

20
POST—GULF: Back to Balance of Power

— *Henry Kissinger*

LANKA

GUARDIAN

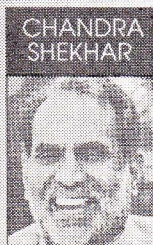
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INDIA

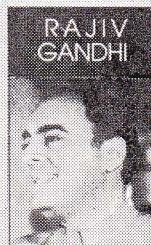
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— *Mervyn de Silva*

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INDIA

**THE
CONGRESS
IS
READY**

— *Rajiv Gandhi*

The Koggala Trade Zone — Ariya Abeysinghe

HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIFFERENT WORLD VIEWS

— *Laksiri Jayasuriya*

GULF WAR: THE PILLARS OF U. S. POLICY

— *James Petras*

— *Meera Nanda*



Black Knight
It's your move

Briefly. . .

● Parliament has been prorogued until 8.45 a.m. on April 19, 1991. The President's proclamation was announced when the House met on March 21.

● Sri Lanka has requested SAARC to send observers for the local government elections due soon. The request was made to SAARC Secretary General K. K. Bhargava by the Sri Lanka Foreign Ministry on a directive from President Premadasa.

The President has pledged that the forthcoming local government elections will be conducted in an exemplary manner, a communique from the presidential secretariat said.

● Parliamentary Affairs Minister Vincent Perera told the House that there had been a marked increase in terrorist activities in the North and East by the LTTE militants. He was moving a motion for the continuation of the State of Emergency. 118 MPs voted for it and 56 against. Only the UNP was in favour.

The Minister said that six police officers and 27 services personnel had been killed by the LTTE in the North and East between February 15 and March 13.

● Mr. Bradman Weerakoon, presidential advisor on international affairs, told a press conference that the question of permitting an Amnesty International team to visit Sri Lanka to undertake a "research mission" on the subject of human rights. Two representatives of AI who had been in Sri Lanka recently for a trade union conference had indicated that they would be making a formal request for permission for such a mission to visit Sri Lanka.

● Opposition MPs attended parliament on March 19 calling off their boycott following incidents in the House on February 20 and 21.

● Government further relaxed exchange control regulations to allow a freer flow of foreign exchange in and out of the country. Among the relaxations: Sri Lankans can now bring in any foreign currency without having to explain how it was earned; non residents can bring in 5,000 US dollar or its equivalent in convertible currency without making a declaration to Customs; authorised money changers will be appointed to handle the anticipated influx of foreign currencies following this liberalisation; and the US dollars 1500 and 400 travel allowance for non-Indian countries respectively will now be given every year, pilgrims to India will now get 1000 dollars, and those who pay more than Rs. 200,000 per year in income tax will get US \$ 225 per day in addition to their allowances when they travel abroad.

● More than 125 university students are being held in custody for the past one and a half years, according to a University Grants Commission source. They are arrested during the JVP violence and have not been charged.

● A high level Japanese team was in Colombo to discuss restructuring the economy. Japan is one of Sri Lanka's biggest aid givers and has contributed about Rs. 80 billion to various projects over the past 14 years.

● A high Court trial-at-bar acquitted all three policemen in the Liyanarachchi murder case. The court however earlier convicted the accused of illegally detaining the late lawyer.

The Lanka Guardian will not be published on April 15 in view of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year holidays. The L. G. takes this opportunity to wish all its readers and well-wishers a happy and peaceful New Year.

LETTER

TEXT BOOKS

The school text books which are given free by the State to school children in this country are replete with false and biased facts. Hence something should be done to caution the country about this trend.

A good dialogue is needed on this subject as this has a bearing on the country's progress.

Education is one thing. Indoctrination is quite another. What we need today is more and more education for children.

S. Chandrasiri

Panadura.

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Editor: Mervyn de Silva

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TEL: 25149, 24431, 548235
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INDIA: Problems and Perils of Structural Adjustment

NEWS
BACKGROUND

Mervyn de Silva

Twice that third week in March bombs went off in Connaught Place, Delhi's cosmopolitan shopping-cum-business centre. Though the terrorist attacks did claim many lives, it was the psychological blow that proved the more shattering. It was in the heart of the nation's capital. Besides, the enemy remained unidentified. There are so many separatist insurgent groups operating in India today, and so many extremist bands that have taken the path of violence. A faceless enemy was roaming freely in Delhi, the powerhouse of the world's largest democracy.

And the future of that parliamentary system itself had been made dangerously uncertain when India's third government in a mere 18 months resigned in the first week of the month. The Ides of March, muttered the wise men in op-ed pages of Delhi's dailies. Under siege, noted other analysts, less picturesquely but underlining the same point of unparalleled crisis.

Yes, the main pillars of the modern India that Nehru conceived were all collapsing — national unity, secular democracy, a quasi-federalism, a State-supervised 'mixed' economy, Gandhian non-violence, an independent "non-aligned" foreign policy, the Congress, a movement and a political party, as the centre-piece of the political system. Suddenly, the crisis in India seemed as wide-ranging and deep as the systemic collapse of the Soviet Union,

India's steadfast friend and near-neighbour.

Born in a bloodbath, independent India suffered the agonies of partition, only to confront the challenging, absurd anachronism of an Islamic Pakistan composed of two territorial "wings", separated by a thousand miles of Indian territory. When Bengal nationalism proved a stronger allegiance than Islam, the Indian army intervened to help create Bangladesh. Though Bengali nationalism and Indian military might together created new boundaries to alter the geopolitical map of the (Indian) sub-continent, the twin forces of nationalism and sub-nationalism have persisted as tenacious threats to India's internal

issue of caste. Whether Prime Minister V. P. Singh's motives were purely egalitarian or entirely electoral does not matter any more. The 45 percent job reservation plan to "uplift" the downtrodden "scheduled castes" has had the immediate objective result of exacerbating social tensions. To religion, race and ideology, another mode of group identity and mobilisation has been added. The prospect of polls made such mobilisation instant, while simultaneously agitating the higher castes, the Hindu upper class and the business elite. The immediate outcome has been the dramatic rise of rightwing Hindu extremism and the emergence of the B. J. P., under the charismatic L. K. Advani, as a significant, electorally incalculable

Yes, the main pillars of the modern India that Nehru conceived were all collapsing national unity, secular democracy a quasi federalism, state supervised mixed economy, Gandhian non-violence, an independent non aligned foreign policy, the Congress a movement and a political party as the centre piece of the political system.

order and its territorial integrity. If history repeats itself will the Indian sub-continent follow the route taken by modern Europe?

And now into the cauldron of conflict and divisive dissension has been thrown the new

factor that could decide the fate of Mr. Gandhi's Congress at the mid-May polls. Even if the Hindu middle and upper-middle strata remain loyal to Nehru's and Indira Gandhi's Congress Big Business has already bankrolled Mr. Advani's anti-Mandal, and anti-Muslim campaign.

India has had "extremist" or "fundamentalist" Hindu organisations before. The R. S. S. is still active. But Mr. Advani has not only given this Hindu (BJP) response to Islamic fundamentalism in the West Asian neighbourhood and to Mr. V. P. Singh's Nandalism at home a respectable face but it has disturbed a traditional electoral equation. The support-base of the Congress may have been chipped away. Or seriously eroded.

Whichever the final answer, the uncertainty adds to the confusion, and the evident disorder which once again reinforces the impression of the Nehruvian vision in tatters.

DISINTEGRATION PROCESS

P. C. Alexander calls it "disintegration". A former principal secretary to the Indian Prime Minister, who ended his career as High Commissioner in London and then Governor of Tamilnadu, Mr. Alexander wrote last month:

"The most disturbing development has been the erosion of the people's confidence in the ability of their rulers to hold the nation together in against fissiparous forces... there have been challenges from secessionists in Jammu-Kashmir, terrorists in Punjab, and Assam and Naxalites in Andhra Pradesh, but none of these could shake the peoples faith in the nation until certain developments of the last couple of years, started gnawing at the roots of that faith". He concludes:

"With people losing confidence in the government's ability to protect the nation's unity and with the devaluation of the institutions of democracy and the new found respectability for communalism and casteism in politics, the question whether India will disintegrate may not sound perverse any longer".

ECONOMIC PRESSURE

The choronic parliamentary imbalance, largely caused by the

decision of the largest party, the Congress, to remain in opposition, and control a weak Prime Minister commanding only a tenth of the House (54 seats), may have given Mr. Gandhi the time he needed to re-organise his own party to achieve the maximum preparedness for another, more decisive trial of strength at the hustings. But his strategy of sustaining the Chandra Sekhar regime until that ideal moment arrived, did not anticipate Mr. Chandra Sekhar's political cunning nor appreciate fully those qualities of political integrity and personal pride which have now earned the Indian Prime Minister the respect of many an Indian, including known adversaries.

With Parliament dissolved, and a date for nominations fixed, Mr. Chandra Sekhar has been busy trying to forge new alliances and make all sorts of electoral deals. In Delhi, the phrase for this exercise is "seat adjustment". This writer was waiting in an office in South Block last week to keep a scheduled appointment with Mr. Chandra Sekhar when an official on the PM's personal staff came rushing in to announce that Mr Chandra Sekhar could not, alas, see me since he has had to rush out for an "urgent consultation". I could hear "seat adjustment" offered as an apology to my Indian escort!

Of course, it's all about "seat adjustment" anyway — the most important seat in the world's largest democracy. It is chiefly because there has been no secure occupant in the recent past that India has failed to overcome other, equally grave dangers, to its stability and therefore to its future as a post-war nation-state. The crucial test is in the field of economic policy.

India is broke. It has less than a month's money for essential imports. Resistance to World Bank and IMF pressure was one of the totem poles of India's near-unique Third Worldism, and nonalignment, a

Nehruvian ideal even more pugnaciously served by his proud daughter, Indira Gandhi. Rajiv, the third generation, did try to adjust to an increasingly US-dominated world, in which the IMF-IBRD increased their combined influence over a debt-burdened Third World. Given its enormous natural resources, including oil, its size and potential as a market, and its status as a regional power courted by both superpowers, India did have considerable room for manoeuvre.

But economic inefficiency and mismanagement, political violence and instability, and a structural change in the international system, bi-polar to multipolar (some would say uni-polar) India's leverage has declined appreciably. Neither the Indian leadership nor the Indian elite however have mobilised the necessary will, even when the challenging need was recognised, for that "structural adjustment", which is wider in scope than the IMF defined "adjustment process".

The moment of truth has arrived. With foreign reserves dropping below the Rs. 3,000 crore line, at the end of March, the Indian Finance Minister, Mr. Yaswant Sinha addressed an urgent letter to the US, JAPAN, and GERMANY for urgent "accommodation" until it negotiates an upper tranche with the IMF for 2 billion dollars. Interestingly, Mr. Gandhi's Congress stalwarts reacted as angrily to this S.O.S., as it did to Mr. Chandra Sekhar concession to the US for re-fuelling rights in Bombay for military aircraft bound for the Gulf. Both, the Congress said, was a humiliation that India need not bear. But behind the protest over re-fuelling rights was a poorly disguised attempt by the Congress to court the Muslim vote! Thus, domestic considerations determined foreign policy. Old thinking and 'Cold War' reflexes dominate Congress still.

RAJIV GANDHI

"We never wanted to pull this government down"

Sitting in his plant-strewn, plush book-lined study, Rajiv Gandhi is the very picture of confidence. As he spoke to PRABHU CHAWLA he displayed his legendary charm and had the manner of one who knows he is on the road back to power. Excerpts:

On the Congress (I)'s role in the collapse of the Government:

We never wanted to pull this government down. In fact, we haven't withdrawn our support to it even now. It was the prime minister who took a unilateral decision. We were never unreasonable. What we asked for was political action in Haryana. But ultimately we accepted even what their emissary Subramaniam Swamy had drafted. And finally it was he who suggested that the Government should take some punitive action in Haryana and institute a full-fledged inquiry. Swamy told us that this was not acceptable to the prime minister.

On the motion of thanks to the presidential address:

If the opposition had voted against the motion of thanks, the Government would only have been embarrassed and not voted out. And if we were to take any action, we would have gone to the President and withdrawn support. From the debate on the day when the prime minister resigned, it was clear they were all making farewell speeches. The ruling party and the Opposition had obviously come to an agreement on this issue.

On whether the Congress(I) behaved childishly:

I don't agree. We were concerned with an issue and made it clear to the prime minister that the party's feelings had been hurt and he should take corrective measures for restoring the confidence of the Congress (I) MPs.

On the surveillance issue:

It is not just a question of two policemen. We understand now

that there is a full unit in Nabha House with over 40 people. It is a serious matter if a supporting party is being watched.

On the CBI's phone tapping report:

I told the prime minister that we felt the CBI report had been leaked out by the Government to the Opposition only to embarrass us. If the Government had full faith in us, it could have asked us how the issue should be tackled.

On the budget postponement:

At no stage did we force the Government to postpone it. We only wanted the prime minister to ensure that the Congress(I)'s economic policies were not violated. The prime minister told me that he had discussed this with Dr Manmohan Singh who was actively associated with the formulation of economic policies during 1980-88. But then Swamy suggested that the budget be postponed.

On the failure to coordinate with the Government:

We did try but it didn't work properly. We got the impression that the ruling party didn't want us to be involved in any major decisions. In December, we made an attempt to solve the Kashmir problem. The prime minister sent the governor of Jammu & Kashmir and another MP from the National Conference for sorting out the employees' strike and other issues. I asked the prime minister whether I could involve an IAS officer. He agreed. But the IAS official said he was disgusted because none of the decisions was being implemented. We decided to keep away after that.

On Chandra Shekhar's performance:

There is no improvement in Punjab. We still have no plan of action. Nor do we have any plans for Assam or Kashmir. The action taken in Assam

failed because Operation Bajorang was leaked to the ULFA. Foreign policy, of course, is totally missing. As for economy, inflation is going up rapidly. The Government has so far been successful only in cooling down the caste and communal tensions.

On the moves to keep the Janata Dal(S) Government in power:

In our party there are people who were against fresh elections. But we are firm in our view. We will never form the government without a mandate. If we had wanted to adopt that course, we could have done so in November 1989 and then again last year and we could have broken both the Janata Dals.

On the Congress(I)'s readiness to face the electorate:

We are ready to face the elections. The BJP is now moving towards its low point from its high one last November. Only V. P. Singh's party is picking up. And if we delay the elections, both may gain some ground. The ruling party is hardly a threat anywhere.

LOCAL POLLS

EMERGENCY RELAXED

Several Emergency regulations have been revoked as a prelude to the local polls on May 11.

Some 13,000 candidates have entered the fray for 3,500 seats in 236 local bodies. This includes 10 Municipal councils, including the capital Colombo. The UNP has fielded 234 candidates for 236 contests; two councils have been conceded to the UNP's major partner, Mr. Thondaman's C.W.C. The SLFP has fielded 145 candidates, conceding the rest to its allies. The SLMP has 119 candidates, with the SLMC 65.

With its opponents disqualified on a legal point, the UNP won the Kadugannawa Council.

Ranjan's assassin known

Defence Secretary General Cyril Ranatunge claimed at the weekly media briefing that those responsible for the assassination of Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne have been identified as LTTE cadres belonging to the group referred to as "Kantharupan Group".

They have targetted several more VVIPs and an LTTE assassin identified as Eliyatamby Kirupalan of Kayts had travelled through India from Europe about 10 days earlier. He had been transporting electric equipment and accessories required for explosive devices. Ports have been alerted and the assistance of the Indian authorities is being sought to intercept him.

General Ranatunga said.

The CID is investigating into a conspiracy by the LTTE to launch a massive offensive agai-

nst the Sri Lankan Government Forces. Vital plans of the LTTE have been divulged, which have exposed the motivation of the LTTE in calling for a Unilateral Ceasefire at the end of Dec 90. The LTTE had purchased large consignments of military equipment consisting of rocket launchers, anti-aircraft weapons and ammunition in Europe and had arranged for these consignments to be transported on the ship "MV Golden Bird" which the LTTE had purchased on 20/10/90. Unfortunately for them the Gulf Crisis interfered with this shipment. Frustrated in their attempt to get this weaponry they used yet another ship which they won, the "MV Sun Bird" which is registered under the name of "Point Pedro Shipping Corporation", to transport a consignment of equipment for their guerrilla forces, from Singapore.

THARMALINGAM SHANMUGAM KUMARAN, identified as the LTTE logistical officer, directed this purchase of speed boats, radio communication equipment, high-power out-board motors, walkie-talkies, under-water diving kits, camouflage uniforms, binoculars.

Their intention was to land them off the North-East coast of Sri Lanka, but en route this consignment was detected by the Malaysian Authorities on 13 Dec 90. This detection completely upset the LTTE plans, and to buy time they immediately came up with the proposal for a Unilateral Ceasefire.

From the equipment seized there was no doubt that they were planning attack on the Sri Lanka Navy and the Air Force in particular

Role awaiting India as peacemaker

Mr. Neville Kanakarathne Sri Lankan High Commissioner designate to India, sees a role for India in resolving the conflict between the minority Tamils and the majority Sinhalese now threatening to tear the island apart.

Speaking to newsmen at Madras airport enroute to New Delhi, Mr. Kanakarathne said: "India can help to bring about an end to the ethnic crisis, but without directly participating in possible talks between the Sri Lanka government and the LTTE."

He maintained that the Tamil-Sinhalese conflict was an "internal affair" of Sri Lanka and no neighbour had the right to intervene directly.

But he said India could not be ignored. "It has had a direct role to play in Sri Lanka since the early eighties. There are the refugees on its soil, the Indian Peace-Keeping Force was sent to the island in accor-

dance with the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987. They sacrificed their lives in implementing that accord.

The Sinhalese, down to the village level, realise that India has had historic links with Sri Lanka, it gave them their religion — Buddhism."

He described the current armed conflict in the north and east of the island as a "running sore" and hoped India would help to end it with a solution fair to all parties.

The High Commissioner was asked if the Lankan Government would review the offer of talks with the LTTE on the basis of three conditions — that the LTTE leader, V. Prabhakaran, should participate in the talks; that arms be laid down and all Tamil groups made party to the talks. The LTTE had rejected such conditions, and said there could be only

"unconditional talks", he pointed out.

Mr. Kanakarathne viewed the acceptance by rival Tamil militant groups of the Lankan Government's offer of talks as a healthy sign. They had seen the pointlessness of violence, he commented.

"The Sri Lankan Government has made mistakes, the Sinhalese have made mistakes, the Tamils here made mistakes, the LTTE and the other Tamil militants have made mistakes and India has made mistakes. The time has now come to bury the past and begin talking, avoiding past mistakes", he said.

Mr. Kanakarathne refused to accept the LTTE as the sole representative of the people of the Tamil areas. "If they are sure of their representative status, why cannot they put their guns down and participate in elections?" he asked.

A New World Order

Henry Kissinger

America has never been comfortable with fighting wars for limited objectives. World War I was cast as the war to end all wars; World War II was to usher in a new era of permanent peace to be monitored by the United Nations. Now, the Gulf war is justified in similar terms deeply embedded in the American tradition. In his speech of January 16, announcing hostilities with Iraq, President George Bush described the opportunity for building a new world order "where the rule of law... governs the conduct of nations", and "in which a credible United Nations can use its peace-keeping role to fulfil the promise and the vision of the UN's founders."

American idealism was most eloquently formulated by Woodrow Wilson in his attempt to replace the ever shifting alignments of the balance of power with an overriding common purpose. In Wilson's words, peace depends "not on a balance of a power but on a community of power... Nations agree that there shall be but one combination and that is the combination of all against the wrongdoer."

That hope was disappointed in the League of Nations and later by the United Nations. And not by accident. While every country has some interest in elaborating a concept that it can invoke in its own defence, the willingness to run risks varies with history, geography, power; in other words, with national interest. Thus, during the Cold War, the so-called Non-Aligned Movement invoked a rhetoric of moral superiority to mask the calculation that bargaining position depended on finding a position between the two sides. The non-aligned sought to avoid antagonising either side but especially the side of which they were most

afraid, which also paradoxically posed the greater threat to the peace: the Soviet Union.

Despite the near unanimity of UN decisions, historians will in all likelihood treat the Gulf crisis as special case rather than as a watershed. A unusual set of circumstances combined to foster consensus. The Soviet Union, wracked by domestic crises and needing foreign economic assistance, had no stomach for conflict with the US. But this does not mean that Soviet objectives in the Middle East in the post war period will necessarily be identical or even compatible with those of the US. China, though wary of superpower military action, sought to demonstrate the advantages of practical cooperation despite Tiananmen Square and ideological conflict. For Beijing considers Washington an important partner in China's determination to resist either Soviet or Japanese hegemony in Asia.

France was torn by conflicting emotions: concern over the reaction of the five million Muslims resident in France; its quest for preferential status in the Arab world and, moreover, the desire to keep America linked to France should its nightmare of German resurgence come true. Thus France for once resolved its ambivalence in favour of our view; however, it would be unrealistic to treat a practical decision as a philosophic commitment. Among the permanent members of the Security Council, Great Britain was the only country to hold views practically identical with those of the US.

The Gulf states and Saudi Arabia saw their very survival at stake and were not much concerned with the principle invoked to safeguard their existence. Syria's President Hafez Assad has been in mortal conflict with Saddam Hussain for 10 years preceding the Gulf crisis

and will likely continue to struggle if Saddam remains in office after the war. As for Egypt, the rulers of the Nile competed with the rulers of Mesopotamia for 4,000 years before the doctrine of collective security was invented.

The Persian-Arab conflict is of more recent vintage as history is measured in the Middle East; it is only 2,000 years old. This is why Iran will support the UN resolution only until Iraq is sufficiently weakened. After that Iran will probably continue its historic quest for dominance in the Gulf by pressurising America to leave.

Finally, two special non-recurring circumstances facilitated the creation of the global alliance. The first was the noxious character of Saddam Hussain. It had been preceded by the use of gas warfare against Saddam's domestic opponents like Iran.

Most poignantly, American pre-eminence cannot last. Had Kuwait been invaded two years later, the American defence budget would have declined so as to preclude a massive overseas deployment. Nor can the American economy indefinitely sustain a policy of essentially unilateral global interventionism — indeed, we had to seek a foreign subsidy of at least \$50 billion to sustain this crisis. Henceforth the US will not be in a position to supply the vast preponderance of military force for security missions far from its shores. Therefore, neither the US nor foreign nations should treat the concept of the new world order as an institutionalisation of recent practices.

The world into which we are moving will be infinitely more complex. Ideological challenges will be fewer; the danger of nuclear war with the Soviet Union will be sharply reduced. On the other hand, no one can know how well Soviet command and control arrangements for nuclear weapons will withstand domestic upheaval. Elsewhere local conflicts will be both more likely and, given modern technology, more lethal. The col-

lapse of the Soviet empire in eastern Europe and the loosening bonds of the western alliance have unleashed nationalist rivalries not seen since World War I. The post-colonial period has spawned fanatical fundamentalist forces very hard for the comfortable, if not smug-industrial democracies to comprehend, much less to master. Economic rivalry among Japan, which is growing into super-power status, the European Community, which is becoming increasingly assertive, and the US will no longer be restrained by overriding security concerns. The confluence of these elements will characterise the new era as one of turmoil and require major adjustments in how we think about international relations.

US policy makers must recognise that the new world order cannot be built to American specifications. America cannot force-feed a global sense of community where none exists. But it has an opportunity for creating more limited communities based on a genuine sense of shared purpose.

History so far has shown us only two roads to international stability: domination or equilibrium. We have neither the resources for domination nor is such a course compatible with our values. So we are brought back to a concept maligned in much of America's intellectual history — the balance of power.

There is no escaping the irony that our triumph in the Cold War has projected us into a world where we must operate by maxims that historically have made Americans uncomfortable. To many Americans, the most objectionable feature of the balance of power is its apparent moral neutrality. For the balance of power is concerned above all with preventing one power or group of powers from achieving hegemony. Winston Churchill described: "The policy of England takes no account of which nation is it that seeks the overlord ship of Europe. It is concerned solely with whoever is the strongest or the potentially dominating tyrant. It is a law of public policy which we are following, and not

a mere expedient dictated by accidental circumstances or likes or dislikes..."

A policy based on such concepts knows few permanent enemies and fewer permanent friends. In the current Gulf crisis it would avoid branding Iraq as forever beyond the pale. Rather, it would seek to balance rivalries as old as history by striving for an equilibrium between Iraq, Iran, Syria, and other regional powers.

It is a paradox that no nation is in a better position to contribute to a new world order than the US: it is domestically cohesive, its economy is less vulnerable to outside forces, its military capacity for the foreseeable future is still the world's largest and most effective. Our challenge is the price of success: triumph in the Cold War has produced a world requiring adjustment of traditional concepts. But the price of success is one for which most other nations would envy us.

(Courtesy, India Today)

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207, 2nd Cross Street,
Colombo - 11.

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The Limits of the Eurocentric View

Laksiri Jayasuriya

A leading Japanese newspaperman¹ speaking in Perth observed that the freedom of speech was one of three (the others being land reform and role of women) outstanding changes introduced by MacArthur and the Allies that has continued to the present day. This is an observation which is in itself of considerable significance; but my purpose in referring to it is to draw attention to its relevance to the theme of this morning's Panel — Freedom of speech in a cultural context. The Japanese newspaperman's remark appears to assume that the very concept of, and the value we attach to, freedom of speech is a distinctly Western notion, one which in particular is associated with Western liberal thought as it has emerged in the evolution of the Western intellectual tradition. This assumption is partly true because it can be shown that the tradition of free and critical inquiry is also characteristic of other intellectual traditions such as Buddhism in India (see Jayatilleke).

But, as Thomas Merton (1964) has rightly observed, a distinctive feature of Gandhi's life and vocation, was Gandhi's discovery of the East through the West. For this reason alone, as I shall argue, it is instructive and illuminating to see how principles and ideals such as freedom are embedded in different cultural systems and may lead to varying interpretations and political experiences. Let's briefly consider freedom of speech as we know it in Western society and culture.

A central premise in the idea of modern liberalism, as understood in Western thought, and the belief that the essence of human nature is man's freedom, lies in the notion of individual sovereignty. This approach is firmly grounded in the philosophy of individualism which regards individuals as the best judges of their interest and, accordingly, they are encouraged to act as free and morally responsible individuals. The ideology of freedom in this mode of thinking embodies above all the crucial idea of the dignity and worth of the individual, and forms an essential part of the Judeo Christian tradition.

For this reason alone, the notion of freedom of speech, as espoused by international bodies, is distinctly culture-bound in that it is customarily associated with Western liberal democracy and built around the fundamental idea of individual autonomy and freedom. This and allied notions, arising from the philosophy of Individualism, were of course central to the concerns of the Western intellectual tradition; and furthermore, were influential in determining the shape and characteristics of the emerging new liberal democratic state in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries. The new industrialised economy, the rise of modern science and the critical attitude to knowledge and inquiry were all key elements of this tradition.

What nurtured and sustained this mode of thinking — the ideology of freedom — was the deep-seated philosophy of individualism and scientific humanism which were so characteristic and dominant in the Western intellectual tradition, particularly of Western liberalism. And as one American social theorist, John Gardner (1966) once put it,

If one had to select a single conception that is central to the consensus in our own society, it would be the ideal of the dignity and worth of the individual

What this exemplifies is the concept of a person in a free society; a concept of person, as a distinct being, with inherent rights, equal in rights with all others and free to choose and develop one's capacities, pursue one's interests untrammelled by external constraints such as those represented by tradition and authority.

In short, freedom of speech is inextricably bound with the values of individualism, such as tolerance and fairness, but most significantly, with the notion of individual autonomy. It is this sense of autonomy of persons and a sense of unencumbered Self which is prior to all else that creates the difficult paradox of freedom. It is a paradox which lies in the undeniable fact that individual autonomy can exist only within a larger social enterprise. As the British philosopher Plant (1970) observes, quoting Aristotle, 'he that could live apart from society might be beast or a God but not a human being' (p40). The completely unfettered individual, the notion of unencumbered self' it is suggested is an unreal mythical abstraction. The recognition of this fact has forced us to revise and re-examine the axioms of free speech buried in the orthodoxy of the Western intellectual tradition, especially of individualism.

Through the work of scholars like Isaiah Berlin (1969), we now have a more comprehensive understanding of the concept of freedom and liberty in contemporary western social and political

¹ Yukiyo Matsuyama, Chairman, Editorial Board *Asahi Shimbun*, in an address in Perth on March 1, 1991.

(A Paper read at a recent P. E. N. conference by Prof. Jayasuriya in Perth, University of Western Australia)

cal theory; and, among other things, it is one which points to two important facets of freedom — negative and positive freedom. It is the notion of negative freedom which dominates the contemporary ideology of freedom as in the doctrine of free speech. This interpretation owes its origin to Mill's classic essay on liberty and the writings of Rousseau on social contract. The notion of 'negative freedom' sums up the dominant liberal view where 'freedom', as in freedom of speech, is conceived of in terms of absence of interference and restrictions. Liberty and freedom are seen primarily as the removal of arbitrary interferences.

As Berlin (1969) observes, we need to contrast this with the more European conception which suggests the freedom had more of a positive nature in that it was a question of the achievement through the exercise of reason of goals which lie beyond the Self. This difference is often expressed as the difference lies between 'Freedom from' and 'Freedom to'. Communitarian critics of Western liberalism (see Sandel, 1984) have been to the fore in drawing attention to the limitations of Western individualism, in particular the concept of the abstracted 'self' which lies inherent in this dominant tradition of Western thought. These theorists question the view that the Self; the unencumbered Self; is free, independent and capable of exercising an unrestrained choice. The alternative view states that the Self is defined, and indeed, constituted by one's place in one's society, the family, tribe or community, and especially by the membership status conferred on persons.

The tension between the negative and positive aspects of freedom is a perplexing dilemma which has baffled and intrigued modern political and social theorists. Among these, Paul Tillich (1963) stands out as one who has endeavoured to grapple with the seemingly contradictory requirements of self-affirmation (typified in the philosophy of

individualism) and commitments beyond the self (more characteristic of recent communitarian theorists). Tillich sees the individual self as reflecting a larger harmony, a cosmic sense of the individual over and beyond the confines of the individual Self. Others, see the self as being defined and governed by the common purposes, ends, and goals of one's community. Within him such a theoretical viewpoint, one would defend the right to free speech somewhat differently from one based on a theory of individual rights. The concept of a common good, arising from one's role as a citizen, requires the right to free speech in that it enables the pursuit of a rich life of political participation which is more worthy than one unconcerned with public affairs.

Interestingly, several commentators (see Glyn Richards, 1982) have noted that an approach like Tillich's in many respects espouses a point of view very similar to the philosophy of Gandhi based on Truth, Ahimsa and Satyagraha. In brief, for Gandhi, the realisation of Truth is essentially one of Self-Realisation but the Gandhian concept of Self, like that of Tillich, goes beyond the narrow confines of the individual Self. It is a Self in Man which is to be at one with the Ultimate Reality. There is here a cosmic sense on the Self which is expressed variously in the Indian intellectual tradition and is markedly different from that of the more scientific rationalist, atomistic way of thinking characteristic of much Western theorising about Self. Therefore 'freedom to,' as for Tillich is one of acting in unity with Truth in the larger cosmic sense.

Let me express this difference in another way. The Civil Rights Movement can be justified in the name of human dignity and respect for persons, or alternatively, in terms of the need to approve the full membership status of all citizens and their need to participate in the common life of the nation. To take

another example, we can see how the problem of self-alienation is conceptualised and understood in these different philosophical traditions. In Gandhian thought, essentially it means alienation from Reality, an alienation from Truth or God because of ignorance of the true nature of the Self (Atman).

This Gandhian view may be seen as being characteristic of the Hindu intellectual tradition, which, the Indian philosopher Patima Bowes (1978) says, presents an organic world view — that is one in which there is an idea of an eternal world view; it is, one in which there is an idea of an eternal cosmic order pervading all existence. This is a viewpoint which differs importantly from the individualistic scientific rationalist world view of Western liberalism which regards all things as having a distinct nature of their own and existing on their own. Hence, the concept of alienation, as in Fromm and others, is from other Selves, their products and achievements.

The main purpose of drawing attention to these different world views is to illustrate the fact that the ideology of freedom, rooted in different traditions and cultural systems, takes on different forms. The dominant mode of thinking in Western liberalism, especially when grafted on alien cultures, leads to different manifestations and expressions. Thus, in a culture governed by the Gandhian philosophy, freedom of speech, and other freedoms may well exhibit characteristics features different from that of Western liberalism dominated by the philosophy of individualism. There may of course be broad similarities between different intellectual traditions. Thus the Gandhian view, may perhaps come close to Tillich's viewpoint or a communitarian view which regards the individual self as being firmly anchored to the community, be it the family, class or nation. And, clearly, the Self cannot

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Gulf War Reveals Nature of New U. S. Foreign Policy

James Petras

The Gulf war reveals new important shifts in the nature of international politics. With its economic power declining but in the absence of a Soviet counterweight, US is relying more on military and ideological forces to expand its global influence: High-tech destructive air wars are in store for those countries refusing to toe the line. James Petras draws 100 conclusions on the nature of US foreign policy.

The US war against Iraq requires us to re-think many of our basic notions about war, peace and democracy, the position of the US in the new world order and the nature of the post-Cold War period.

Firstly, the peculiarities and perversities that define the specific character of late imperial politics are evidenced in the mechanism of conquest and control: 'air-imperialism' from the top and 'death-squad democracies' from below.

The massive use of air power in the Gulf war is not simply technological warfare at the service of empire, but an expression of a new style and perhaps, phase, of imperial politics.

The relative decline of US economic investment and trade has increased the weight of the 'ideological and military' components of the US in shaping the priorities of policy and the instruments in pursuing them. The goals becomes less concerned with seizing economic resources than with military destruction of the enemy, even at the cost of the so-called strategic economic target.

James Petras is professor of sociology at the State University of New York, Binghamton, USA.

Moreover, the ascendancy of the military-ideological components of the state over and against the economic are evidenced in the post-invasion period: in every instance, from Grenada to Panama to Nicaragua, the US demonstrates the absence of an economic capacity to reconstruct a viable economy.

What emerges instead of viable economies are 'para-military' contingents drawn from the US-trained armed forces to limit the political options in post-electoral contests. It is clear that the US air war in the Gulf will not produce viable economies and open political systems, nor is it likely that the US economic interests, by themselves, can reassert their pre-eminence.

The second feature that the war reveals is that as public opinion in the US turns against the domestic human costs of imperial wars, it spurs imperial policy-makers to put increasing emphasis on destructive wars by remote control.

Air wars and high-tech warfare to intensify destruction in the shortest time span is Washington's response to durable majoritarian opposition to costly overseas interventions. An anti-war public means less tolerance for prolonged, 'labour-intensive' wars; short high-tech war is the obverse side of the growing anti-war public.

The third significant feature of the US-Iraq war was the degree of unanimity at the top and disintegration of Congressional opposition. The total mobilisation of mass media behind state policy was striking: the 'relative autonomy of the media' evident in the late stage of the Vietnam war has been replaced by state propaganda.

The fusion of the media and the state was evident throughout the invasion: the repetition of the lie that the massive bombing of civilians in Baghdad was merely directed at 'military targets'; the countless commentaries focusing on state strategy, objectives and support while denying or minimising large-scale public opposition in the streets of all major cities.

The absence of any Congressional questioning of an offensive attack and the massive bombing of cities reveals the monolithic nature of the political system: the totalitarian principal of 'unanimity' reigned supreme.

The war crisis revealed the degree to which all the restrictive mechanisms inherent in the political system operate and converge to marginalise public visibility of opposition and promote state policy. One is forced to ask why the overweening concern to manipulate 'news and public opposition' — could it be that the rulers fear that any public debate would open the floodgate to a massive opposition?

The apparent power of the war-makers in totally controlling the media and dictating policy might be resting on fragile foundations. The absence of any of the accepted channels of public debate illust-

rates the further decay of democracy — and clearly suggests the incompatibility between democracy and late imperialism; military conquests with economic and social costs are incompatible with political hegemony of electoral militarists.

Fourthly, the larger meaning of the US war is found in the 'lesson' it is supposed to purvey to the rest of the Third World. Massive attacks and wholesale destruction are in store for whoever encroaches on US hegemonic positions.

The nature of the war itself, its 'total' character, the offensive nature (absence of any effort to fabricate a 'defensive' pretext) and the phoney built-up of Hussein's military capacity, serve as a backdrop to exaggerating the nature of the US military victory. All these facts of the war have a great deal to do with amplifying the image of US global power to various potential and real competitors and adversaries.

On the most immediate level, Bush hopes to use the military success to overcome growing discontent with the deepening economic crisis: this is a temporary expedient that will pass as the recession is prolonged.

More fundamentally, Bush's terror bombing of Iraq plays the same role as Truman's nuclear bombing of Hiroshima: it is a method of sending a message to 'third parties' that the US is prepared and willing to massively intervene when local surrogates of clients are threatened.

Whether in fact Washington can effectively go the route of intervening in every regional conflict is another matter. But the use of air power as a principal weapon and the new Bush doctrine of threatening to destroy countries in order to save them has been transmitted throughout the Third World. Many Third World leaders are likely to take this into account in organising their strategies of political change.

Fifth, the 'militarisation of North-South conflict' evidenced

in the Gulf war, is only one aspect of a broader set of global development that suggest a movement toward a kind of re-colonisation of the peripheral areas of the world economy. Alongside of the notion of 'total war', late imperialism is characterised by large-scale debt pillage, military invasions and the promotion of free trade regional blocs hegemonised by one of the three economic superpowers.

The relative economic decline of the US has been increasingly accompanied by a virulent revival and renewal of its imperial claims, now reinforced by its willingness to engage in total war — a warning not only to local challengers but more surreptitiously directed at its global allies-competitors.

The notion that imperial markets grow out of the bomb bay of a B-52 is merely an adaptation of a traditional imperial strategy to a different technological age. The scope, depth and impact of the economic recession will certainly determine whether the Iraq strategy will breathe new life into imperial revival or wheather it is the last pyrotechnics before the big fall.

Sixth, the political groundwork that enabled the 'Grand Coalition' into being reflects a specific set of conditions in West Asia and a particular conjuncture in world politics. As such, it is highly unlikely that it can be replicated in other contexts.

In the future, the US will have less political support for its military policies and, hence, the projection of military power to regain global influence will be politically costlier and less effective.

Briefly speaking, several factors allowed the US to form the coalition.

● The US policy of supporting Iraq in its war with Iran weakened the latter and the enmity undermined any common front.

● In Turkey, support for the US from the minority, neo-liberal Ozal regime, product of a US-supported military coup a decade earlier, reflects powerful traditional Kemalist military sentiments, contemporary social democratic pluralities or growing Islamic currents.

● US collaboration with Israel has weakened elite Arab nationalism and contributed to bringing Egypt and Syria into the coalition. Immobilisation of the larger Arab public indefinitely is a highly unlikely outcome.

● Soviet and Eastern collaboration in the coalition has been extremely costly with few immediate or future benefits in store: trade declined, debts were unpaid, oil supplies were disrupted, oil prices soared, etc. As the first wave of big-pocketed 'new thinkers' are replaced by policy realists, it is unlikely that national interests will be perpetually sacrificed to enlarge US hegemonic influence.

● Germany and Japan, who, even in the Gulf crisis, did not provide the US with either material or financial support, are likely to further resist US military occupations of strategic areas in the future. The reason is obvious: German and Japanese global power is rooted in markets, not territory, in competitive products and not political clients. To the extent that Washington's territorial military presence gives the US leverage over markets and resources through clients, it gains advantage over its competitive adversaries.

Seventh, the Bush policy is a continuation and extension of the Carter-Reagan 'roll-back' policy: a strategy designed to 'reverse' rather than merely 'contain' revolutionary regimes. The policy has evolved from support of surrogates during the 1980s (death squads in El Salvador/Guatemala, UNITA in Angola, Contras in Nicaragua, Pol Pot in Cambodia, etc) to direct military interventions in Grenada, Panama and Iraq.

Over time, the size and importance of the targeted country in the particular region increases, as does the size and scope of the US military forces and the level of destructiveness. While hospitals and schools were bombed in Grenada and working class neighbourhoods in Panama, in Iraq major urban centres and civilian installations throughout the country were targeted.

In each ensuing invasion, the presence of US military forces is more pronounced and there is an increasing tendency toward establishing a 'permanent presence', a re-colonisation process. One has to ask if this responds to merely new geopolitical doctrines or whether there are deeper structural interests involved.

Is the long-term military commitment a response to the declining competitive position of the US in the market — part of a neo-mercantilist strategy to seize military initiatives over oil in order to have leverage against competitors in West Asia?

Eighth, the unrestrained bombing of Iraq, the notion of unleashing total war, is Washington's response to the absence of any Soviet retaliatory potential. The Soviet demise as a countervailing power has contributed toward increasing Washington's willingness to use force against recalcitrant former Soviet allies and other Third World adversaries.

The Soviet foreign ministry's subsequent co-operation with Washington in the Gulf further reinforced the imperial 'triumphalist', since in the Bush Administration the notion is that 'there is no stopping us now'.

The notion that East-West co-operation would lead to peace and prosperity has been once again proven to be false. The East is in its worst economic crisis since the second world war and the US has militarily invaded two countries since new thinking became the vogue at the international peace con-

ferences. International bodies and global alliances, whatever their pronouncements, have all but failed to restrain imperial policies where they have not provided a 'legitimate cover' for intervention.

Ninth, the massive public demonstrations world wide against the US attack of Iraq and the majoritarian public polls against military attack, suggest that the 'global alliance' is more an alliance of regimes and leaders — not of peoples. In many parts of the world, the public feel that they are the targets — as cannon fodder, accomplices or victims — and have spontaneously acted in unison across national boundaries.

The pompous self-serving Security Council resolutions and yea-saying supine Parliaments and Congress did not deter massive public protests throughout Europe, the US and parts of the Third World. The most popular saying. We are citizens of the world, speaks eloquently to the increasing divorce between existing electoral politics and the interests of *de facto* disenfranchised citizens.

With rising of abstention, electoral politics no longer attracts discontented citizens — East or West, North or South. Thirty-six per cent voted in the recent US elections; 25% in the Colombian Constitutional Convention; slightly over 50% in Poland; and the tendencies in Western Europe are everywhere in the same direction.

Citizens no longer want to be captives of electoral processes controlled by the wealthy and powerful, spoken for by politicians who address the needs of bankers and investors, manipulated by the mass media which speaks for war and apologises for recessions.

And finally, change and opposition in the 1990s will come from movements in the streets and popular assemblies: new agendas will not result from Congresses and Parliaments that vote for overseas wars and cut-backs at home. The new movements are primarily made up

of working people and their children in secondary schools — not university students — as the anti-Gulf war demonstrations showed

The anti-war movement drew on the rancour over the swindles and scandals in the banks and savings and loans, the growing mass lay-offs and deteriorating health and educational conditions. Domestic programmes and wage incomes today are drained off to buttress a declining global economic power.

Washington's triumphal celebrations over its military victories in the Gulf will be ephemeral as the economic crisis at home and the alienated and disenchanted citizens against the war increasingly take centre stage.

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The Limits . . .

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be understood except in terms of these social attachments and obligations.

To conclude, the main purpose of this brief presentation is to make a plea on this occasion — an international gathering of writers and scholars — for adopting a less Eurocentric, and a more post-'Orientalist' (Said, 1985) approach to concepts and ideologies such as freedom and human rights. By understanding the roots from which idea systems are drawn, we may be able to understand them better, especially when they are transplanted elsewhere as in my opening reference to the remarks of the Japanese newspaperman. Indeed, what was most revealing in these comments was his characterisation of the Japanese culture and society, as one based on consensus, conformity and a harmony, all immersed in familial values. In this instance freedom of speech rooted in a different value system, has been planted on an alien soil, and is likely to manifest itself in its own characteristic ways, leading to different political experiences and outcomes.

U. S. Revises Weapons Systems for Future Wars in Third World

Meera Nanda

Like Hiroshima and Nagasaki nearly half a century ago, Baghdad has been turned into a bloody laboratory. Once again, innocent lives are being lost to test a new generation of weapons. And like their atomic predecessors that ushered in the Cold War, the 'smart' bombs pounding Iraq threaten to, once again, radically alter the international balance of power.

They are meant to inaugurate a new Pax Americana — an absolute and unchallenged military supremacy of the US all over the world, but especially over the politically restive regions in the Third World.

To match its weapons with its role as the world's policeman, the Bush administration is even redesigning the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) or the 'Star Wars' programme to make it more suitable for 'middle-intensity' wars against distant Third World countries — a scenario very similar to the Persian Gulf conflict.

In his State of the Union address on 29 January, President Bush promised to rejuvenate the SDI. In a passage welcomed by the hawks in the defence establishment, Mr Bush said that he has 'directed that the SDI programme be refocused on providing protection from limited ballistic missile strikes — whatever be their source. Let us pursue an SDI programme that can deal with any future threat to the United States, to our forces overseas and to our friends and allies.'

Dr Meera Nanda is an Indian journalist specialising in science and technology issues. She has written several articles for Indian and US newspapers and magazines.

To match its weapons systems with the role of world policeman, the US is redesigning its "Star Wars" programme to make it more suitable for 'middle-intensity' wars in Third World countries, similar to the Persian Gulf conflict.

To show that he meant business, his administration followed his rhetoric with a defence budget on 4 February that asks for \$4.6 billion for SDI for the fiscal year 1992, a sizeable \$1.7 billion more than the \$2.9 billion the Congress approved for SDI for the current fiscal year. Moreover, within a day of his address, Lockheed Corporation announced 'unqualified success' with a new missile, ERIS, that can intercept warheads in space.

The call for reviving 'Star Wars' in the middle of a conventional war against a distant Third World country appears a little misplaced and needs an explanation.

One interpretation, espoused by the *New York Times* defence analyst Leslie Gelb, is that the hawks are simply using the success of the ground-based Patriot interceptors in destroying Iraq's Scud missiles aimed at Israel and Saudi Arabia, to vindicate — and pump more money into — Regan's grand vision of space-based missile interceptors.

The Patriot, in this view, was never a part of, and in Gelb's words, 'not even a spin-off of the SDI. Gelb dates back its origins to the Ford administration and credits the Carter administration for supporting it.

It was initially meant to shoot down aircraft and the Army later changed the software and

made a missile interceptor out of it. Gelb charged that those who insist on linking the Patriot with the Star Wars were only trying to 'keep the military spending around \$300 billion after the war ends'.

But a closer look at the kind of modifications in SDI the Bush administration has been proposing for the last two years helps explain why they are so excited about the idea just now. If Bush's version of the SDI — called GAPLS or Global Protection Against Limited Missile Strikes — succeeds, the US will be in a position to deploy SDI-like anti-missile gear anywhere in the world, on demand, in a short time. Bush is proposing nothing less than a portable Star Wars that the US will need for carrying out its new, self-assigned role as the world's policeman.

The key phrases in Mr Bush's speech are 'limited ballistic missile strikes' and 'whatever be their source'. Ronald Reagan's Star Wars was meant to be an 'impenetrable shield' capable of intercepting virtually unlimited numbers of warheads at any given time.

Moreover, Reagan never had any doubts about the source: they were all supposed to be Soviet missiles aimed at the US. Bush's GPALS has no pretensions of impenetrability. It is designed to intercept a limited number of missiles — up to 100 at a time, a scenario more

likely if the adversary is less powerful than the Soviets.

This brings us to ask who the new adversary might be. Ever since the Berlin Wall fell, the US defence establishment has been frantically searching for a new Enemy against which the US can continue to 'stand tall'. Theoretically, it can be any country or region, anywhere in the world, that dares to challenge the interests of the US and its Western allies.

But the consensus is that the Enemy is more likely to be from the Third World. The forces of nationalism, militant religious ideologies and the sophisticated weapons some Third World countries have obtained are presented as a 'clear and present' danger to Western countries' access to natural resources, trade routes and assets. With NATO a spent force, the US can still claim to 'lead' the industrialised countries if it promises them a new umbrella of security against the Third World 'threat'.

To make the need for protection appear urgent, Third World dictators unfriendly to the US — Quaddafi, Noriega and now Saddam Hussein — have been demonised beyond recognition. The spread of ballistic missiles and other sophisticated arms to Third World countries is no doubt unhealthy and poses a threat to regional peace.

But in the past two years, the US defence establishment has made it the centre-piece of its planning. In the statements made by defence strategists one finds an obsession with maintaining access to resources and earnest discussions about how to protect Europe, Israel and even mainland US from missiles from 'hostile Third World powers'.

GPALS is thus designed to protect the US in 'middle-intensity' wars, possibly against Third World armies. Technologically, GPALS is simply a scaled-down version of the SDI. It would use both ground- and

space-based interceptors, the latter consisting of hordes of 'brilliant pebbles' — satellites that can home in and destroy enemy warheads in outer space.

But GPALS would need about one-fourth of the 4,612 brilliant pebbles and about half of the 2,000 ground-based interceptors required for a full-blown SDI. The entire package is estimated to cost only \$30 billion, about half the budget for the first phase of the SDI — not an insignificant consideration for selling the idea to a wary American public.

The true value of the GPALS, however, lies in what it can do to cement the Pax Americana. The Persian Gulf conflict has shown the feasibility of assembling a GPALS-like system in a distant region in about six months. The US already possesses the rudimentary elements of GPALS and has the technological ability to deploy it on foreign territory.

All it would take is to fly upgraded versions of the Patriot to serve as ground interceptors and put a few missile-destroying satellites in orbit. The technology for launching satellites over strategic areas is commonplace, as evidenced by the spy satellite the US launched over Iraq just before the hostilities began.

Once it is able to deploy GPALS over any 'theatre', the US would be in a position to neutralise the adversary's missiles and destroy any deterrent it might have. It can proceed to invade and carpet-bomb the opponent with impunity — like it has been doing in Iraq. GPALS can help the US minimise the loss of life and material of its own forces while wreaking havoc on its adversaries.

One sure consequence of such a strategy will be that Vietnam will cease to haunt the conscience of this country. Once they can promise to bring their own men and women back

safely, the future presidents will only become more trigger happy.

Moreover, as an editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* pointed out approvingly, such a system can 'serve US diplomatic goals'. If the new world order depends on building coalitions, the editorial continues, 'the US job will be easier if it can offer protection against enemy missiles.' In other words, the US can extort loyalties and concessions by offering protection, an age-old mafia tactic.

What makes the GPALS more worrisome than the SDI is that the technology that goes into it is already fairly mature, 'Theatre defence', SDI Director Henry Cooper told the *Wall Street Journal*, can be deployed within five years. Already a number of candidates exist for ground interceptors; Erint a highly mobile interceptor and Arrow, a joint US-Israeli missile.

Lockheed's recent announcement about the success of ERIS adds another very powerful interceptor capable of protecting an area of 100 square miles (as compared to about 2 miles for the Patriot) against missiles moving many times faster than Iraq's Scuds.

The space component — the 'brilliant pebbles' — has not been tested under combat. But as SDI director Henry Cooper told the American Association for Advancement of Science last December, 'innovation is now possible because of the maturing technologies that allow smaller, lighter, cheaper, more powerful key technical elements.' 'In an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, Mr. Cooper insisted that if 'adequately funded GPALS could be humming soon after the year 2000.

A carry-along Star Wars is only one element of the American arsenal for waging 'middle intensity' wars around the world. In a March 1990 report 'Critical Technologies Plan', the Pen-

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And commerce settles on every tree

Zuhail

A frequent visitor to this country, an American, was here around the time when the media was full of praise for Chitrasena's dance achievement stretching across half a century or more.

He happened to read some of the tributes being paid to this great dancer and discovered that his home which was a kind of Shantiniketan for Sri Lankan artistes was also the place where the country's national anthem came to be written by Ananda Samarakoon.

"If it was my country," he told a Sri Lankan friend, "this place would have been made into a national shrine." He seemed to be surprised that the Niketan for the artistes itself had been demolished and the place left to look forlorn and desolate.

It is true that the East places a different value on the art and the artiste, but no where in its long history has it neglected its arts or its artistes.

Leave alone the cultural importance of this question, even from the utilitarian point of view the passer-by is bewildered at the neglect of a buildings site, after the tenant was compelled to leave, so that a businessman could buy it.

Bureaucracy is of course notoriously indifferent to the arts and seems to endorse the view that when nations grow old, the arts grow cold and commerce settles on every tree. But for almost a decade now even commerce has hardly condescended to settle on Chitrasena's former home for the artistes.

Which itself is a mystery to all except Bevilgamuwe Lapaya Gurunanse, the 80 year-old Yakdessa (which may be loosely translated as devil dancer), one of Chitrasena's fabulous drummers. His explanation for the failure of commerce to settle on this place, he has told Chitrasena, is all that drumming and the consequent vibrations set up, enough to make the

place a hallowed shrine by itself and keep the dark and evil forces away from it.

Progress?

Measuring progress and development seems a difficult thing. Recently we witnessed the celebration of 125 years of municipal government in this country. Civic amenities, I must say, improved quite a lot from the days when water used to be supplied by *pakkaliyas*, men carrying water in leather bags. These men have disappeared, but the word has got lodged in the vocabulary of local politics to be used viciously when the occasion demanded. As the garrisoned British troops appear to have benefited mostly from this service the men who served them seem to have been held in disrepute.

Latterly *pandankaraya* has overtaken *pakkaliya*, as a word or abuse, but *pakkaliya*, as when Colvin rolls it round his tongue, is more than a mere torch bearer, he is a bootlicker.

But to come back to civic amenities, there was a time when the water carts of the Municipality used to water the roads to keep it less dusty for passers-by, even the bulls that drew the carts which made up most of the vehicular traffic of that time could take a drink of water from the public troughs set up for the purpose.

But today, far from the animals in the city being looked after, even the citizens are left without any public urinals. How the Municipality can think of celebrating their achievements and inviting distinguished people like Joe Sim to watch them having fun, is a thought that has been worrying more than one person.

This is not the first time this question is being raised. I have read quite a few letters in the national press complaining about the omission of this amenity by the city fathers. Even a popular rendezvous like the Galle Face Green is without

any kind of toilet facility.

As a result of the permission given by the authorities to demolish public lavatories citizens can be found relieving themselves uninhibitedly in public.

Sometime back a magistrate even fined some citizens for using a public wall in the Fort as a public urinal. Had the Municipality, too, been fined for not setting up alternatives to the demolished lavatories, justice would not only have been done but also, more important, seem to have been done.

War's casualty

What with truth being the first casualty, the recently concluded Gulf war has left no winners. Even the more sober minded journals and news magazines abandoned their pose of 'objectivity and calm appraisal' as one reader complained to the London Economist.

He was a representative of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and he seemed quite piqued by the constant needling of the Economist about Japan 'not spending pledged funds quickly and effectively enough.'

'Surely you could have distinguished,' the Ministry official pointed out, 'between the supposed desirability of a clear-cut, instantaneous response from Japan... and the realities of the difficulties facing Japan. These are constitutional, political (especially anti-war public opinion), fiscal (as elsewhere there is no public cornucopia) and administrative.'

A European reader of the Economist was even more bitter. Referring to a picture of Saddam on the Economist's cover with the legend 'Don't Save This Face' he says: 'You could equally well—and equally foolishly—plaster it across George Bush's. Either way it trivialises a conflict in which a diversity of legitimate state, continental and ideological issues are confronted.'

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The Koggala EPZ: The Potential

Ariya Abeysinghe

President Ranasinghe Premadasa's appointment of a high powered task force to plan, implement and monitor progress, to start work on the development of the Koggala Exports processing Zone, within the framework of the Master Plan for the Southern Province Accelerated Development Programme, is timely and is in the right direction. Amongst the plus factors the area is endowed with 220 acres of crown land, 30 megawatts of electricity are available from the Polwatte oya, ground water of 400,000 gallons per day is readily available, no sewerage and surface drainage problems, proximity to the Galle harbour which can take 40 containers per day to service the Colombo port, road and other infrastructure are available. There is a pool of floating population from Ruhuna to Colombo and from the EPZ's in KIA and Biyagama, from the South who could fit in immediately with the proposed Koggala EPZ (KEPZ) Excellency. The President has stressed that the KEPZ should concentrate on production for export and employment generation with industries that would link with the local economy and thereby contribute to the general economic growth in the region. The uniqueness in this "regional" approach as against the "project" approach in that it will fit in well with the broader regional matrix.

The prerequisite to a long term KEPZ development are the "Ruhuna Expressway" the widening of the Galle road, the development of the Galle port, the organising of a package of investments incentives to attract investments to KEPZ. Broadly, priority industries identified have been light engineering, food processing, gems and jewellery, wood work. It is believed that these carried high potential for both male and female employment, for skill-

based industrial development and for links to the domestic economy. These proposals are examined in the article.

2. THE PORT OF GALLE

The port is a natural harbour of 320 hectares with facilities to berth vessel in the stream as well as alongside the jetty, the port facilities are located between the quay and the breakwater off Gibbet Islands and is therefore, narrow. The port is sheltered from the Ocean by stone masonry breakwaters and the Buona Vista peninsula. The soil of the seabed comprises, a sand silt or silty sand. In the seabed of the bay are boulders and rocks. Between 1982 - 84 the channels outside and inside the breakwater were dredged to a depth of 9.6 meters and 8.9 meters removing about 850,000 cu m. inclusive of 25,000 cu m. of rock dredging.

During the South West monsoon the winds make it difficult to ensure calm water conditions as the bay opens to the Southwest. A fishery port a yacht harbour, a slipway and a factory are located around the bay.

Port facilities provided are limited to the following:

- facilities to berth vessels in the stream and along the jetty
- a quay of approx. 425 meters enables along berthing of two small vessels - water depth being 8.8 meters
- two warehouses which provides approx. 5400 sq. m. floor space for storage.
- transit cargo sheds of 8000 sq.m. storage
- approx. 12,000 m. tons of baggage cargo could be stored
- Offices
- Customs accommodation

- rest rooms, canteen, toilets
- a rail link partly carried out rail (road encroachments needs to be cleared)
- Colombo - Hambantota trunk road, A 2 runs besides the North-East perimeter of the port.
- 500-ton 65 ton shipway (of Galle Shipway and Engineering (Pte) Ltd and a machine shop for repair work
- a fishery port equipped with modern refrigerators, warehouses, and an ice making factory and a yacht harbour (opened by late Hon. Phillip Gunawardene when he was the Minister of Industries and Fisheries.)

According to a study done by the Overseas coastal Area Institute of Japan (JICA) the Galle harbour improvements suggested are:-

- (a) a breakwater and/or a new wharf system to minimise monsoonal effect.
- (b) seabed rocks and boulder clearance in the operational area.
- (c) dredging of channels in the operational area.

The benefits from the long term investments are likely to bring the following:-

- (1) the port of Colombo is on the verge of saturation.
- (2) a high proportion of container transshipment is destined from India.
- (3) Unlike Colombo, Galle is situated adjacent the shipping line, thus, reducing the nautical miles.
- (4) Galle has potential for bunkering - leading to employment, income generation, low investment activities
- (5) Cargo handling facilities can be shared with the Colombo port.

- (6) easily dovetails with the Southern Province accelerated development programme.

JICA concludes "the development of the Port of Galle must take place in conjunction with the development of the regional economy. "Since, the government has taken a timely decision, to develop the Galle harbour, it can take advantages on grounds of costs in the short term whilst in the long term the port will not go into hibernation but would become a growth centre.

From 1960-1965 the total tonnage handled annually varied between 136,000 and 106,000 tonnes and from 1977 it rose to 110,000 tonnes. In 1985, it handled only 69554 tons (Source: Galle district situation report—1987). Its potential is evident from the cargo handled in the pre-nationalized period. Before 1963, tea exports from the Galle port exceeded 40,000 tonnes annually but since 1971 it had not been an outlet for even low country teas. The cargo discharged at Galle has declined very significantly. Galle handled only rice, flour, sugar, imports occasionally general cargo, cement, fertilizers. Sometimes handled exports of some rubber and miscellaneous items. Yet since large vessel could not reach the jetty without releasing a part of the load temporarily at the anchorages located outside the harbour, port development was undertaken to deepen the access passage and completed in 1984 at a cost of Rs: 100 million. However despite this and after port development work completed during recent years as well as policies to stimulate trade such as liberalization and an open economy, the cargo handled by the port is considerably below the levels of the 1960's - 1965 period. Part of the problem is the failure to the port of Galle to cater to new trends in international cargo handling-containerisation. Other is the lack of economic development in the Southern Province to feed the Galle harbour.

There is much scope at present for multiplying port operations of cargo destined to the South and originating from the South. About 90,000-100,000 tonnes of rice imported to Sri Lanka could be handled through Galle. Galle could handle another flour mill using imported wheat to feed Southern Province flour demand. Raw Sugar molasses could be imported and refined into sugar and molasses. About 11,000 tons of general and mid grown tea (50,000 tons annually), rubber (20,000 tons), coconut products (fibre, rope, charcoal), cinnamon, essential oils (cinnamon oils, citronella oil), salt, frozen fish, fruits and vegetables. Once the KEPZ starts, both discharging and loading cargo could be expected to increase significantly. In the long run development of containerisation through transit sheds, vehicle parks, container stacks, trailer parks, workshops and office building becomes an essential necessity.

3. AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT

Internal airtrips with high potential for development are the Koggala 20 Km from Galle town and Wirawila, 25 Km from Hambantota. Eraminiyaya has been identified for development. Since Koggala is to be developed as a EPZ it is questionable whether its present status with a paved runway of 1030 M x 45 m. would be developed. The development of the Wirawila airstrip could serve the needs of visitors to Yala Reserve, Kataragama pilgrimages, domestic and business community (flying distance from Wirawila to Koggala aerodrome is 100 Km). A domestic private air service or helicopter service could be encouraged. The airport could also feed tourist industry and be feeder to the Katunayake International Airport.

4. THE RAILWAY EXTENSION

The Galle - Matara railway was commissioned in 1985 at a time when the combined po-

pulation of the Matara and Hambantota district was 125,000 spread over 3840 sq. Km at a density of 35. The present population is 1.2 million with an average density of 312 per sq. Km. In the context of the population and economic growth in Matara and Hambantota, particularly in the Uda Walawe and Lunugamwehera areas and through traffic to and from Kataragama, Yala, Wiraketiya, Walasmulla, Hakmana, Dickwella, Kamburupitiya, Tangalle, the extension of the rail would bring passengers and goods traffic.

5. THE RUHUNU HIGHWAY

A new highway linking Colombo - Galle, 15 Kms away from the coastline is proposed. The highway will run through Horana, Elpitiya, and Baddegama and proceed from Galle to the proposed airport at Eraminiyaya in Uda Walawe and continue up to Wellawaya via Embilipitiya.

In the Southern Province nearly 90% of all passenger miles and 95% of all tonne miles are by road. The trunk and main roads (A + B class) of the province comprise 44.7% of the network and they carry more than 60% of all traffic in terms of vehicle miles. The trunk route improvement programme should cover:

- Colombo - Galle - Matara
- Hambantota road (A class) Matara - Thiagoda - Kamburupitiya - Mawanella - Kotapola (B class) 48 miles (77.2 Km)
- Galle - Deniyaya - Madampe (class A - 91.70 miles of which 56.5 in the Southern Province).
- Pelmadulla - Nonagama - (Class A - miles 0.43 in 44 - 54, 5 in Southern).

In order to improve and provide a better passenger transport service the roads mentioned below will need improvement.

- (1) Galle - Udugama road (improvements from Nakiyadeniya - Udugama)
- (2) Akuressa to Udugama road
- (3) Mulatiyana to Kotopola road

- (4) Makumbura - Ketanwila - Akuressa road
- (5) Baddegama - Nagoda Udugama road
- (6) Suriya wewa - Mirijjawila
- (7) Tissa - Wirawila - Kirindioya road
- (8) Karapitiya - Dodella road. Galle road

There is also a need to develop fisheries roads. In a nutshell, the strategy for development of the highway network for investments to follow roads should be:

- A. Identify the sections of A + B class roads needing immediate rehabilitation or reconstruction.
- B. identify the links in the minor network requiring upgrading.
- C. Construction of the Ruhuna Expressway.

6. ENERGY SUPPLY

The demand for electricity increased at the rate of over 10% annually between 1980 - 87 and the consumption increased from 1668 Gwh in 1980 to 2707 Gwh in 1987. The power generation in the country increased from 421 MW (1980) to 1146 MW (1987) to meet the higher level of demand. The commencing of Victoria (2169 Gwh), Kotmale (482 Gwh) Randenigala (516 Gwh) Ukuwela - Bowatenna (280 Gwh) Ratambe (253 Gwh) increased the capacity to 4217 Gwh and Mahaweli added 60% supplies to the national grid. The commissioning of the Samanalawewa will produce 140 MGW of power increasing the national installed capacity of 12%. The existing 30 MGW at Koggala could, thus, be augmented, to meet any new need for industries.

7. URBANIZATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The Southern region comprises of a total population of 1.8 million persons. This is 12.7% of the total population of the country. The urban component of the population in the Southern Province is 281,000 persons which amounts to 14.9% of the total population of the Province.

This is comparatively low when compared to the national average of urban population which is 21%.

In terms of the 1981 Census of Population the Southern Province has one of the highest rate of unemployment. National unemployment rate is 17.9% compared to Galle (26%), Matara (27%) and Hambantota (18.6%), which are higher than the national rate. The highest unemployment rate is in the age group between 20 - 24. This age group comprises 36.8% or over 1/3 of the total unemployment. The literacy rate in Galle is 82.6%, Matara district 78.4% and Hambantota 73.6% compared to the national average of 78.5%. There has been a high rate of outmigration to other areas, from Galle and Matara districts and a marginal increase was seen in Hambantota especially with the Lunugamwehera project. This reflects the lack of employment opportunities in the region. There are 19 urban centres in the Southern Province with Walasmulla TC (2318 persons) to Galle MC (77183) persons.

8. INVESTMENT POTENTIAL AT KEPZ

The President has directed that KEPZ should concentrate on production and employment generation with industries that has linkages with the local economic growth. Although, the approved investment in the Southern Province is Rs: 760.9 million for 22 projects under the FIAC, the actual investment upto Jan 1988 was only Rs: 456.4 million. Under the FIAC, investment of Rs: 29616 million was approved for 161 industrial units. The Small and Medium industry loans to the value of Rs: 23.7 million for 204 projects and to the value of Rs: 166.7 million for 447 projects have been given. But these are dispersed all over the Southern Province. However, the local regional resources are worth examination.

(A) MINERAL BASED INDUSTRIES

Coral mining should be strictly restricted to inland coral

deposits and the industry, should be organised in an orderly manner and raised above the level of cottage industry. Kaolin and clay based industries be developed through manufacture of exportable pottery and ornamental earthenware. The Kaoline refinery, lime plant and the pottery centres should be upgraded in the Province, through a scheme of contract link industries, with the KEPZ plant putting the finishing touches and packaging. Salt based chemical industries could be developed like in Paranthan in the Salt areas. Graphite occurring in the Southern Province could be a base to manufacture crucibles for metal smelting, as carbon brushes in electric motors, as a moderator in atomic reactors. Gem and jewellery could also be encouraged.

(B) AGRO-BASED INDUSTRIES

A few units using a technology introduced recently to produce white coir fibre have been established in the Southern Province. There are nearly 25 white fibre producing units in the Southern Province. These could be multiplied in several villages and an industrial unit be established in the KEPZ to manufacture white fibre based products like coir carpets, rubberized coir carpets, rubberized auto car seats and other products. The village level mechanical process uses coconut husks in the green form and shortens the production time 6-8 months to approximately 40 minutes. Direct employment in each unit would be 20 persons, but indirect employment per unit would be 250 persons per unit for the collection of husks, transport and spinning of the yarn. The machinery is locally manufactured and loan facilities are available. If such units are encouraged in all coastal areas in the South and linked to the KEPZ factories the backward and forward linkages expected would be met. There is also a need to upgrade the coconut fibre handloom

sector for the manufacture of export quality mats and matting by the introduction of power looms.

There is also the handicraft sector. Handicraft working in gold, silver, brass, lack making, jewellery, gem polishing, embroidery, wood carvings, coconut shellware, horn reedware rushware are all based on local raw materials. All such raw materials could be developed along rivers, swamps. Coconut shell powder, cocount shell charcoal, activated carbon are other industries that could be brought in.

Rubber based industries has many potential. Rubber wood based industrial products including furniture, a centrifuged latex factory, banbury mixer for making rubber compounds available to small industries. A wide range of sports goods, rubber based industries, rubber seed oil and resins, are few of the vast potentialities.

Tea bulk packetting for exports through the Galle Harbour, added value bagging of tea, manufacture of green tea in Galle and Matara for packetting and exports. Manufacture of tea chests, battens, tea machinery rubber machinery are other possibilities. An ideal would be to have a large oil mill and a manufacture of coconut oil based products like the soaps, detergents, tooth-pastes, glycerine. The shifting of the large state owned oil mill and soap manufacture from the heart of Colombo to the KEPZ with joint venture private sector management could be seriously considered. A feed mill to provide provender to the livestock sector development in the South would also be useful.

Essential oil distillation for export would be suitable for KEPZ. Cinnamon based essential oils, extraction of downstream products like euganol, use of bark oil in perfumery, pharmaceuticals, flavouring food industry for export, distillation of citronella oil, lemon grass oil, vetiver root oil, clove oil,

eucalyptus oil, ginger oil, palmarosa oil, and possibly introduction and the development of jasmine, rose, mint in uneconomic lands to supply the needs of essential oil distilleries to be established in KEPZ would be ideal. Machinery for distillery could be fabricated locally. Technology is available from the CISIR and the UNIDO.

Other agro-industries that would be established at KEPZ would be herbal based industries. Instead of importing essences of synthetic flavours premier carbonated cola producers be encouraged to establish plants to brew carbonated herbal teas from Gotukola, Ranawara, Iramusu, polpala, Neeramulla, Beli mal for local and export markets. Canning of balaya in the form of ambuthiyai, Canning of bilin beduma with sprats. Canning of del (breadfruits), waraka, polos are good possibilities. Southern province uneconomic paddy fields could be converted to grow okra, japanese egg plant, zucchini, yams for canning for export. Canning of fruits like mangoes (from Moneragala, Middeniya, Hambantota, Walawe) passion (from Yatapatha and the periphery), papaya from Uda Walawa, production of dried fruits from papaya, lime lemon, banana, manufacture of manioc starch are other agro-based industrial possibilities.

(C) MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

Manufacture of Yatches, ship-building, assembly of micro electronic items like T'Vs, radios, videos, telephones, computers (the micro chip based information industry), garments, textile finishing and printing, scooter, chailey, motorcar, lorry, buses, two wheel tractor assembly, foundry industry, are other manufacturing possibilities. Pharmaceutical manufacture is yet another possibility.

(D) SERVICE INDUSTRIES

Offshore banking, ship service information including software exports, printing of books and publications for exports are

some of the many service industrial facilities that can be attracted.

9. CONCLUSION

The establishment of the KEPZ within a time frame under the GCEC would be timely. Before looking outwards to the West or Near East, KEPZ authorities must encourage the small, medium and large local entrepreneurs who are from the South to invest in the KEPZ. An identification of investment opportunities at KEPZ and identification of successful local entrepreneurs and linking them with joint venture partners abroad who has technology, markets and managerial expertise through an Investors Forum as the UNIDO did in Fiji in 1984 for South Pacific countries would be very successful first step. The writer participated in the Forum with few South Pacific country entrepreneurs and the results were encouraging. Instead of Sri Lanka spending funds and going abroad to seek investors, it is best that we prepare project profiles, train local entrepreneurs and bring foreign investors to an Investors Forum after wide publicity through our missions abroad and through the UNIDO. This would be a more pragmatic investor promotion approach than spending much exchange to get small results as was the case in the past.

And commerce . . .

(Continued from page 16)

'You well know that Iraq's evil latter day Tamburlaine wields power largely thanks to American behaviour over many years. You know too that Iraq's attack on Kuwait was triggered by clandestine economic aggression against Iraq in which American interests were deeply engaged.

'And in case you did not know it, many Middle East analysts in Europe were predicting pre-emptive military action against Iraq to secure Israel before the invasion of Kuwait. Whatever other principles involved, let's have done with talk of morals and justice and with your usual fawning support of American power-play.'

CORRESPONDENCE

Whither Sri Lankan Tamil Films?

It is sad, bad and true that the Tamil Cinema Industry in Sri Lanka, which should have developed alongside the Sinhala cinema industry has, after nearly four decades, registered no progress at all.

In the past, there was string of mediocre productions which were mere carbon copies of films that came to us from across the Palk Strait.

Today, Tamil film production in the country, has come to a virtual standstill. The recent ban on Indian films — rightly or wrongly — and presently lifted, I presume, made many a patronizer of Tamil films, to sit up and think.

Wasn't it a timely signal for those who had the interest of local Tamil films at heart, to stir into action?

A Tamil film produced here, some years back, "Ponmani", received rave notices and is talked of even today, in terms of the highest eulogy, by discerning film-goers. Before the film could go the rounds, it was withdrawn from exhibition, for reasons known only to the people at the helm of film affairs, during that period. "Ponmani" mirrored everyday life in Jaffna and left an emotional impact on you. The film, although not technically perfect, proved that there was ample latent histrionic talent, which required to be exploited further. While on the subject of acting, a word of caution to the local Tamil film stars. They should refrain from modelling themselves on the so called "superstars" of Tamil Nadu or rave and rant like some of the ham actors. It is ludicrous.

What about the joint Indo Sri Lanka film ventures? In these movies, the audiences were taken on a pilgrimage to places of religious interest in Sri Lanka, shown around the palm-fringed beaches — and the scenic

beauty of the hill country. Songs, dances, fights and buffoonery — passing for comic relief — were thrown in, to complete the both potch.

This is the manner in which some of the film producers from Sri Lanka and their counterparts in neighbouring Tamil Nadu, frittered away their time energy and money, to promote cultural ties between our two countries!

These were puerile exercises and an insult to the intelligence. Let them not foist any more of these pedestrian monstrosities on us, please. Enough is enough!

Yasapalitha Nanayakkara deserves our thanks for evincing interest in locally produced Tamil films and must be complimented for his attempts to raise their standard.

Likewise, the bilinguals — "Sarungale" and "Aadara Kathawa" — were laudable efforts and this trend, too, should receive the encouragement and backing of our National Film Corporation.

S. Sivagurunathan

("Sun" Tuesday, January 30, 1990)

Sri Lankan Tamil Films

The letter of S. Sivagurunathan which appeared in the "Sun" of January 30, is thought provoking. It is quite obvious that he had not seen the film himself, for his letter contained information, which is far from the truth.

There were only 27 spectators in the cinema hall in Kotahena on the third day of showing the film "Ponmani". It would be naive to expect the theatre owner to continue with the exhibition of that nonsensical film, for he would not be able to meet the wages of his staff, even for a day. Therefore, it was really a wise step that the film was withdrawn immediately.

S. Sivagurunathan may have been connected with the production of that film but it would seem hardly the reason to expect the ordinary cinema-goer to waste his time, money and energy in seeing a film of utter rubbish, which was "Ponmani".

M. Senathi Rajah

("Sun" Saturday, February 17, 1990)

Sri Lankan Tamil Films

Mr. M. Senathi Rajah's reply ("Sun" February, 17th) to my letter captioned "Whither Sri Lankan Tamil Films?" ("Sun", January, 30th 1990), is the finest example of ignorance, intolerance and fatuity.

I availed of a privilege to which readers of your paper are entitled — airing my views on a subject of topical interest. Other than this reason, I had no axe to grind in singing the praises of a locally produced Tamil film.

Let me reiterate that the motion picture under reference, "Ponmani" is an admirable one. The movie is a good sample of everyday life in Jaffna and could be categorized as a social document. Of course, those who yearn for the fantastic, grotesque and the gigantic, will not relish "Ponmani". They are going to feel bored and repelled.

Reader Senathi Rajah states in his letter that "Ponmani", the "Nonsensical film" drew only 27 people on the third day of its screening at a Cinema hall in Kotahena. It must be the absolute truth and we will let that pass. Owing to its merits, and in response to requests, when the same film was shown on "Rupavahini", many in Sri Lanka and in Tamil Nadu, were afforded an opportunity to view it.

We do not want all the Tamil films produced in Sri Lanka to be entertainmentless, social correctives or propaganda. But we have a right to expect a good proportion of these films to reflect our world as it is, spreading truth, understanding and good will.

S. Sivagurunathan

("Sun" Saturday March 3, 1990)

U. S. Revises . . .

(Continued from page 15)

tagon lays out 12 priorities for research and development including: worldwide, all-weather force for limited warfare without an operating base; affordable space transport; global command, control, communications and intelligence capabilities for on-demand surveillance of selected geographical areas and real-time information transfer to top authorities; defence against ballistic missiles of all ranges and reduction of operations and support resource requirements by half.

The usefulness of these efforts for making US forces capable of waging high-tech war anywhere in the world is self-evident.

The US Congress has already recognised some of these prio-

rities. In November 1990, when Desert Storm was still Desert Shield, the Congress allocated funds for continuing production of B-2 stealth bombers and purchasing additional C-17 transport planes and V-22 Osprey aircraft.

Raytheon Corporation, the manufacturer of the now-famous Patriot missiles, has been asked to step up production. The company has already received orders from Saudi Arabia, Germany, Japan and Italy.

Given its technological might the US has won the war against Iraq. Unfortunately, a technology-driven victory will only whet its appetite to police the world. And that is bad news for the world.

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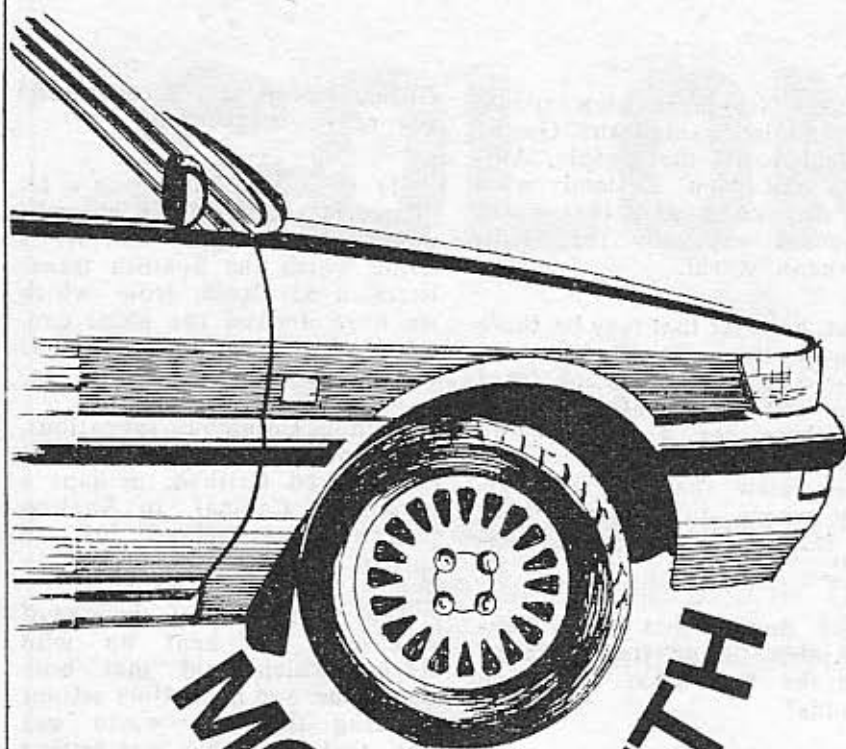
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THE BODIES OF WAR

Note this was submitted to the Grey City Journal before the United States began bombing Iraq. — Editor

by Pradeep Jeganathan

We live under a regime of Capital and Reason. It is from within this regime that the technologies of war that will soon be used in West Asia are produced. In the calm, reasoned tones Ted Koppel, and Robin McNeal tell us of the war. They assure us that the supremacy of American technology is beyond question. The coordinates of targets have been programmed into the computers of the AWACS. Missiles will home in. They will explode; the job will be done. It is reason that conceives of such a vision, and guides the long hard effort that makes it real.

At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where I was an undergraduate student and researcher in science and engineering, such a vision motivated many of my fellow students. In their utopia weapons would be perfect; weapons would, at the press of a button, carry out the project of war, leaving no room for human error, fear or terror. Technology, not people, would win wars. And, like Koppel, those scientists were sure that American technology was superior: People, that is Americans, would be free to play dungeons and dragons, untroubled by the horrors of war. Yet the utopia of technological reason remains unrealized, and unrealizable: In the days ahead bodies will pile up. The dead bodies of war.

That remarkable historian of the regimes of capital and reason, Michel Foucault, seems to argue that 'man' is a cruel irony of modernity: 'he' is invented in an epistemic rupture that rescues him from the brutal punishment of public torture, only to be carefully 'disciplined' in schools and armies; in prisons and asylums. Bodies made docile for a life of labour in the regime of capital. Technologies of the body are central in the episteme: marking, classifying, indexing, and counting. Counting bodies.

Even though I've always taken Foucault very seriously, I've also sometimes felt troubled by the argument that the rise of 'humanity' was not to be valorized. After all didn't I feel love and anger, joy and pain, fear and terror; was I not, beyond anything else, a human being? And yet, right now, I have no doubts.

Where in a regime of capital and reason does humanity exist? Day in day out, we are told of body counts. How many America has disciplined and trained to kill; how many the Other has. How many the Other thinks he can get; and much more rarely, how many America thinks it will lose, how many the Other thinks it will lose. Technologists' dreams have not saved the body; dead or alive they will be counted. But not as human beings, as we've been taught they should be; no, just as numbers that will decide who will win.

There is no other conclusion on this cold, brutal January day. The myth of 'humanity' is the cruelest joke of them all: we will count bodies until the very end of this regime of capital and reason.

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