theosophical Society formed in 1875 by Helena Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott. The construction of Sinhala Buddhist identity stressed the unity and indivisibility of the island and claimed that the Sinhala people had been chosen for the mission of upholding and protecting the religion of Theravada Buddhism within it. It thus involved the assertion of Sinhala Buddhist hegemony over the minority ethnic groups.

While the processes of economic transformation through a plantation economy set in motion by the British in the nineteenth century had brought into being new classes, the national awareness that subsequently developed was in part fuelled by the desire of the emergent bourgeoisie to participate more fully in economic and political processes; but its very composition — traders, plantation owners and liquor merchants — and its close links with an agrarian society of small producers, prevented it from developing an ideology that was secular, rational and strongly assertive of bourgeois values. In the absence of a powerful modernizing ideology that could have united classes across ethnic confines, the nationalist revival took on an ethnic and religious form. Even the constitutional agitation for political reforms could not compel the ethnic groups to submerge their specific identities for the evolution of a national consciousness during colonial rule.

The issue of women's emancipation did not figure prominently in the nationalist discourse in Sri Lanka in its early stages at the turn of the century. In fact, some leaders of the Buddhist revival laid down conservative codes of behaviour and dress for their women, also urging them to reject the modernizing processes that had begun to affect the status of women. The distorted Sinhala nationalism of Sri Lanka thus combined ethnic and religious chauvinism against the minorities with chauvinism against women; this was in contrast (as mentioned earlier) to the nationalism of many other Asian countries that attempted to include women as well as minority groups in their agenda for national liberation. When Sinhala Buddhists began to assert an exclusive ethnic identity and also to assert themse-

lves (in gender terms) as *sons of the soil*, minority groups as well as the *daughters of the soil* were pushed into a space determined for them by the men of the majority group. Minorities were downgraded as aliens, who were then defined as members of an anti-national conspiracy; similarly, an attempt was made to confine Sinhala women to a narrow and strictly defined role. These two tasks — of subordinating minorities and women — were assumed by the intelligentsia of the Sinhala Buddhist revival in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

One of the foundations of Sinhala-Buddhist consciousness formulated during this period was the myth of Aryan origin. The word *Arya* was familiar in Sinhala discourse and meant that which was noble or honourable; monks who had renounced lay life were, for example, described as *Arya*. This word was given a new meaning when intellectuals in India and Sri Lanka accepted in toto the notions of Western orientalist who had deduced, on the basis of links between Sanskrit and the European languages, the existence of a common original language and of a common Aryan race. Though the notion of a common race was later repudiated by most of them, including Max Muller, its original proponent, the myth of Aryan descent continued to hold sway; in Sri Lanka, the myth confirmed the superiority of the Sinhala people, who were said to be the descendants of immigrants from Bengal, over the Tamils who were said to be of inferior Dravidian origin.

The construction, within this framework, of a specifically Aryan Sinhala Buddhist woman pervades the Buddhist revivalist debate, the early nationalist discourse and the writings of Sinhala novelists and poets. The correct way a Sinhala Buddhist wife/mother should behave, dress and conduct herself in society was categorically defined. Women followers of the Buddha and the queens and heroines of early Sri Lankan history were projected in the nationalist press as role models. While being exhorted to follow the patterns of conduct laid down in the discourses of the Buddha, women were given the added roles of guardians of the Aryan Sinhala race and the inspirers of their men — dissuading them from alcohol, meat-eating, immorality and imitation of the despised foreigners. Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933), the most outspoken ideologue of the revival, visualised the Aryan wife and her family thus: "The Aryan husband trains his wife to take care of his parents and attend on holy men, on his friends and relations. The glory of woman is in her chastity, in the performance of her household duties and obedience to her husband. This is the Aryan ideal wife". (Guruge, 1965 a, p. 345).

The Christian and Burgher Female as "Other"

At the early stages of the Buddhist revival, in a context where Christianity was the religion of the "whites" and its proselytizing activities were defined as corruptive and supportive of imperialism, the Sinhala-Buddhist ideal of womanhood was advanced in contradistinction to an image of the Christian "Other". Dharmapala spoke of the whites as "a powerful race", but their behaviour was also characterised by wife-beating and the "promiscuous dancing of men and women regardless of the laws of decency", which were vestiges of their "primitive customs when they lived half-naked and painted their bodies" (Guruge 1965a: pp. 479-80). He also alleged that Christians indulged in "killing animals, stealing, prostitution, licentiousness, lying and drunkenness" (p.482). They were thus in clear violation of the five principal precepts of Buddhism. Even more important, practices such as these were pushing native males in the direction of miscegenation, which would pollute the pure ethnic community; it would also have effects reaching into the subsequent generations because an alien mother could not be expected to socialise her children into the culture of the community.

Dharmapala and the Buddhist revivalists expressed particular animosity against missionaries and the Christianization and westernisation of the students by European and Burgher teachers. The latter, being partly European and English speaking, were pioneers of the modernizing process, and from the mid-nineteenth century, dominated the teaching staff of girls' (English) schools; by the late nineteenth century, they had also become nurses and secretaries. The first women doctors on the island were Burghers who qualified in Scotland in the 1890s, thereby setting the pace for Sinhala and Tamil women students (Jayawardena, 1986, p.12).

Such westernization outraged the orthodox of all communities who felt that their women were losing all traditional virtues in the pursuit of Western ideals. Dharmapala warned that Sinhala Buddhist women of noble character were becoming rare because of Christian influences and marriages to Christians. Buddhist women, he said, had given up their pleasing Aryan names for those of the foreigners. And although the clothes worn by European women were offensive to the eye, women of the local bourgeoisie had taken to wearing ridiculous hats and stockings and dresses that exposed their legs (Guruge, 1965 b, pp. 77-94).

(To be continued)

Asian female leadership (exploring theories)

Linda K. Richter

"Leadership in politics is one of the least tractable topics that political scientists deal with".

Leadership studies have long attempted to explore the extent to which leadership is dictated by structure, culture, and overall environment and to what extent it is the product of individuals seizing the initiative and manipulating events. We have seen this debate most prominently in the discussions of Soviet leader Gorbachev. Are his meteoric rise in influence and the dramatic events in Eastern Europe and the USSR the result of the forceful imprint of one man's vision or is he riding a tiger he cannot control? Do events happen because he is pushing them along or because he is powerless to control them? Do we explain the leader as "one in charge or in command of others" in terms of "Great Men" or "Great Events"? Or in a more democratically organized society, is it enough to label as "leaders" those who "head a political party or organization"?²

John Gardner in his studies of leadership would argue not, as would many others whose books and articles have examined the concept³. A dictionary definition looks pallid and simplistic. Yet many studies of leadership also yield unsatisfactory definitions because they suffer from inadequate models. Most studies of leadership are based on particular western cultures. Most are not simultaneously concerned with gender, and most do not agree with each other except in the degree of complexity associated with the notion of leadership and the importance of the topic.

Thus, with regard to gender, it is worth exploring why countries so long associated with patriarchy and the subordination of women should be the focus for so many politically prominent females. This subject seemed particularly germane in 1990. At that point, there was every prospect that the most famous Asian female leaders might soon be gone from the political landscape: A pregnant Benazir Bhutto barely survived a vote of confidence in Pakistan in December, 1989 before being unceremoniously replaced by Pakistan's president in August, 1990. A charismatic Burmese expatriate, Aung San Suu Kyi

linguished under house arrest, ineligible to contest elections that she almost certainly would have won. Her party, despite her absence, won the elections, but it is unclear whether the military government will honor the results. And in the Philippines a beleaguered Corazon Aquino survived a sixth coup attempt against her, but only with U.S. air support.

The biographies of such women enrich our understanding of leadership, their lives pieces in a complex mosaic that refines but does not define the term "leadership". The experience of these and other politically prominent women offers empirical "reality checks" on theories of leadership derived almost exclusively from the experiences of men.

This is not to say that a gender-neutral exploration of leadership would not end up exploring the same variables or that there is necessarily a distinctive female, Asian, or Asian female pattern of leadership. However, there may well be historical, contextual and/or environmental parameters of leadership by women that need to be understood.

Thus this paper while recognizing that it is neglecting the insights of many scholars of leadership is studying only highly placed, *elected and appointed*, women in south and southeast Asian politics. Specifically, attention is concentrated on female prime ministers of Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, the current president of the Philippines and the female party leadership in Burma and Bangladesh. To a lesser extent, electoral data from Thailand, Vietnam, and India are also considered. Constraints of space and information, and lack of comparable systems and electoral data make systematic assessments and more precision impossible. It is also recognized that the occupation of lofty positions by women does not assure that they *lead* or that the people without institutional roles may not be more important leaders. This paper simply focuses on a more manageable group. In doing so, it (1) explores some of the key variables in the political prominence of Asian women and tries to see if any of these variables are distinctive to women; (2) assesses what, if any, advantages or disadvantages women have as women in leadership

roles in south and southeast Asia; (3) determines what impact, if any, women characteristically have as women in the politics of these regions; and (4) predicts the prospects for future female leadership in these regions.

Key variables in the rise of women to political leadership roles

The key variables operating when women have assumed roles of political leadership in south and southeast Asia are both similar and in some ways distinct from those variables in operation when women have assumed political leadership elsewhere. Selected for consideration and comparison are the ideology of patriarchy, familial ties, martyrdom, social class, female lifestyles, the historical context, prison experiences, and electoral arrangements. The ideology of patriarchy has had a decisive impact on the fate of women in most cultures around the globe and has tended to reinforce authoritarian values over democratic norms. Male dominance has been legitimated in law and custom. Politics or the public life of the polity has been presumed to be a natural sphere for men while for women, to the extent they had a space or turf to call their own, the "natural" sphere was presumed to be private. Different cultures or religions might base this division of roles on the "dirtiness or roughness of politics," "the toughness needed," or conversely the nobility of public service, the need for people (male) with a sense of "the big picture" as opposed to people (females) whose horizons and loyalties were "limited" to the family and clan. Thus, the private family role forced on most women formed part of the basis for making them "ineligible" for political roles.

Also, women in western countries during the postmonarchical era have, like women in Asia, been told politics would sully their purity and promote family discord. Yet, in south Asia women have traditionally been told that it is not their purity that is at stake so much as the family honor that might be compromised by their leading less restricted lives. In southeast Asia, however, women have known historically greater equality and somewhat more political roles in precolonial, pre-Islamic eras.

The impact of general gender-based public-private spheres, however, has been that women are accepted as behaving appropriately in politics when they are perceived as filling a political void created by the death or imprisonment of a male family member.

This has also been true in the United States. In fact, a very interesting article entitled "Over His Dead Body" chronicles the careers of female legislators in the U.S., most of whom from 1920 to 1970 had assumed political roles on the death of their husbands⁴. Indeed it was only in 1978 that a woman, Nancy Landon Kassebaum, who had not followed her spouse into politics, became the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate. Even in her case her father's fame as governor of Kansas and as 1936 GOP presidential contender against Franklin Roosevelt was a powerful aspect of her support⁵. Though women in most countries are making more independent bids for political office, characteristically they are most successful and uncontroversial the lower and closer to home the political bid. There are very few female top leaders without links to politically prominent male relatives⁶.

In south and southeast Asia those women most prominent since independence, Fatima Jinnah, Nusrat Bhutto and daughter Benazir are all close relatives of deceased leaders. Indira Gandhi and even her daughter-in-law Maneka Gandhi owe their initial political roles to key deceased males. Indira, of course, also benefited from her father Jawaharlal Nehru's foresight in launching the Kamaraj Plan⁷ — a party purge that eliminated virtually any independent power base that might challenge her ascendancy.

Maneka's efforts to pick up the political mantle of Indira's dead son, Sanjay, was complicated by his notoriety and the fact that his mother, Indira, was still very much on the political scene. Despite this, however, she has persisted and today enjoys the position of minister of state for environment⁸. Her 1989 campaign relied on tying her program to the imagery of the Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata*, dressing in saris that matched her party colors and maintaining "the perfect-image of a demure but determined widow"⁹.

In Bangladesh the leaders of the two major opposition parties owe their political prestige and following to assassinated relatives. Sheikh Hasina Wajed, the Awa-

mi League's heir, is the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founder and first prime minister of Bangladesh. Similarly Begum Khalida Zia, her bitter rival as leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, is the widow of President Ziaur Rahman who was assassinated in 1981¹⁰.

In Sri Lanka, Sirimavo Bandaranaike has twice led that country (from 1960 to 1965 and 1970 to 1977) following the 1959 assassination of her husband and was the first woman ever elected head of government in a democratic system¹¹.

In Burma, extraordinary political repression and economic and political decay has encouraged a mass following to develop around Aung San Sun Kyi, the daughter of assassinated nationalist leader, Aung San. Her situation is particularly unusual in that she has lived abroad most of her life and only happened to be in Burma in 1989 to care for her mother, who died later that year. Her following reflects not only her own considerable charisma but the fact that her long absence from Burma has left her untainted by the deterioration that resulted from decades of corrupt military rule. But although she leads a party she remains under house arrest, so her eventual role is still unclear¹².

The other major and current female political leader in Asia is President Corazon Aquino of the Philippines. As the widow of the martyred Benigno Aquino she too fits the prevailing pattern. Imelda Marcos who was mayor of metro Manila and minister of human settlements until her husband was overthrown in 1986 owed her claim to leadership to the authoritarian rule of her husband, President Ferdinand Marcos. She enjoyed political power while her husband was alive and had built a power base that would have made her a formidable contender for the presidency if he had died in office. Similarly, the Marcos daughters and sisters shared in the dynastic spoils of the Marcos dictatorship.

In south and southeast Asia, then, the most important political posts open to women have been so because of *familial* ties to prominent male politicians — the opportunity for such women having been greatly enhanced by their husbands' deaths and often dramatic *martyrdom*. This is in marked contrast to the political success of women like Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher and Golda Meir. Thus,

the apparent contradiction between the overall status of women in Asian societies and the startling prominence of a few is less attributable to their having surmounted formidable barriers than their proximity to established male power. That they, rather than other family members, assumed power and exercised it of course requires more specific answers. In most cases, they were the only person available in the family of the right age and ability to capitalize on their husband's legacy and/or martyrdom. Other explanations have been offered. The *social class* of most women leaders clearly identifies them as a part of the elite. While social class explains much about who holds political power in most societies, it is especially important for explaining female leadership roles in societies where the status of women is low as it is in south and southeast Asia. This is seen particularly in the political activities of many of the female members of former princely families. The Maharani of Jaipur, the Rajmata of Gwalior and the Begum of Bhopal are but three examples of women entering democratic politics after having built a base of traditional political loyalty as family members of leaders in the princely states of what is now India and Pakistan¹³.

(To be Continued)

Notes

1. Bryan Jones, *Leadership and Politics* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1989), p.3.
2. William Morris, ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973).
3. John W. Gardner, *Leadership: An Overview* (Washington, DC: Independent Sector, 1988).
4. Diane Kincaid, "Over His Dead Body: A Positive Perspective on Widows in the U.S. Congress," *Western Political Quarterly*, vol. 31 (March, 1978), pp. 96-104.
5. Linda K. Richter, "From School Board to Senate: The Political Career of Nancy Landon Kassebaum," in Frank P. LeVeness and Jane Sweeney, eds., *Women Leaders in Contemporary U.S. Politics* (Colorado: Reinner Press, 1987).
6. Antonia Fraser, *The Warrior Queens* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988).
7. Linda K. Richter, "The Kamaraj Plan," unpublished M.A. report (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1966).
8. *The Hindu*, 27 January 1990, p. 9.
9. *India Today*, 30 November 1989, P. 37.
10. *The New York Times*, 15 November 1987.
11. Craig Baxter et al., *Government and Politics in South Asia* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1987), p. 311.
12. Linda K. Richter, "Burma in 1989," *Encyclopedia Americana Yearbook* (Danbury, Conn: Grolier Incorporated, 1990), pp. 151-52.
13. William L. Richter, "Traditional Rulers in Post-Traditional Societies: The Princes of India and Pakistan," in Robin Jeffrey, ed., *People, Princes and Paramount Power* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 329-54.

India's Role

Narasimha Rao

I was not a little perplexed when I faced the task of drafting an address to this distinguished gathering on the "new relationship" India is forging with the Asia-Pacific. I suppose the connotation has something to do with the fact that in Asia, the industrial and technological revolution was heralded only late in this century, but the advances in development have been so rapid in the recent decades or even years that it would be fair to say that it is not the reality that is changing, but change which is becoming a reality.

So let us address this seeming paradox of the "new relationship". In 1941, just about two years before he died, the great Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore had this to say in his work, "The Crisis in Civilisation":

"I had at one time believed that the springs of Civilisation would issue out of the heart of Europe. But today when I am about to quit the world, that faith has gone bankrupt altogether... And yet I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in Man... I would rather look forward to the opening of a new chapter in his history, after the cataclysm is over and the atmosphere rendered clean with the spirit of service and sacrifice. Perhaps that dawn will come from this horizon, from the East where the sun rises".

After the cataclysm of the Second World War we have continued to see much turbulence through the period of the Cold War, which dominated political and strategic perceptions. By the end of that struggle, by 1992, Jane's Defence Weekly had identified a total of 73 hot-spots worldwide, including ongoing and potential conflicts.

Asia has had its share of troubles, apart from the continuing suffering and humiliation we had to put up with during the phase of our colonial history. Permit me another quote which reads as follows:

"But there is yet another spirit of Asia today. As we all know, Asia is no longer passive today; it had been passive enough in the past... It is no more a submissive Asia... It has tolerated submissiveness for so long. Asia of today is dynamic".

Mr. Chairman, these words were spoken by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru not far from here, at the Asian African Conference in Bandung in April 1955. It is remarkable how true and relevant these words are today.

We cannot ignore the fact that while the world has become a smaller place, thanks largely to the technologies of travel and telecommunications, the hiatus between regions, nations and even communities, may be said to have increased in one sense. If ideological rigidities have been jettisoned or at least largely muted, with the end of the Cold War by most of the contenders, new barriers are in evidence, in the form of tariff and non-tariff walls, immigration laws, cartelisation of technological capabilities to ensure domination over nations which are slightly behind in the race, and several other ingenious innovations. It seems, ironically, that man has changed everything except his own mind and proclivities. The reason, too, is not far to seek. It is much easier to change dead matter than to alter mental attitudes formed over many centuries, even millennia. In any event, while the effort to transform matter has been massive and continuous, a matching effort to adapt the human mind so as to be in tune with material changes has not been undertaken, except in a few awakened societies.

It takes a good deal of statesmanship to proceed on the path of nation-building on democratic lines while ensuring that the nation remains a worthy member of the international community. The problems are both endogenous and exogenous. In the first category fall:

- (i) **The massive challenges of development:** In cases such as India's, feeding, clothing and educating hundreds of millions whose eyes have still to adjust to the bright light of the twentieth century, and who are already being rushed into the mysterious twenty first;
- (ii) **The challenge to human values** thrown up everywhere by rapid changes. Prime Minister Goh alluded to this last month in his speech on Singapore's National Day when he stated, and I quote:

"But societies change. They change with affluence, with technology, with politics. Sometimes changes are for the better but sometimes changes make a society lose its vitality, its solidarity, make a people soft and decline..."

- (iii) **The emergence of an attitude** which seeks to define an individual's social, and increasingly political, identity more on ethnic, religious and sometimes geographical lines, with the pernicious motivation of organising forces for ostensibly economic, but in reality for political and even personal ends.

In the latter, exogenous category, some of the main elements which I could identify are:

- (i) The temptation, to which several political elites increasingly tend to succumb, of blaming their own internal problems, some of which I have just outlined, entirely on supposed events or attitudes abroad;
- (ii) Friction between cultures. Although I would not go so far as to subscribe to the thesis that we are seeing a clash between Western and non-Western civilisations, there are unmistakable "fault lines" in some parts of the world, which are still to be repaired. This could, and sometimes does, lead to the export and import of fundamentalism and the assertion that religion has some over-riding, trans-national and supra-sovereign validity. This dangerous theory needs to be contained effectively.
- (iii) The increasing tendency on the part of dominant powers today to assume that they can not only define the means, but even the ends, of collective international endeavour. This has been revealed to us in recent years in the form of intrusive prescriptions in the areas of social regulation, dissemination of knowledge, technological development and even domestic administration. The worst part of this tendency is that on closer scrutiny, it can be easily shown to

be based on unsympathetic half-knowledge, and not unoften even total ignorance.

- (iv) Worldwide criminal networks of drug smugglers, terrorists, money launderers and other such elements who have no stake in peace and real prosperity but manage to suborn Governments to ensure the furtherance of their own interests.

Mr. Chairman, I have dwelt at some length on these global issues before I come to the Asia-Pacific. This is because I sincerely believe that the nations that comprise the Asia-Pacific today must address these problems in their totality; because this region, if it can be referred to as a region, encompasses well over half the world's population and wealth, and is today a primary source of the dynamism that impels global activity.

The Asia-Pacific region is rather loosely defined, I understand. While organisations such as APEC and ARF have a membership based more or less on geographic criteria, there can be no gainsaying that political and economic imperatives have mainly contributed to the process of the coming together of these nation-states.

The constitution and the vitality of these fora speak well of the diplomatic and political maturity of the concerned Governments. The issues are formidable:

- interpretations of sovereignty, whether over the oceans, in outer space, over territory, resources etc;
- frictions arising out of differing cultural perceptions - as we witnessed in the case of Michael Fay;
- massive needs and demands of relatively underdeveloped populations and migratory tendencies, with no respect for national boundaries;
- confrontational postures on a broad range of fundamental issues related to trade barriers, currency stabilisation, international aid and investment flows;
- intensification of the debate over linkages between issues such as human rights, labour laws, environmental protection and resource management, liberal information flows etc. in political and economic relationships.

The Asia-Pacific region is fairly disparate in levels of economic development and physical size of the constituent States, as also in terms of political attitudes, given

the incredible racial, ethnic and religious diversity of its populations.

While India has been observing the Asia-Pacific drama objectively, we cannot ignore the fact that our civilisations are organically linked to those which have founded so many of the nation States of East and South East Asia. The evidence lies in the temples of Java, Indochina and Thailand, in the manifestations of the great religions of Buddhism and Hinduism that spread across this vast continent, and more aptly today, in the physical origin of ASEAN and other countries of the Asia-Pacific region. In these communities living here in peace with others, we have a true example of the Asian symbiosis.

But we must look beyond our own continent, and you have started doing so. With the organisational bonds you have established with Australia, New Zealand, Canada, USA and some of the Latin American countries, Asia has transcended the boundaries that were imposed by the Pacific. These boundaries were not merely physical but psychological and political. Enlightened leaderships of the region have realised that cooperation is fully compatible with healthy competition. If I may quote Pandit Nehru's Bandung speech again:

"We send out greetings to Australia and New Zealand. And indeed Australia and New Zealand are almost in our region... They are next to us and I should like indeed Australia and New Zealand to come nearer to Asia".

Mr. Chairman, I repeat, these words were spoken in 1955 by a man who almost had an intuition of the Asia-Pacific as it evolves today.

While in those days, the Cold War was at its peak, and therefore the superpowers were looked upon with some caution mixed with suspicion, it is gratifying to note that ASEAN can today speak from a position of strength at the same table with the US, Russia, China and Japan. The equations have indeed altered. While one cannot deny the overwhelming military superiority of the United States, one cannot ignore the significant military development of China, Japan and Australia. The stakes in the Asia-Pacific region are indeed high. They involve rights of passage through crucial waterways, security of navigation from piracy, claims over disputed lands, maritime zones and resources, and hostilities through history that have been defused but not dispelled.

Recently there have been attempts to

depict India along with China and Japan as a potential power which could fill the vacuum created by the withdrawal of the US with the end of the Cold War. This theory was partially rejected by American and South East Asian strategic thinkers and even in the Australian Senate report of 1991. George Tanham, in his essay titled "Indian Strategic Thought" prepared for the US Department of Defence in 1991 stated:

"India retains a long term unshakeable commitment to strategic independence and autonomy in its decision making and military capabilities, although its economic, industrial, and technological shortcomings continue to limit the success of such a strategic design..."

It is these shortcomings which we are striving to remove with single-minded attention.

India could well appear as a large enigma located between an interactive Asia-Pacific and the somewhat unclear West-Central Asian attempts at regional integration. This is understandable. But there is no cause whatever for the alarmist views propounded about India's alleged expansionist designs, or its blue water Navy; On any basis of rational and impartial comparison, it will be crystal clear that India has not coveted any land or other asset belonging to any other country, leave alone having any expansionist design through military might. Indeed India has been an oft-invaded land throughout history. I do not know what a Prime Minister should feel about this, but I am citing it as an undeniable fact.

In the first place, it is difficult to conceive of a navy that does not sail in blue waters, by any one's definition. I hardly need to describe in this gathering, the magnitude of India's territory; the distance of its island territories from the mainland; its maritime boundaries which are demarcated with those of ASEAN; and the enormous resource base which has to be protected, whether it be our fisheries, offshore oil and gas or even under-sea mineral deposits in the area we have been allotted in the Indian Ocean as pioneer investor recognised under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Any country's strategic policy can be analysed in terms of its interests, intentions and infrastructure. India's interests are patent. A careful study of the past 50 years will convince anyone that India has, in fact, been subjected to considerable burdens on account of migrations of populations, terrorist attacks, smuggling and so

on. Our interests lie in peace and harmony which will enable us to improve our standards of living. Our intentions are also evident from our recent policies, as also the fact that in terms of per capita expenditure and as a percentage of GDP, our defence expenditure is perhaps among the lowest of any country that maintains an armed capability even half our size. The Australian Senate Report of 1991 has also concluded that India does not have the capability of sustained force projection far beyond its boundaries; and capability reflects intention.

Having said this, I must add that, while India can be said to have been confined to its own strategic defence, this does not detract from its ability and willingness to exercise its role in global affairs. Our armed forces have participated in peace keeping operations from Cambodia to Congo, and have recently shed blood in Somalia. We have not shrunk from our commitment to the cause of global peace and we shall not do so in future. At the same time we do not accept any agenda that seeks peace at the cost of any country's self-respect. We are willing to contribute troops to a UN standby force but would reserve the right to object to the deployment of such forces under circumstances that would make such deployment look like that of an aggressor.

Mr. Chairman, I have only reiterated what I consider our firm policy. I also think that the Non-aligned Movement is fully relevant today except in the minds of those who see no self-respect in it and seek to predicate it only in terms of the existence of rival Blocs. In point of fact, however, its principles have not really been diluted by the recent strategic changes — we continue with the determination to decide our own destiny, independently according to our lights, and to ensure genuine international consensus on matters that concern the world community.

This view may be supported by some, rejected by others. Indeed the approach adopted in the ARF may well contribute to over-all regional security. For this to happen, however, there must be a through consensus among all the powers, big or small who have a stake. Security cannot be compartmentalised when the global reach of weapons, and the scope for rapid deployment of forces has increased to the point where the threat of armed intervention and conflict can never be ruled out, in any part of the world, and where the struggle for sovereignty over territory and resources is getting more and more acute.

Mr. Chairman, India's preoccupation with economic development and its determination to withstand the onslaught of inimical internal and external forces, have together wrought a political economy which has a self-respecting GDP and a technological base which is the envy of many other countries. But as the second most populous country in the world, India's special problems need to be noted carefully, before prescriptions of unsuitable models of development are accepted without adequate fore-thought.

India's economic imperatives should be seen both in short-term and long-term perspectives. Right now, the necessity of massive investments in infrastructure loom large. We need huge investments in power, oil, telecommunications, fertilizers and, of course, agriculture and irrigation, apart from roads, railways and ports. I have come to extend my hand of partnership in this adventure — a partnership having so much in common, and so close already in multi-faceted cooperation. Investment is coming from several industrialised countries already. My present endeavour is to draw, as much as possible, investment and cooperation from the Asia-Pacific countries, in consonance with our common concept and solidarity and my faith in our common destiny. This, of course, will bring large-scale employment to India's young people at different levels — skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled.

When we in India take employment in the long-term perspective, the question of the right technology confronts us. If we take to gigantism in order to attain the economies of scale, we accept increasingly sophisticated technology which, in many cases, replaces man with machine, accentuating unemployment and imposing unacceptable social costs in a populous country. On the other hand, if we accept the route of large-scale employment with old technology and low wages, the large mass of people, as well as their economic activity, including the product thereof, remain at an unacceptably primitive level in quality.

Obviously, both these positions are unacceptable. There are six factors involved here: size, environmental acceptability, cost, quality, technology and employment potential. Environmental acceptability and quality are obviously a *sine qua non*. If the objective is to maximise employment and minimize the per unit size at more or less the same cost, the only imponderable that remains to be determined is technology. I see no alternative for

populous developing countries, except to develop these technologies of the future. One may perhaps call them the "Laptop technologies," taking the analogy of the computers, wherein all the six factors listed above are integrated. I invite the technology experts here and everywhere to ponder over this particular aspect of our necessity and direct their research and innovation to this end, working in cooperation with us.

Coming back to the present situation, till recently, we laid emphasis on self-reliance and trade with traditional partners. This is changing now. In the calendar year 1993, proposals from APEC economies, excluding the US, constituted over 20% of the total foreign investment collaborations approved by the Government of India. Between January 1991 and June 1994, a total of 1904 foreign collaborations were approved with APEC economies. During this period, direct investment from APEC in India amounted to approximately 54% of the total foreign investment received. These figures are indeed revealing.

On the other hand, Indian businessmen have established joint ventures all over the Asia-Pacific — 148 in the APEC economies. The overseas Indian community, which retains strong links with its homeland, but prefers to live and work abroad, constitutes a vital link between India and the countries of the Asia-Pacific. We have a stake in their prosperity, as they have in our future.

From April 1993 to March 1994, APEC economies accounted for 45% of India's exports and 30% of India's imports. But all this trade amounted to only about 1% of intra-APEC trade. We are acutely aware of the considerable potential that exists, considering India's natural resources, its growing infrastructure, human resources, a well developed legal system and an increasingly open financial and investment regime.

Last year we commenced an economic dialogue with ASEAN. My visit to Singapore, and earlier visits to other ASEAN countries, have convinced me that the potential for India's partnership with this nucleus organisation in the Asia-Pacific is immeasurable.

Already we find Indian enterprises prospecting oil, constructing rail roads, building power plants, setting up enterprises to manufacture engineering goods, process agricultural products and trade all over the region. At the moment, however, all this is on a miniscule scale. Much more

is possible and desirable. India therefore wants a real and sizeable jump.

India's premier railway construction enterprise has rehabilitated, electrified and built several hundred kilometres of railway track in Malaysia. I found it significant when last month a leading Malaysian company presented me with a proposal to construct a 10,000 kilometre toll highway on "build-operate-transfer" basis, linking India's cities. Yet another Indian company Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited has set up thousands of megawatts of generating capacity in the Asia-Pacific region, in those very countries from where we are now receiving offers to set up power plants in India. Is it a paradox that Indian companies are exerting themselves abroad to execute projects of a nature which firms from those countries are attempting to set up in India? Far from being a paradox, I think this is the essence of eclectic enterprise; business that constantly seeks to move beyond boundaries. This has been the key to success in the Asia-Pacific and a valuable lesson we have learned from you. The creation of wealth in this region, particularly in those countries which were eclipsed for two to three centuries by colonial rule, is an example to mankind everywhere. It has also aroused sufficient interest in the developed members of the APEC for them to have realised that a partnership with Asia is not only desirable but inevitable. Speaking for a developing country, I feel we must not barter our advantage without ensuring that we can become equal partners with equal say in the eventual codification of international laws and regulations that will govern international political, economic and social activity in the next century.

What we see in the Asia-Pacific region cannot be called a clash of civilisations but a mesh, interwoven with religious, ethnic, racial, linguistic and professional strands. And it is this diversity which gives the resilience that enables this mesh to sustain the almost unbelievable growth rates that Asia has seen in the past decade will continue to see well into the next century.

Mr. Chairman, I am consciously including India in this reality and this vision of the Asia-Pacific that I propound. If a new relationship is to be forged, it is only the visible superstructure that needs to be erected over the very sound and solid foundation that already exists:

This superstructure will include increasing levels of interaction through travel and communication links. Rural Indian

homes today receive TV programmes in Indian languages beamed from Hong Kong and Moscow. We expect that in the not-too-distant future, programmes made in India will be beamed over the Asia-Pacific. We in India are conscious of the dangers posed by commercial media networks whose indiscriminate satellite footprints stamp over our cultural sensitivities and disrupt our social ethos. But we have full faith in our cultural heritage and believe that it will survive all onslaughts from outside, integrating healthy influences and also influencing the external factors in the process. The information revolution should have, as its natural corollary, an enlightened understanding of our cultural affinities and differences. The more we know of each other, the better we understand each other. Geographical, linguistic and legal barriers must come down. I realise India has a big responsibility in this regard and I assure you that we will not shirk this responsibility. We will vindicate the cardinal principle of responsible media projection, that profit must be predicated on propriety.

Mr. Chairman, India has already taken steps to liberalise its currency regime, open the economy to more imports and investment, and educate its people on the benefits of exposure to the outside world. The Asia-Pacific could be the springboard for our leap into the global marketplace.

Much has been reported recently, including in the Singapore press, about the slowing down of India's economic reforms. May I clarify that if we appear to have slowed down, it may only be because the pace of reforms over the past three years has been extremely rapid. Only last month my Government has further liberalised the currency regime to make the rupee convertible on current account. Meanwhile the Bombay Stock Exchange continues its bull run. Regarding our labour policy, one has to understand the Indian situation, and spare a thought for the hundreds of millions who face the prospect of unemployment. A hire and fire policy in India would not only be inhumane, it would be economically unwise. At the same time, businessmen who are planning future investments have the least to worry about, because unlike established businesses whose work force may have over-grown for various reasons not germane to results, new business can always assess its manpower requirements accurately so as to avoid the risk of becoming uneconomic on that score.

I can assure this gathering that India not only welcomes, but is worth, your time and

money. Investment in India is an investment in the future — a future not only for the investor but for a population of one billion which will remain a force for stability in the world. In return, countries of the Asia-Pacific will find in India a reliable partner, a vast market, the process of whose development will simultaneously involve the renaissance of a great and noble civilisation which we all share in some measure.

Mr. Chairman, before I conclude, I would like to revert to my earlier quotation, what our great poet Rabindranath Tagore said about the new dawn coming from the horizon of the East, where the sun rises. Those were the days of the Second World War, of the horror that made no sense to anyone. The War ended, only to give rise to the Cold War. That too has ended, only to leave the world in a flux of a different kind. The world has no big War now, hot or cold; yet it has no peace either. Thus, the transition to the post-Cold War world, welcome as it is, is likely to be equally difficult, if not more. The days of celebrating the demise of a system are over. The contours of a different world have begun to emerge, a world so different from the world of blocs and deterrents that we had hardly expected it even to exist. But Cold War attitudes persist — not because there is anything permanently valid or inevitable about them, but because their removal takes time and even more than time, the genuine realisation that the change in human destiny needs a corresponding change in man's own mindset. I firmly believe that beyond the processes of diplomacy and inter-State relations that occupy our attention most of the time, there is an immeasurably vast area in which all the tiny specks that make up humanity are surprisingly equal. We have to capture the spirit and quality of that equality and realise the unity of Man. This is the challenge of the uni-polarity which we witness today. This challenge is an opportunity which History does not often throw up. We miss it at our own peril. And we can capture it, through the essentially Asian ethos of compassion, harmony and a sense of sharing, where the individual and the collective entities are beautifully blended to make life a consistent whole.

I am happy to have had this opportunity to enunciate my belief in this vision of a new relationship between India and the Asia-Pacific from Singapore, which I consider the geographic and symbolic centre of the Asia-Pacific. I trust this vision will be realised in the near future and that the next century will be a century of partnership for us all.

Northern Ireland: towards a settlement

John Field

The future of Northern Ireland is an issue which has recently sprung back into the headlines. It is, of course, not a recent issue — not even a 20th century issue — but one with historical roots going back many centuries. It is a fortunate coincidence that the timing of this seminar should have been so appropriate. I would, however, like to make clear at the outset I do not have any particular knowledge of, or insights into, the British government's policy. Colombo is not a post that is in any way connected with the problem. I am speaking today, therefore, from the point of view of an average informed citizen who follows the issue from newspaper and magazine reports.

I mentioned the long history of the problem. One needs to look at this because without it the bitterness and persistence of the opposing views is hard to understand. An outsider cannot but be struck by the fact that events of two or three hundred years ago are as fresh in the minds of Northern Irelanders as if they had happened yesterday. For those trying to reach a settlement it must be so frustrating that people look back to past injustices rather than forward to the benefits that could flow from an end to the fighting. As a historian I was taught that we should understand and learn from the past to avoid earlier mistakes, not to repeat them. In Ireland sadly many people seem set on doing just that.

In this whole problem religion has played a part — but only a part. It is the weft of the fabric, but there have been over the years other colours in the cloth — for instance pre-empting Ireland becoming a base for hostile powers — a real concern in the 16th and 17th centuries — or land and colonisation, or social and economic — the question of jobs and discrimination. In press shorthand it is easy to characterise it as Protestant versus Catholic, but in reality it is more complex, as I hope to show. But sadly Christianity has complicated and exacerbated, not cured.

First a few facts: today the Republic of Ireland covers about 4/5 of the island (70,000 sq kms against 14,000 for Northern Ireland). The Republic's population is 3.5 million compared to 1.6 million in Northern Ireland, and it is 95% Catholic while Northern Ireland is 60% Protestant. The Republic joined the EEC in 1973 — a development which could be helpful in that both Britain and Ireland are now members of a Union which is seeking

to harmonise policies on a wide range of issues.

England's involvement in Ireland began, as so often was the case in England's overseas expansion, with the activities of adventurers, in this case in the 12th century. Their activities forced King John to intervene shortly thereafter to create the Earldom of Ulster. Later the Reformation (Henry VIII's break with the Catholic Church) brought pressure to conform with the new church: Catholics left and land seekers from Scotland and England appeared. James I encouraged the "plantation" of Ulster as being the area closest to Scotland. Tension mounted and led to rebellion in 1641. Cromwell reconquered the island with a cruelty which is remembered to this day.

Shortly after this James II used Ireland as a base for his attempt to recover the throne, but was defeated at the Battle of the Boyne in 1691 — one of the key dates in establishing the supremacy of the Protestants. Subsequently basic civil rights, such as the right to hold public office, were denied to Catholics and dissenters. It is perhaps worth noting that such laws applied equally to Catholics and dissenters in England and Scotland: Ireland's treatment was not exceptional in this respect.

Over the following century immigration continued, particularly Protestant Huguenots, who had been expelled from France. Two elites were created in this period — the English landowners and the English/Scottish "commercials". Not surprisingly Catholic dissatisfaction grew, leading to a rebellion in 1795, which ended in the Protestant victory at Diamond. The subsequent creation of the Orange Society (later Order) and the Act of Union in 1800 symbolised Protestant domination and polarised the communities. The 19th century saw the rise of Irish nationalism under O'Connell and the creation of the Fenian movement. Various crises, including the potato famine, led to the demand for Home Rule, which alarmed the Protestants, who feared they would lose the protection of Westminster, and revived the Orange Order. In the latter half of the century the Westminster government was constantly wrestling with this issue. Home Rule bills were introduced, but failed in the Commons, in 1868 by Gladstone and again by the Liberals in 1893. In 1912 a bill passed the Commons but was defeated in the House of Lords. It aroused bitter opposition in Ulster,

where Carson organised the League and Covenant, but it passed in 1914. However the implementation was postponed because of the outbreak of the World War.

The next few years set the scene for the rest of the century down to the present day. Republican frustration boiled over into the Easter Rising (1916) whose harsh suppression further antagonised the south. In 1920 the Government of Ireland Act created the possibility of north and south Ireland with limited self-government. The IRA, which was founded in 1919, wanted full independence and fighting broke out between the British forces and the Republicans. Eventually in 1921 the Anglo-Irish Treaty was concluded setting up the Irish Free State, but leaving 6 of the 9 counties of Ulster as a separate unit although part of the United Kingdom.

(To be continued)

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The author is the U.K. High Commissioner in Colombo. He presented this paper at the recent seminar, sponsored by the LANKA GUARDIAN and LAW AND SOCIETY TRUST.

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Religious and ethnic differences

Veronica Shoffstall

College Park, Maryland, USA

When young Israeli guitarist David Broza stepped out onto the stage, he was warmly welcomed by fans who clapped and sang along to familiar Israeli pop songs, which he sang in both English and Hebrew.

Received with less familiarity and somewhat more reserve was the next performer, Nabil Azam, a white-haired Palestinian Arab. Many Jews were in the audience and they listened politely as he strummed on a gourdshaped *oud*. The applause was appropriate but without excessive enthusiasm.

"People came together who don't normally talk to each other, like people from the Middle East and different parts of Africa."

— Bernard Cooperman

Director of the Meyerhoff Center.

Then, Mr. Azam switched to the violin and the sweet, mournful strain he played next seemed to dissolve an invisible barrier. As if by reflex, a crescendo of voices rose, singing along in Hebrew as Mr. Azam offered up "Jerusalem of Gold," a well-known Israeli song about the Holy City. An olive branch, it was impossible to resist.

The concert punctuated a 9-11 April conference held here at the University of Maryland, entitled "Once Empires Fade: Religion, Ethnicity and the Possibilities for Peace." The on-stage harmony of an Israeli and a Palestinian stood as a dramatic symbol for the hope of a peaceful resolution to the Middle East conflict — one of more than 40 such disputes based on religious or cultural differences currently raging across the globe.

How the factors of religion and ethnicity can hasten or hinder the peace process was explored through artistic presentations, scholarly speeches, and discussion groups.

"People came together who don't normally talk to each other, like people from the Middle East and different parts of Africa," said Bernard Cooperman, director of the Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Studies, one of the three organizers of the conference. Co-organizers included the History Department and the Baha'i Chair for World Peace, also at the University of Maryland.

More than 700 people, including students, academics, and public figures, came from around the world, representing a cross-section of religious and political ideologies.

Speakers and some 30 workshop leaders addressed the unique possibilities for peace presented by the end of the Cold War and the opportunity to redirect the focus of defense toward pressing global concerns.

Among the key themes to emerge was that religion, which is so often viewed as a source of conflict, can be a source of peace.

Mona Grieser, chief executive officer of Glovis, Inc., a development communications company, said the current economic paradigm ignores the psychological and spiritual component at the root of third world development.

"There is no doubt that we have the technology to feed, clothe, and house all the people on earth," said Ms. Grieser, who is also a Baha'i. "Why it is not being done is a spiritual issue which must be addressed."

"Spirituality, applied to global issues both collectively and individually, can set a new global agenda based on a shared vision," she said. "Spirituality can provide the moral authority and... the motivation to implement new policies and programs based on new priorities."

Paul-Marc Henry, an Ambassador in the French Foreign Service, said a "spiritual gap" was in part responsible for the "deep crisis" the world is in, as evidenced by the deterioration of public works and

the school system, rising unemployment, and the violence erupting from the frustration of the young.

"The real long term is not to be calculated by the gross national product, but by the hope for the future," he said. "Basically this crisis is one of despair."

Ernest Gellner, director of the European Center for the Study of Nationalism in Prague, took a more secular approach, presenting the idea that differences in culture should be viewed as accidents of birth or history, and should have no bearing on the citizenship rights accorded to one group over another.

"We are organizing films on war and peace for the documentation center that is being set up. And we find that there are many films available about war, yet few about peace. We are putting the emphasis on peace."

— Denis Marechal

Director of the World Center for Peace, Freedom and Human Rights.

Nationalism, Dr. Gellner said, is an "artificial phenomenon" in which culture is narrowly defined by an elite group. Those who do not meet the standards set by that elite, he said, run the risk of being excluded or oppressed, which leads to violence.

The papers presented at the conference will be gathered into a book which, organizers hope, will encourage continued discussion of the new opportunities for peace.

"For the academic world to recognize that religion is an important factor in bringing about peace or in laying down the ground for better understanding among disparate and sometimes contending peoples is in itself an achievement," said Suheil Bushrui, who occupies the Baha'i Chair for World Peace.

DRUGS ?

Amendment to Drug Regulation No. 34 of 1984 in Govt. Gazette Extraordinary No. 722/3 of Monday the 6th July 1992.

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Lessons from two wars

Horace Perera

This is a tale of the role played by two Presidents of the US, George Bush and his successor, Bill Clinton, in two successive international crises, each of which was declared by the United Nations Security Council to constitute "a threat to international peace and security." It is a tale of how President George Bush played a leading and effective role in the events following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 that led through twelve resolutions of the Security Council to the Gulf War, the liberation of Kuwait and the acceptance by Iraq on 6 April 1991 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) which was intended, inter alia, to ensure that Iraq would never again be able to threaten peace and security in the region and, by extension, in the world at large. It is also a tale of how the same President, the Liberator of Kuwait, distanced himself and his country from the wars which broke out in Yugoslavia in July 1991 with the declaration of independence by two of Yugoslavia's constituent republics, namely Slovenia and Croatia, and thereby failed to give leadership to the international community to check Serbian aggression at the beginning when, according to several political commentators, that was a military possibility. It is also a tale of how the same President decided to remain on the sidelines while the war in Yugoslavia escalated with the military intervention of Serbia in the constituent republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina following on that republic's declaration of its independence and how this same President chose to be a spectator while that war was being fought, specially by the Serbs, with a ferocious barbarity not seen since the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945. It is also a tale of how the results of Bush's failure to act in time was dumped on his successor, Bill Clinton whose overwhelming concern with US domestic issues blinded him to the fact that the stability of Europe was, and will always, be a matter of national concern to the USA and to the world at large and made him forget his election campaign's promise in regard to the war in Yugoslavia that the US should do "whatever it takes to stop the slaughter of innocents" and not ignore "a deliberate and systematic extermination of human beings based on their ethnic origin." It is also the tale of the same Clinton joining with the Russian Federation and major members of the E.C. in a "Contact Group" and carving out Bosnia-Herzegovina into

two political entities in a "take it, or leave-it-and-face-the-consequences" Peace Plan, in spite of repeated assertions by the Security Council that the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina should be protected and no territorial changes be made by threats of force, or force or under duress. Finally it is the tale of the same Bill Clinton becoming a hawk and declaring that if the Bosnian Serbs do not accept the Peace Plan by 15 October the US intends to ask the Security Council to lift the arms embargo against the Croat-Muslim confederation, thus stepping up the military might of the party that accepted the peace diktat.

Part I

George Bush in the Persian Gulf

Saddam Husseln contra les Nations Unies

Just before dawn on 2 August 1990 the forces of Iraq invaded Kuwait. The Security Council met soon afterwards and adopted the more or less standard resolution (660) demanding the "immediate and unconditional" withdrawal of Iraqi forces and calling for "intensive negotiations by the two states to resolve their differences." Undeterred Saddam Hussein proceeded to commit a series of acts that constituted further violations of the Charter as well as violations of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic Immunity. In response to resolution 660 he proclaimed that Kuwait was traditionally a province of Iraq and would continue to be so. He ordered the closure of diplomatic and consular missions in Kuwait and withdrew the diplomatic immunity of their personnel. He placed third-country nationals in Iraq and Kuwait under detention without ensuring them immediate access to food, water and basic services and he began to alter the demographic composition of Kuwait and to destroy its civil records. In addition to this the media highlighted that the safety of children under 15 years of age, expectant mothers, maternity cases and the elderly were in jeopardy. The Security Council responded to these acts and news with relevant resolutions. One of these (662) declared the annexation of Kuwait null and void. Four dealt with sanctions against Kuwait: the first of these, 661, imposed comprehensive economic sanctions and set up a committee to moni-

tor the sanctions process; the second, 665, endorsed a naval blockade of Iraq; the third, 670, confirmed that sanctions applied to all means of transport, including aircraft, and the fourth, 669, authorised the Committee (set up under 661) to deal with requests for assistance to countries affected by the sanctions process. Resolutions 666 and 674 dealt with mistreatment of Kuwait and third-state nationals and resolution 667 condemned Iraq's attempts to alter the demographic composition of Kuwait and to destroy its civil records. By the middle of November 1990 it was clear that Iraq was in no mood to comply with any of the Council's resolution. It stood firmly by the position of Saddam Hussein that the unity of Iraq and Kuwait was "indestructible," "eternal and irreversible." No one was able to move him from that position: not the Gulf Corporation which labeled his action as "an act of defiance against the international community" not an Extraordinary Arab Summit which, on 10 August, appealed to him to withdraw from Kuwait; not a joint appeal from the Heads of State of six Muslim countries in South and South-east Asia to comply with Council resolutions. (17 October 1990) and not the efforts of the Secretary-General.

In view of Saddam Hussein's intransigent obduracy the Security Council had no alternative but to authorize, in resolution 678, the use of "all necessary means.... to restore international peace and security in the area" if Iraq did not fully implement (all) resolutions on or before 15 January 1991. The Council, "while maintaining all its decisions" was allowing "Iraq one final opportunity, as a pause of good will" to enable it to do so. Even this did not make him change his position. Instead he frittered away the 48 day grace denouncing the USA, warning it that its forces would meet a most humiliating defeat and proclaiming that God was with him. He never seemed to consider whether he was on God's side. History may provide psychologists sufficient material to explain how his mind worked and probably present him in a better light.

The Burning Bush

Bob Woodward in "The Commanders" asserts that almost immediately after the invasion of Kuwait Bush and his White House group decided to go to war to resolve the issue. It is unlikely that this

decision came to them as a flash of lightning. It most probably grew from a deep concern by the Bush administration of the growing power of Iraq and the possibility of it developing into a sort of "super power" in the Middle-East, able to intimidate, if not conquer neighbouring states, establish a sphere of influence, if not an empire, controlling the world's largest oil producing region and posing a real threat to the existence of the state of Israel. It is likely that the violation by Iraq of the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of a Member State of the United Nations was just the sort of **Casus belli** that Bush and his White House Group were waiting for. Of course this was not Central America where the US had occasionally acted as it wished. This was the Middle-East and all measures for the peaceful settlement of disputes specified in the UN charter would have to be exhausted before force could be used. The previous section shows very clearly how Saddam Hussein by his arrogant defiance of the Security Council played directly into their hands. There can be very little doubt that the speed with which (except for resolutions 678 and 687) and the majorities by which they were adopted was largely due to the fact that they were inspired, if not initiated and, and "steered" through the Council by the USA. This was not all. By well prepared statements at press conferences carried by the vast media network in the US and by cable television throughout the world, he responded effectively to the violent diatribes that emanated almost daily from Baghdad. He interpreted developments as to how they would play with Congress, the media and public opinion, presenting Saddam Hussein as a dictator worse than Hitler and warning the world of the dire consequences for international peace and security if Iraq was allowed to get away with its aggression and deliberate violations of relevant international legal instruments. He did not go directly to Congress for a declaration of war against Iraq but succeeded in securing one in the form of Congress support for the Council resolution 678 which authorized all Member States of the UN, not only the US, to use "all necessary means" (UN terminology for the use of force). Finally he was able to overcome misgivings of Generals Collin Power and Norman Schwarzkop and Defence Secretary Dick Cheney and persuaded them to go along with him. There is also some evidence that even before three weeks had passed after the invasion of Kuwait. Bush had begun to build his coalition of 34 nationalities and transport troops and weapons to the area. Saddam Hussein drew attention to this in a counterproposal he made to the Security Council, on 19 August, stating his willingness to comply with its resolutions provided that, inter alia,

the President of the US announces "clearly, unequivocally and in writing" his commitment to withdraw his forces and those of his allies from Arab territory and Muslim Holy Places within a specified time. This counterproposal was rejected by the Council and Bush continued to strengthen his coalition and transport a vast arsenal of the most sophisticated weapons to the area, largely Saudi Arabia. The deadline, 15 January 1991, given in the Council's "pause of goodwill" expired and at 19 hours (E.S.T.) on 16 January Operation Desert Storm" was launched with a round the clock aerial bombardment of military communications and strategic infrastructure in Iraq. Eight days later ground operations began with the movement of tanks and troops into Iraq and Kuwait accompanied by thundering military and naval gunfire barrages. On 27 January Kuwait was liberated and on the next day US led coalition, keeping to its mandate under Council resolution 678, suspended offensive combat operations. A ceasefire came into effect and following a month of diplomatic consultations the Council adopted resolution 687 on 3 April 1991. This was accepted by Iraq on 6 April and the Gulf War came to an end. All that remained was to win the peace. At this stage an assessment of Bush's role in the crisis would be useful.

Bush's role-an assessment

All in all it can be argued that without Bush's leadership the Gulf War would not have taken place and Kuwait would not have been liberated, at least so soon. The Security Council may have, as it has done so far in relation to the conflicts in Yugoslavia, churned out resolutions to no effect and Kuwait would in time have been firmly established as a Province of Iraq of whose further ambitions it is possible only to guess. Some of his more responsible critics, while not denigrating his achievement, accuse him of "bulldozing" the UN to serve the broader interests of the USA. "Bulldozing" is a relative term. That he was prompted to act in the broader interests of the USA also, will not be contested. There is, however, no denying that in a unipolar world the UN is very unlikely to restore international peace and security in serious conflict situations without the effective leadership of the solitary super power. This places on that one power the responsibility to give that leadership. This will be seen more clearly in any discussion of the failure of the European Security Institutions and the UN itself to restore peace and security in the former Yugoslavia.

Winning the Peace

The terms of the formal ceasefire are set out in Security Council resolution 687 which was adopted on 3 April and was

accepted by Iraq on 6 April although Saddam Hussein considered its measures "unjust," "iniquitous and vengeful." Nevertheless on 11 April the Chairman of the Council declared that Iraq's acceptance was "irrevocable and without any qualifying conditions." The resolution goes far beyond calling on Iraq to accept a 1963 border agreement with Kuwait and to compensate Kuwait and other countries for the damage caused to them from the seven month occupation of Kuwait. With a view to ensuring that Iraq would not again threaten peace and security in the region certain measures were introduced calling, among other things, for the destruction of all Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. The Council then proceeded to set up machinery to ensure implementation of the terms of the resolution. The then Secretary General, Perez de Cuellar declared that it was important that the international community show the same determination and efficiency in securing the peace that it exerted in ending aggression. The terms of the resolution appear quite harsh and there is a tendency to feel some sympathy for Iraq. That disappears, however, in the face of Iraq's efforts to hinder the implementation of various measures explicitly stated in the resolution. For example the team of UN inspectors who were to remove, render harmless or destroy the proscribed weapons and install a monitoring system that would help to prevent their being renewed was so frequently hampered and even harassed that it is only now, more than three years later that there are signs showing that their mission is nearing completion. Iraq's cruel persecution, after the war, of the Kurds in the North and the Shiites in the South has led to the establishment of a "safe haven" for the former and a "fly-over zone" for the latter. Moreover Iraq has yet to recognize the frontier line drawn up by a UN team and to abandon its claim to Kuwait. Furthermore, it has chosen not to use the option the UN had written for Iraq to sell a designated amount of oil for humanitarian use. Finally, it continues to provoke assaults on UN personnel. All this has kept the US quite busy. Bush has been criticized for not allowing the coalition forces to proceed to Baghdad, when at one time in the war they were only 150 miles from the city, and remove Saddam Hussein as "the chief war criminal." It is reported, though not widely known, that the use of the "veto" on resolution 687 by one Permanent Member was averted by an undertaking given to do nothing to topple the Saddam regime. Political leaders who call for the lifting of all sanctions against Iraq would do well to consider these details and not hamper the winning of the peace.

(To be continued)

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