

Is India's Nuclear Deterrent Credible?- I

Shri Shyam Saran

Chairman, RIS & Former Foreign Secretary
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Mr Chairman, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to thank the Subbu Forum Society for Policy Studies, in particular my friend, Commodore Uday Bhaskar and the India Habitat Centre for once again giving me an opportunity to share with you my thoughts on certain issues of contemporary relevance to India's national security. And thank you, Sanjaya, for doing me the honour of presiding over this meeting. I recall well our fighting in the trenches together during the difficult negotiations on the Indo-US civil nuclear agreement. While I have been introduced as the Chairman of India's National Security Advisory Board I must hasten to add that the views what I shall be sharing with you today are entirely my own and do not in any way reflect those of the Board or the government. These are views that have evolved over a fairly long period of time drawing upon my earlier experience dealing with disarmament and international security issues at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the two year stint I had at the Prime Minister's Office in 1991-92, handling issues relating to External Affairs, Defence and Atomic Energy and more recently my involvement in the Indo-US negotiations on a Civil Nuclear Cooperation agreement, both as Foreign Secretary and later as Prime Minister's Special Envoy. I cannot claim personal familiarity with our strategic establishment but I believe my engagement with it has given me a sense of how our security perceptions have evolved over the years and how different generations of our political leadership have dealt with the security challenges confronting the country. I make this presentation in the hope that there could be a more informed discourse on the role of India's strategic programme in national security, a discourse that is truly rooted in India's own circumstance rather than influenced by external commentaries.

India became a declared nuclear weapon state in May 1998, although it had maintained a capability to assemble nuclear explosive devices and had developed a delivery capability both in terms of aircraft as well as missiles several years previously. In May 1998, this capability was finally translated into an explicit and declared nuclear weapon status. This is important to recognize because India did not overnight become a

nuclear weapon capable state in May 1998. It was already a state with nuclear weapons capability and had the capacity to deliver such weapons to their targets but until the May 1998 tests, a deliberate choice had been made to defer the acquisition of a nuclear weapon arsenal as long as there was still hope that the world would eventually move towards a complete elimination of these weapons of mass destruction. India's leaders recognised the prudence of developing and maintaining national capability and capacity to develop strategic assets if this became necessary but the preference remained for realising the objective of a nuclear weapon free world. The nuclear tests of May 1998 reflected the judgement that nuclear disarmament was no longer on the agenda of the nuclear weapon states. On the contrary, their objective was to make permanent the division of the world into nuclear haves and have-nots, which India had rejected since the very dawn on the atomic age.

India's policy towards nuclear weapons evolved over a period of nearly three decades and this evolution was impacted by several significant developments in the country's security environment. The testing of a nuclear weapon by China in 1964 was the first major driver. There is evidence that both Nehru and Homi Bhabha had not excluded the possibility of India acquiring nuclear weapons even earlier, in case India's security and defence warranted it. India's first plutonium separation plant came up in 1964 itself at Trombay when both Nehru and Bhabha were still in office. The pursuit of strategic capability took time and each subsequent stage would be linked to certain adverse developments in India's security environment. It would be 10 years before India carried out a peaceful nuclear explosion, in 1974, to signal its capability to design and fabricate a nuclear explosive device. In the background were a series of developments which had heightened India's security concerns and led to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's decision to approve the nuclear test:

- The conclusion of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968 which sought to prevent the emergence of any new nuclear weapon states, without a concomitant and credible commitment on the part of the existing nuclear weapon states to achieve nuclear disarmament within a reasonable time frame. India had to stay out of the treaty in order to maintain its nuclear option.

- The NPT was followed by the 1971 Bangladesh war and an unwelcome Sino-US axis targeting India. The appearance of USS Enterprise in the Bay of Bengal heightened India's sense of vulnerability.

The next phase in the acquisition of capabilities is also linked to certain new developments adversely affecting India's security. Reports began to appear that China had delivered a fully tested nuclear bomb design to Pakistan in 1983. China may have tested a Pakistani weapon at the Lop Nor test site in 1990. Pakistan emerged as a "front-line state" in the war against Soviet forces in Afghanistan in the decade of the ninety-eighties, bringing fresh worries to India's security planners. Its feverish and clandestine pursuit of nuclear weapons capability also heightened threat perceptions in India, particularly when it became clear that the U.S. was not willing to deter Pakistan from the quest, given its equities in the ongoing war. This also marks the phase when Pakistan's nuclear weapon programme, which was led by its civilian political leaders, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and later Ghulam Ishaq Khan, passed into the hands of its military establishment, thus acquiring an altogether more sinister dimension. Today, Pakistan is the only nuclear-armed state where it is the military and not the civilian political leadership that is in effective control of its nuclear arsenal. During this period, India's sense of vulnerability increased due to the surge in Khalistani insurgency, aided and abetted by Pakistan as also the blow back from the ongoing war in Afghanistan. Despite these developments Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi launched a major initiative at the United Nations in 1988 to promote a world free of nuclear weapons through the Action Plan on Nuclear Disarmament. This was a serious effort to promote nuclear disarmament which would enable India to avoid the less preferable alternative of itself becoming a nuclear weapon state in order to safeguard its security and political independence.

The decade of the nineties marks the next phase in India's nuclear trajectory, leading up to the "break-out" in May 1998. This phase was marked by a serious debate within the political leadership over whether the time had come to go ahead with a declared nuclear weapon status or whether the likely international political and economic fallout made this a costly choice. As the decade of the nineteen nineties unfolded, it became abundantly clear that the choice was being forced on India as a consequence of several serious geopolitical developments.

What were the drivers during this phase? One, the U.S. emerged as a hyper-power after the demise of the Soviet Union and this severely narrowed India's strategic space. Two, the nuclear weapon states moved to enforce a permanent status on the NPT in 1995, thereby perpetuating the division between nuclear weapons

states and non-nuclear weapon states, with oblique threats to use the U.N. Security Council to sanction and to penalize those countries which resisted the universalization of the NPT. This would have put India in state of permanent strategic vulnerability to nuclear threat and nuclear blackmail. This may have happened during India-Pakistan tensions in 1990 though the record is ambiguous on this score (Yaqub Khan's visit to Delhi in 1990 is said to have been undertaken to convey the threat of nuclear retaliation against India in case the latter moved its conventional military forces to threaten or to attack Pakistan). During 1991-92, one was also witness to a determined attempt by the U.S. to put serious limits on India's civilian space and missile programme by pressuring Russia under President Yeltsin to deny India the cryogenic engine technology that it needed to upgrade its civilian space capabilities. The precipitating factor proved to be the effort in 1996 to push through a discriminatory Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which would have permanently foreclosed India's options to develop a credible and fully tested nuclear deterrent. These developments in the decade of the nineties meant that India could no longer have any credible assurance of its security in the absence of its own independent nuclear deterrent. It would confront increased vulnerability vis-a-vis its adversaries, its security would have been severely undermined and made its quest for strategic autonomy a mirage.

It is against this background that a decision was taken in May 1998 to breach the narrowing nuclear containment ring around the country and assert India's determination to retain its ability to deter threats from States hostile to it and to ensure an environment in which it could pursue its development priorities without disruption. This is clearly articulated in India's Draft Nuclear Doctrine released in August 1999. The official Doctrine based mainly on the draft was adopted in January 2003, but its full text has not been shared with the public.

It is important to keep this historical perspective in mind because the nuclear tests carried out in May 1998 were not a mere episode driven by current and largely domestic political compulsions (though this may have influenced the precise timing), but rather the logical and perhaps an even inexorable culmination of a decades-long evolution in strategic thinking, influenced by an increasingly complex and hostile security environment. The timing may have also been influenced by geopolitical developments. The end of the Cold War and the rise of China brought a sense of strategic opportunity to India.

The collapse of the Soviet Union meant that the U.S. was no longer inimical to Indian interests as it had been during the Cold War years, with India seen as being on the wrong side of the fence. China's emergence as a potential adversary to the U.S. made a more rapidly growing India an attractive countervailing power, quite apart from the opportunities it offered to U.S. business and industry. India's swift emergence as an I.T. power and the rising affluence and influence of the India-American community, reinforced the positive shift in American perceptions about India. Therefore, while fully conscious of the adverse fallout from its decision to undertake a series of nuclear tests and to establish itself as a declared nuclear weapon state, Indian leaders may also have calculated that such fallout would be temporary and India's growing strategic relevance would eventually overcome such impediments. This judgement has proved to be true in most respects.

There is no doubt that the shift to a declared nuclear weapon state posture confronts India with new and more complex challenges. These challenges involve the nature and structure of the nuclear weapon arsenal as well as delivery assets. India has articulated a nuclear doctrine that is appropriate to the current geopolitical environment, is aligned with its existing and projected levels of technological capabilities and affordability and most importantly, is reflective of India's domestic realities and its value system. The people of India want their leaders to pursue an independent foreign policy, maintain strategic autonomy and safeguard the security of the country and its citizens by having adequate means to deter threats to national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Sustaining democracy within the country is seen as integrally linked to the ability of the State to deliver on these fundamental aspirations.

At various stages of India's contemporary history, the Indian state has pursued different strategies to achieve these objectives in a nuclearized, asymmetrical and often hostile regional and global environment. It has had to make difficult choices including embracing a three decades long strategic partnership with the Soviet Union which helped the country to meet the threat from an implacably hostile and belligerent Pakistan and a China that turned into a threatening and often arrogant adversary post India's humiliating defeat in the 1962 border war. Those who perennially bemoan India's lack of strategic culture such as the recent Economist article, seem strangely reluctant to acknowledge the difficult

choices that governments of every persuasion in the country have made whether in seeking strategic partners, maintaining a nuclear option or eventually exercising that option despite the odds confronting us.

That mistakes have been made, that sometimes opportunities have been missed or our judgments were misplaced is undeniable. But if having a strategy means the readiness to make reasoned choices, then India has demonstrated an ability to think and act strategically.

It is against this background that I find somewhat puzzling assertions by some respected security analysts, both Indian and foreign, that India's nuclear weapons programme has been driven by notions of prestige or global standing rather than by considerations of national security. For example, typical of comments from U.S. analysts is the remarkable observation that "India now lacks a credible theory of how nuclear weapons might be used than as an instrument of national pride and propaganda".

India does have a credible theory of how its nuclear weapons may be used and that is spelt out in its nuclear doctrine. One may or may not agree with that doctrine but to claim that India does not have a credible theory about the use of nuclear weapons does not accord with facts. Yes it is true that since January 4, 2003 when India adopted its nuclear doctrine formally at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), it has moved to put in place, at a measured pace, a triad of land-based, air-delivered and submarine-based nuclear forces and delivery assets to conform to its declared doctrine of no-first use and retaliation only. It has had to create a command and control infrastructure that can survive a first strike and a fully secure communication system that is reliable and hardened against radiation or electronic interference. A number of redundancies have had to be created to strengthen survivability.

In all these respects, significant progress has been achieved. To expect that these should have emerged overnight after May 1998 is a rather naïve expectation. India today has a long range ballistic missile capability and is on the road to a submarine - based missile capability. These capabilities will be further improved as time goes on and more resources become available. The record since the May 1998 nuclear tests demonstrates quite clearly a sustained and systematic drive to operationalize the various components of the nuclear deterrent in a manner best suited to India's security

environment. This is not the record of a state which considers nuclear weapons as “instrument of national pride and propaganda”.

There is a similar refrain in Chinese commentaries on India’s nuclear weapons programme. Here is a typical Chinese comment:

“Unlike China, which was forced to develop its nuclear option under a clear nuclear threat, India has never been faced with an immediate major military or nuclear threat that would require New Delhi to have a nuclear weapon option to ensure its national survival. The acquisition of nuclear weapons appears to have been almost entirely motivated by politics. India seems to have an explicit strategic goal; to be accepted as a world power. And this goal seems to reflect India’s deep rooted belief that nuclear weapons constitute an effective physical signature of world power status, and even short-cut to this status”.

And this extraordinary assessment of India’s quest for security in a nuclearized regional and global environment comes from an analyst in a country which over the years actively and relentlessly contributed to the clandestine nuclear weapons programme of Pakistan, firstly by providing it with the design of a tested weapon and later by assisting it with developing its missile capabilities, both directly and through its North Korean ally. This is a rare case where a nuclear weapon state has actively promoted the acquisition of nuclear weapon capability by a non-nuclear weapon State, though similar allegations have been made about US and French assistance to Israel. Chinese assistance to Pakistan's strategic programme continues apace.

Could India ignore the implications of this alliance and the role of Pakistan as a most convenient Chinese proxy to pose a nuclear threat to India? The narrative that I have sketched out does not square with the observation that “India has never been faced with an immediate major military or nuclear threat that would require New Delhi to have a nuclear weapon option to ensure its national survival”. And it is rather odd that a representative of a country whose iconic leader Mao Zedong called for “politics in command” can now say that India’s nuclear programme has been “almost entirely motivated by politics”. Of course, it has been, but not the politics of seeking world power status as is claimed, but the politics of keeping India and its citizens safe from nuclear threats. We have long been familiar with the

Chinese predilection to dismiss India’s role in international affairs as that of a pretender too big for its boots, while China's super power status is, of course, regarded as manifest destiny. One should reject such self-serving assertions.

What is worrying, however, is that this status-seeking argument has been finding an echo among some Indian analysts as well. One analyst recently claimed:

“During its long and unfocused nuclear weapons quest, India came to develop a highly self-absorbed approach. This was because India’s dominant objective was political and technological prestige, while for every other nuclear weapon state it was deterrence.”

Such sweeping statements show a lack of familiarity with the history of India’s nuclear weapons programme, set against the broader political and security backdrop. They also serve to diminish the very legitimacy of India’s nuclear weapons status though this may not be the intention. For if deterrence was not the reason for which India became a nuclear weapon state, but only for “political and technological prestige”, then why should it have nuclear weapons in the first place?

If the argument is that India has and does face threats for which a nuclear deterrent is required, but that these have been ignored by successive generations of India’s political and security elite, then obviously it must be a mere fortuitous coincidence that we have strayed into a strategic capability. This elite, it is implied comprehends neither the security threats nor the manner in which this accidental acquisition of nuclear weapons and delivery capabilities, must be operationalized. This does not square with facts.

The thesis that India’s nuclear deterrent is mostly symbolic is, for some, driven by the perception that India’s armed forces are not fully part of the strategic decision-making process and that they play second fiddle to the civilian bureaucracy and the scientific establishment. Even if this perception was true, and in fact it is not, one cannot accept that the credibility of India’s nuclear deterrence demands management by its military. The very nature of nuclear deterrence as practiced by a civilian democracy dictates that decisions relating to the nature and scope of the arsenal, its deployment and use, be anchored in the larger architecture of democratic governance. It is the civilian political leadership that must make judgments about

domestic political, social and economic priorities as well as the imperatives imposed by a changing regional and global geopolitical environment.

The military must be enabled to provide its own perspectives and inputs, just as other segments of the state must do. Undoubtedly the military's inputs and its advice would have to carry weight, especially in operational matters. But to equate exclusive military management of strategic forces, albeit under the political leadership's overall command, as the sine qua non of deterrence credibility is neither necessary nor desirable. One should certainly encourage better civil-military relations and coordination. It may also be argued that the military's inputs into strategic planning and execution should be enhanced to make India's nuclear deterrent more effective. But one should not equate shortcomings in these respects with the absence of a credible nuclear deterrent.

If we look at the current status of India's nuclear deterrent and its command and control system, it is clear that at least two legs of the triad referred to in our nuclear doctrine are already in place. These include a modest arsenal, nuclear capable aircraft and missiles both in fixed underground silos as well as those which are mounted on mobile rail and road-based platforms. These land-based missiles include both Agni-II (1500 km) as well as Agni-III (2500 km) missiles. The range and accuracy of further versions for example, Agni V (5000 km) which was tested successfully only recently, will improve with the acquisition of further technological capability and experience. The third leg of the triad which is submarine-based, is admittedly a work in progress. We need at least three Arihant class nuclear submarines so that at least one will always be at sea. Submarine-based missile systems have been developed and tested in the form of the Sagarika but these are still relatively short in range. It is expected that a modest sea-based deterrence will be in place by 2015 or 2016. There is also a major R&D programme which has been in place since 2005, for the development of a new, longer range and more accurate generation of submarine-based missiles which is likely to ready for deployment around 2020.

(to be concluded)

(Courtesy South Asia Monitor) CPS conveys its thanks to Shri Shyam Saran and Cmde. C.Uday Bhaskar.



INDIA AS A 21st CENTURY POWER: THE MARITIME DIMENSION-I

(Admiral Pereira Memorial Lecture, Navy Foundation,
Bengaluru, 25th May 2013.)

Admiral (Retd) Arun Prakash
Ex Chief of Naval Staff
Former Chairman, National Maritime Foundation

It is a great honour and privilege to have been invited to deliver the first Admiral RL Pereira Memorial lecture instituted by the Navy Foundation, Bengaluru on the occasion of the Admiral's 90th birthday. The Indian Navy is singularly fortunate in having had an inspiring figure like Adm. Pereira as its 11th Chief. During his lifetime, he was universally admired, for the unique blend of qualities that he consistently stood for: uncompromising integrity, professionalism, moral courage and compassion. Two decades after his death, his memory is cherished with profound affection and respect, across the armed forces; and his legend continues to grow. Ronnie Pereira stands like a colossus in today's morally and ethically barren environment, and all of us – especially the younger generation - could do no better than to choose him as an icon or role-model.

Like Admiral Pereira, the average Indian is pragmatic, down to earth and quick to see through deception and camouflage. Thus, the party which boasted about 'India Shining' during the run-up to the 2004 elections was sent packing by a skeptical electorate. In 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's declaration, in Delhi, that the US was going to "help make India a great power", was greeted with a mixture of scorn and resentment. There are good reasons for these reactions. For a vast number of our citizens engrossed in a daily struggle for "roti kapda and makan", sixty-six years after independence, any talk of great power status seems like a mockery of their wretched existence. A smaller minority, classified as the "elite", are either skeptical about India's future or indignant that our ascent to great power status should require American assistance.

But the fact remains that Condoleezza Rice was followed, a year later, by George Bush, who signed a historic deal with Dr. Manmohan Singh, re-awakening India's visions of great power status. In 2009, Hillary Clinton declared that she considered India "...not just a regional power, but a global power", and the following year, President Obama endorsed India's bid for a Security Council seat, while reminding our Parliament that great power aspirations came with onerous responsibilities.

Science is the best boon that God has bestowed upon mankind. Science with reasoning becomes the capital of society. **Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam**

Consequently, a view has emerged that greatness is being thrust on India by the Americans, who are setting us up to do their dirty work for them. All this hype notwithstanding, as an Indian ruefully surveys the shambles of our much touted democracy, the notion of India as a '21st century power', seems, surreal and perplexing, for many reasons. India's unique political system has created conundrums leading to policy-paralysis, institutional corruption and economic slowdown; the spin-offs being stalled development, huge poverty and social unrest. Our statesmen have substituted strategic vision with an ostrich-like stance whose logic seems to say that if we maintain status quo, our problems and adversaries will melt away. By way of contrast, as an Indian looks at totalitarian China, resolutely surging forward on the back of a burgeoning economy, he can clearly discern the emerging contours of a great-power.

This may seem a bleak scenario, but what we often forget is that India is just 66 years old as a republic; which is but the blink of an eye in a nation's life. The India story is not simple, and certainly bears a more in-depth examination. While we Indians are used to living in an environment of stark disparity and contrasts, foreigners frequently use a cliché to describe this phenomenon, which says: "Every generalization about India is true. But so is the opposite." They are right; because even as Indian space rockets place satellites in orbit, the most common form of transport in urban India remains the bicycle and the bullock cart; India has 59 billionaires in the Forbes list but it also has greatest number of poor people and malnourished children in the world; its economy is 10th largest in the world and yet it ranks 131st, in per capita income.

Coincidentally, the Economist magazine ran a cover story, titled 'Can India Become a Great Power?' as recently as 5th April 2013. Its thought-provoking analysis discusses many of the dilemmas and conundrums that we face today, and here is an illustrative quote.

It says: "India watchers point to the country's large and rapidly expanding economy, its huge population, and its nuclear weapons as signs of its imminent greatness. Other observers ask whether the country's shoddy infrastructure will hold it back, and whether it is strong enough to counter an increasingly ambitious China. All of this frenzied discussion, however, overlooks a simple fact: within India itself, the foreign policy elite shies away from any talk of the country's rising status.... Since independence India has got away with having a weak strategic culture. Instead of clear strategic thinking, India

shuffles along, impeded by its caution and bureaucratic inertia."

This perceptive article raises many pertinent issues and I am going to hark back to them during the course of my talk. However, the first point I would like to make is that neither a large military, nor a nuclear arsenal, by themselves, mean a great deal; otherwise Pakistan, North Korea and Israel would have been great powers today. Factors that carry far more significance are a robust economy and a productive population; and since India has both, we should address them first.

The Economic Dimension

India's economy crawled, for three decades after independence, at a leisurely 2%-3%, while the population grew at 2%. This resulted in a per capita income rise of just over 1% which came to be known as the 'Hindu rate of growth'. The financial crisis of 1990 forced the Government to take some radical steps, and it opened up the economy to globalization, while initiating the privatization of state-owned enterprises. A decade and a half of liberalization saw the GDP growth-rate touching double-digits, with the country averaging above 9% growth between 2006 and 2010.

The past three years, however, have seen a marked slowing down of the economy, which is attributable, only partly, to the global recession. The internal contradictions of shaky coalition governments have rendered them irresolute in policy-making, and prevented them from taking hard economic decisions. This, in turn, has resulted in an economic slowdown and social unrest, aggravated by the utter failure of the government to check rampant corruption and bureaucratic inefficiency; both damaging to the economy. In spite of all this, there is still some good news. Since population growth has slowed down, a growing GDP has brought large per capita income gains; rising from \$ 2200 in 2000 to \$ 3900 today; a 60% rise. While this is only about half of China's and a small fraction of US per capita income, one third of India's population, or over 370 million people, have or will soon attain middle-class status, representing a substantial market for consumables. By 2025 this consumer market will be the 4th or 5th largest in the world.

There have also been dramatic improvements in many indices of human development such as life-expectancy, literacy and healthcare. There are other, more optimistic, forecasts too. It is said that even if India averages a growth rate of just 7%-8%, driven by services, industry and a high saving rate, its present GDP of \$ 1.5 trillion would double every 7-8 years and reach US \$ 50

A superpower is a superpower, and it is time to shed the sophomore naivety that has surprisingly upheld the belief that China's ascent to power will be any different : power is necessarily expansionist. **Harsh V. Pant 7**

trillion by mid-century; placing it amongst the first three world-wide. In an unusual progression, India has leapfrogged from being an agrarian to a service economy; thereby leaving major gaps in industrialization. This will need to be remedied, not just to boost GDP but also to generate adequate employment; which brings us to the next factor that constitutes a major influence on India's standing – its demographic profile.

India's Demographic Profile

Not long ago, Indians used to despair at their inability to curb spiraling population growth, and we envied the ruthless manner in which the Chinese had enforced the draconian one-child norm. Today India's baby boom is being hailed as the 'demographic dividend' and its billion-plus population is considered an asset. At a time when population in much of the developed world is static or declining, and parts of Asia are facing the prospect of an ageing society, India can look forward to a growing proportion of youth in a productive age bracket.

The huge number of children in India's population today will reach working ages in the next 15-20 years. By 2035 India is forecast to have 270 million people between the ages of 15 and 35. Consumption and saving rates as well as productive potential will, then, be at a peak. The challenge for India, in this context, is twofold; firstly, to ensure that this emerging 'youth bulge' is educated and equipped with adequate skills, and secondly, to develop a growth model which will exploit the productive potential of this huge work force. It is interesting to note that currently, China's demographic advantage is at a peak; but in 20 years, just as India overtakes it in overall population, China's productive population will stagnate and then start declining.

As China ages rapidly, it is predicted that by 2030, there will be many more senior citizens than young workers. Along with the fall in work force and productivity will come rising dependency ratios and China may find that supporting old age pensioners becomes a challenge. Let me return to the Economist article, which spells out a number of factors, apart from economics, demographics and military power that stimulate a keen interest in India in the west. Amongst these are; common concerns about Jihadism, shared cultural values, respect for human rights, abundant soft-power, a talented Diaspora and a respected navy, rated as 'up to NATO standards.' The magazine, then, shrewdly puts its finger on three impediments which come in the way of 'India's dream of becoming a 21st century power'; the absence of a strategic culture, the distrust between a civilian MoD

and the armed forces, which has undermined military effectiveness, and a dysfunctional defence procurement system. These observations are uncannily accurate, and we need to examine the problems they represent. Let us take strategic culture first.

India's Strategic Culture

Notwithstanding its ancient civilization and inherited wisdom, India remains somewhat tentative and unsure about the use of power. Its efforts to define and shape a coherent strategic identity are, perhaps, summed up by this rhetorical question posed by India's National Security Adviser, Shiv Shankar Menon. He asks: 'Is there an Indian doctrine for the use of force in statecraft? This is not a question that one normally expects to ask about a power that is a declared nuclear weapon state....But India achieved independence...through a freedom movement dedicated to truth and non-violence, and has displayed both ambiguity and opposition to classical power politics'. While Indian scholars and historians have steered clear of this issue, a RAND Corporation researcher George Tanham, stirred up a hornet's nest, in 1992, with a monograph titled: Indian Strategic Thought. Drawing attention to what he called 'a historic lack of a strategic thought-process in Indian society', Tanham posited that a combination of lofty Hindu philosophy and a fatalistic outlook, combined with the constraints of the caste system, had historically hindered the Indian mind from looking too far ahead, both in time and in space.

Many Indians took offence at Tanham's judgmental remarks, but others, more reflective, tended to agonize over past historical events. For example: why, in India's history, invasions over its north-western passes were never stopped or defeated? Why were rulers of Indian states unwilling to unite against invaders and consider strategic defence of India as a whole? Why was no thought ever given to maritime defence? In more recent times, what explains the 24 year hiatus between India's first nuclear test in 1974 and weaponization in 1998?

Even if there are no answers to these questions, there are sure to be lessons for the future.

In this context, the recent emergence of public discourse on security-strategy has been a positive development. For example, an independent group of academics, having been tasked to examine India's strategic environment, produced a document titled 'Nonalignment 2.0', in 2012, which has offered recommendations regarding a foreign and strategic policy for India in the 21st century. It presents a fresh view which debunks the so called 'void' in strategic-thinking. This

view boldly asserts that right from the moment of independence, India has never been without a clear-cut grand-strategy. Crafted by Nehru, the main components of this strategy were, the preservation of India's political unity, the protection of its territorial integrity and the quest for economic development; with the choice of democracy, and the adoption of non-alignment, forming complementary strategies.

While this interpretation is certainly encouraging, the fact remains that there was, and continues to be, a great deal of ad-hocism, arbitrariness and even a vacuum in India's policies in every sphere. Even if Nehru bequeathed the country a grand-strategy, it seems that his political heirs failed to grasp this inheritance. The Indian Approach to National Security. This discussion leads us on to examine the attitudes of contemporary Indian politicians to national security. Given their deep-rooted urge to emphasize the principle of civil control over the Armed Forces, one would expect Indian politicians to eagerly grasp Clausewitz's dictum – that for any military undertaking to be meaningful, it had to have a political underpinning. And yet the Indian politician has, consistently flinched, not just from outlining national aims and objectives but also, from providing guidance regarding strategic aims and end-states to the country's armed forces leadership.

The sheer intensity of political activity in India makes great demands on a politician's time. Since defence and security have not, so far, become electoral issues, he feels that such complex and tedious matters should not be allowed to consume time that could be devoted to constituency, party, Parliament and political survival. Under such conditions he is happy to leave defence and security matters in the hands of the bureaucracy.

The MoD bureaucracy, however, consists of wandering generalists who can barely begin to grasp intricate military issues before they move on to another ministry. So we are landed with a toxic combination of decision-makers in the MoD; politicians who are hard-pressed for time and bureaucrats who lack adequate comprehension. Is it, then, surprising that complex but important issues are cast into limbo for decades? A prime example of this is the long-overdue need for national security reform; including inter-Service integration, the merger of armed forces HQ with the MoD and constitution of a Chief of Defence Staff. The manic intensity of political activity is also the reason why India's massive defence budget has rarely been debated in Parliament. It is interesting to note that the recommendations of the only

body of Parliamentarians which zealously examines and pursues defence related issues - the Standing Committee on Defence – are largely ignored and remain un-actioned by the government.

The politician needs to note that his assumption about national security being irrelevant in elections is likely to become invalid. The aam aadmi has become acutely conscious of security issues and would like to know why a defence budget of over US \$ 45 billion cannot insulate him from the depredations of aggressive and arrogant neighbours who pose a continuous threat of terror strikes, stake territorial claims and repeatedly violate our sovereignty? With a general election looming large, there may be an electoral price to pay for such adverse perceptions.

Whether that actually comes to pass or not, the detachment of our politicians from defence and security issues is already imposing heavy penalties on the nation. Let us see how. Other Flaws in National Security Management. A remark often heard from politicians and bureaucrats about India's national security framework is, that since this system has worked for 66 years, there is no need to tinker with it. This is sheer self-delusion, because the 'system' has not worked, and we are fortunate to have muddled-through most crisis situations, in spite of flawed organizations. Had any lessons been learnt from four wars, the Kargil episode, Operation Parakaram (the general mobilization ordered after the Parliament attack of 2001) and 26/11, the government would have initiated urgent reforms in the realm of national security. However, all we have is two Task Forces on national security, convened a decade apart, whose recommendations remain in limbo.

The flaws in our national security management do not escape notice of foreign observers, and impact negatively on India's image and credibility. Let me dwell briefly on three salient issues. Firstly; India's political establishment has, since independence, cast the armed forces HQs outside the MoD by designating them as 'Attached Offices', and superimposed an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy on them. According to the Government of India Rules of Business, almost all the responsibilities related to the defence of India, and the management of its armed forces are vested in the Defence Secretary. Thus, not only are the armed forces subaltern to a totally civilian bureaucracy, but the professional heads of the three Services, charged with the command of the armed forces, and who actually plan and conduct operations in war and peace, are not accorded recognition in the edifice of the government.

A damaging consequence of isolating the armed forces from the MoD is the interminable delays that bedevil the processing of cases. Financial and administrative authority is vested in departments of the MoD, but responsibility and accountability are completely diffused. Whether they relate to acquisition of hardware or to infrastructure and manpower accretions, all cases have to be processed through multiple layers of bureaucracy. This has not only thwarted force modernization but also affected combat readiness. A second, deep flaw is represented by India's abject dependence on foreign sources for military hardware; which has made it the world's largest importer of arms.

A handful of nuclear warheads and ballistic missiles do not justify the existence of India's vast defence industrial and technological base or 'DTIB', consisting of a network of sophisticated DRDO laboratories backed by the production facilities of the ordinance factories and Defence PSUs. This massive complex has rendered our armed forces hollow by failing to deliver capabilities badly needed by them. The reasons are fairly straightforward. The DRDO management does not adequately consult the armed forces or allow them a say in its programmes. This organization is free to spend its budget on technologies, which often do not have a bearing on the operational capabilities urgently needed by today's armed forces. Similarly the defence PSUs, under MoD tutelage, have misled the nation with spurious claims of 'transfer of technology' and 'indigenization'.

Having undertaken this introspection, let us direct our gaze outwards. According to the Economist, "...the main external threats facing India are clear: an unstable, fading but dangerous Pakistan; an intimidating China..... In terms of India's regional status and future prospects as a "great power", China matters most; but the vexatious relationship with Pakistan continues to dominate military thinking. From both, internal and external discourse, it seems obvious that the acid-test of India's diplomacy and grand-strategy – such as it is - will be its ability to cope with an increasingly powerful and belligerent China. Let us then take a brief look at the overall Chinese strategic posture vi-a-vis India. (To be concluded)

(Courtesy South Asia Monitor) CPS Conveys its thanks to Admiral Arun Prakash and Cmde.Uday Bhaskar



The PVNR legacy : Dr Manmohan Singh's Sanyasi Mentor

Cmde. (Retd) C. Uday Bhaskar

Former Director NMF& Ex Director IDSA

Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh paid rich tribute to his political mentor, the late PV Narasimha Rao (PVNR) and drew attention to one of the less acknowledged contributions of PM Rao. Speaking in Delhi on March 31, Dr. Singh observed: 'As I saw him from close quarters, he (PVNR) was truly a sanyasi in politics. He was a modernizer who was steeped in our tradition and ethos. He was a rare scholar, statesman who gave a new sense of direction not only to our economic but also foreign policies.' While PVNR's courageous role in ushering in India's economic and trade liberalization no doubt ably assisted by Dr. Singh as then Finance Minister is well documented and universally acknowledged, the manner in which India's strategic and foreign policies were reoriented by him with astute perspicacity merits recall. PVNR became the unlikely choice for what may be termed the loneliest chair in India in June 1991.

The Cold War was in its last phase but few could have anticipated the manner in which it would finally end in December of that year. The US had just emerged triumphant from its war for Kuwait and the moment of extended unipolarity had commenced.

Vulnerable position :

But India was perhaps at its most vulnerable in its 44-year-old history. The country faced unprecedented political uncertainty and internal turbulence. The assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in May 1991 in a terrorist attack highlighted the internal security fragility and India's forex reserves were at an all-time low. The ignominy of having to physically lift bullion to obtain credit pushed India against the ropes and the national psyche was at its most vulnerable. It was against this backdrop that PVNR assumed office as PM and soon stabilized the Indian ship of state. The major strategic/ security and foreign policy changes wrought by him may be disaggregated along three strands: India's post Cold war orientation; husbanding of the nuclear programme; and radical shifts to long-held foreign policies. The sudden collapse of the former USSR in December 1991 and the end of bipolarity was captured in the defining image of a defiant Boris Yeltsin standing atop a tank. The Soviet Union became 'former' and joined the detritus of imperial history. This tectonic shift in the global systemic plate left most capitals disoriented and in a state of denial or shell-shock.

We must ensure that the affluence of some is not derived from the poverty of many.

India was no exception. Yet despite the initial hesitation in welcoming the nascent birth of democracy in a shrunken Russia, India under PVNR was able to restore the balance in its relations with Moscow and the overtures of the sole superpower the USA. The latter had become overzealous in the regulation of WMD thanks to the Iraqi Scud missile scare in the war for Kuwait (Operation Desert Storm) and the pressures on India began to steadily mount.

The unmistakable US intent during the early Clinton years was to 'roll-back, cap and eliminate' the fledgling Indian nuclear capability. More recent narratives of the Indian nuclear programme suggest that apart from the PM of the day, only President Venkataraman and PVNR were in the loop as it were and to that extent the latter had a very astute understanding of how India was to resist these pressures. PVNR's mandate to his pugnacious Foreign Secretary, Mani Dixit, was to 'buy time' and by 1995, the Indian strategic programme was both protected and nurtured so much so that when the CTBT pressure was building on India, PVNR actually planned a nuclear test in December of that year a good 30 months before the Shakti tests of May 1998. Nuclear guru K Subrahmanyam, who met PVNR in the preparation of the Kargil Committee report, notes that PVNR played a major role in appropriately operationalizing India's nuclear deterrent at a crucial juncture. History will recall that PVNR enabled India's current strategic profile in no small measure with his ambiguity and perspicacity.

At the global level, PVNR was perhaps the first leader to caution the global community about the new nuclear challenges the world confronted. His January 1992 speech at the special summit of the UN Security Council that was convened to take stock of the post Cold War flux was prescient in its scope and depth of insight. PVNR was the first leader to warn the UNSC of 'this imponderable yet terrible scenario' that would be created by the 'uncontrollable spread of readymade nuclear weapons across the globe by a variety of means and methods.' The AQ Khan iceberg and the emergence of the non-state actor determined to seek nuclear know-how became a grim reality a decade later but the vision of the man was accurate even if his words fell on deaf ears.

In foreign policy, PVNR is associated with two radical shifts the recognition of Israel and the rapprochement with ASEAN. Notwithstanding India's

traditional bonds with the Arab world and its long standing commitment to the cause of the Palestine people, the end of the Cold War and the resultant security compulsions impelled India's decision to recognise Israel formally in 1992. Israel's relevance in the Indian security matrix was swiftly noted and here was a case of security requirements leading foreign policy orientation. The 'indecisive' PVNR was quick to bring about the necessary changes. That this paid handsome dividends in Kargil in 1999 when the Indian military received valuable niche support from Israel is part of the Indian record. It is apropos ASEAN that there is a personal chord as far as PVNR is concerned. During the Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi years, PVNR as Foreign Minister faithfully implemented national policies towards ASEAN as a collective and individual states such as Myanmar. India's perceived national interests placed it at odds with the larger US supported ASEAN grouping and Cambodia was a case in point. However after the end of the Cold War, the far from charismatic PVNR was able to reach out to ASEAN leaders such as Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew and others and redress the estrangement. Finally under PVNR's stewardship, India embarked on its 'look east policy' and his speech at the Institute for South East Asian Studies in Singapore in September 1994 lays out the rationale and template for India's ASEAN policy that is as relevant today. Bilateral relations that hit an all-time low with Myanmar's military leadership in the Rajiv Gandhi years were normalized during the PVNR watch since the national security interest so dictated. Quiet dexterity In the regional context, PVNR was able to steer foreign policies with China, Pakistan and Iran with quiet dexterity. His August 1995 reference to the 'unfinished' business of Partition sent a clear message to Islamabad that despite the terrorism challenges the nation faced, Delhi would remain resolute. As one senior civil servant of the period recalls, 'PVNR despite the image of prevarication, always kept his eye on the ball as far as India's national interests were concerned.' Interestingly the late PM had an acute understanding of the obduracy of the Indian bureaucratic octopus and its resistance to any change and he mentioned this internal challenge to this author in his later and lonelier years.

Yet it is to PVNR's credit that to a great extent he created the necessary consensus both within and outside the system. In the popular memory, PVNR's legacy will always be tainted with the Babri cross. But Dr Singh's tribute burnishes the image of his sanyasi mentor in a manner that the latter would have perhaps approved -

accurate, objective and detached. And in the daunting challenge of the strategic and foreign policy re-orientation that the country is now poised on and the inherent loneliness of his chair, Dr Singh may well find many correspondences with the stoic PVNR experience.

(Courtesy *The Statesman* April 12, 2007) CPS conveys its thanks to Cmde. Uday Bhaskar



THE NUCLEAR GENIE-7 The Nuclear Cartels

Prof. M.N. Sastri

After the nuclear attack on Japan, President Truman asserted that the US alone must act as the “trustee of this new force” and directed the State Department to take appropriate steps in this direction. The Baruch plan formulated with this objective and debated by the UN Assembly did not get approval due to opposition from the Soviet Bloc. The US then passed the Atomic Energy Act (McMahon Act) of 1946, which made the entire US nuclear programme a secret.

By the time General Eisenhower became the US President, the USSR and UK joined the nuclear club. Eisenhower and his advisors felt that Moscow’s growing mastery of nuclear technology meant that the Kremlin, by providing peaceful nuclear assistance to other countries, especially developing countries, would score a huge propaganda victory. It should therefore revise its own nuclear export policy to counter this. As a part of this strategy Eisenhower in his speech delivered before the UN General Assembly on December 8, 1953, announced the *ATOMS FOR PEACE PROGRAMME* “to hasten the day when the fear of the atom will begin to disappear from the minds of the people and the governments of the East and West.” To this end he proposed the constitution of the International Atomic Energy Agency under the UN with responsibility to devise methods for applying atomic energy to the needs of agriculture, medicine, and other peaceful activities and more importantly to provide abundant electrical energy in the power-starved areas of the world. He further said, “The US pledges before you - and therefore the world - its determination to help solve the fearful atom dilemma - to devote its entire heart and mind to find the ways by which the miraculous inventiveness of man shall not be dedicated to his death but consecrated to his life.” Some people believed that the move hinted at a sense of guilt on the part of the US Government for the nuclear attacks on the Japanese civilian population.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was established as an autonomous body in August 1957 with its headquarters in Vienna with three missions:

Peaceful Uses - Promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy by its member states

Safeguards - Implementing safeguards to verify that nuclear energy is not used for military purposes

Nuclear Safety- Promoting high standards for nuclear safety

The Eisenhower administration simultaneously took steps to disprove the Communist propaganda that the US is solely concerned with the destructive use of the atom. To maintain US global leadership and reduce Soviet influence, the US Atomic Energy Act was amended in August 1954, permitting the US to export nuclear technology and nuclear materials if the recipient country committed itself not to use these items for developing nuclear weapons. At the First UN International Conference on Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy held at Geneva in 1955 under the Chairmanship of H.J. Bhabha, Chairman of India’s Atomic Energy Commission, the US presented hundreds of declassified documents on nuclear energy. It also entered into nuclear cooperation with several countries for extending assistance in the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Most importantly, friendly nuclear nations were given training, technical information and help in constructing small nuclear research reactors. The US Atomic Energy Commission Act was also amended permitting the supply to these friendly nations limited amounts of raw and fissionable materials as well as providing assistance for building power reactors.

With an eye on scientific, commercial and political benefits, the US state and commercial establishments concerned with exports did not pay adequate attention to the security aspects of nuclear programmes and the ulterior perceptions of the recipient countries. As a result, the safeguards system enacted by the US proved ineffective. The IAEA, still in its formative stage, was also not in a position to spell out and enforce an effective safeguards regime.

The US export policy “ordinarily” required the recipients of the fissile materials or reactors to send the used fuel elements back to US for chemical processing, establish adequate inventory and other control technologies and eventually implement the IAEA safeguards. But in practice these measures were not strictly enforced. Other supplier countries (UK and France) also relaxed their control regimes for commercial

considerations. Some recipient countries, Israel, South Africa, India and Pakistan took advantage of the loopholes in the control regime and directed their efforts to nuclear weapons building programmes by diverting the fissile material. Ultimately the Atoms for Peace concept had to bear the blame for this development. Leonard Beaton a well known British defence analyst said in 1966, "only a social psychologist could hope to explain why possessors of the most terrible weapons in history should have sought to spread the necessary industry to produce them in the belief that this could make the world safer." If the US had not launched its Atoms for Peace Programme, the road to nuclear capability would have been much rockier for these countries! Experience however shows that the spread of any technology might be slow but it could never be stopped.

By 1960s the nuclear arms race saw US, UK, France, USSR and China, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, become nuclear weapon nations. At the same time several other countries such as Argentina, South Africa, Israel, Egypt, India and Pakistan were moving in the direction of acquiring nuclear capability, raising concern that humanity was heading towards an uncontrollable and destructive nuclear weapons race. This frightening trend brought together the two super powers US and USSR, which had by then amassed huge nuclear arsenals and felt safe against each other. They decided that steps should be taken to prevent other nations from acquiring nuclear capability. To this end they formulated the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which was presented to the UN General Assembly in the fall of 1965. After prolonged negotiations, the Treaty in its final form was approved by the General Assembly on June 12, 1968 with 91 countries voting in favour, 4 countries (Israel, India, Pakistan and Cuba) against and 21 abstentions. Under this Treaty, states were classified into Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) and Non Nuclear Weapons States (NNWS). For purposes of the Treaty an NWS state is defined as one that has manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosives before January 1968. US, USSR, UK, France and China thus come under the NWS category.

Under Articles I and II the NWS agree not to help the NNWS develop or acquire nuclear weapons and the NNWS agree to permanently give up pursuit of nuclear weapons. Article III empowers the IAEA to inspect the NNWS facilities and also establish safeguards for the transfer of fissionable materials between NWS and NNWS. There is however no provision for the inspection of NWS facilities by the IAEA!

Article IV acknowledges the "inalienable right" of the NNWS to develop and use nuclear energy for non-weapon purposes and also supports the fullest possible exchange of such nuclear related information and technology between the NWS and NNWS.

Article V permits NNWS access to NWS research and development benefits of nuclear explosions conducted for peaceful purposes This clause has lost relevance as the utility of peaceful nuclear explosions has since diminished.

Article VI commits the NWS to "pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of nuclear arms races at an early date and on a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict effective international control." Articles VII and VIII acknowledge the necessity of intermediate steps in the process of nuclear disarmament and the establishment of nuclear weapons-free zones.

Article IX spells out the terms by which a State may withdraw from the Treaty by giving three months advance notice.

The remaining articles deal with administrative matters including provision for a review conference every five years and on decision after 25 years whether the Treaty should be extended. In 1995 Review Conference, the Treaty was extended indefinitely with a decision to evolve strategies to strengthen it.

The NPT is described as a grand bargain between the nuclear haves and have-nots with the haves preserving the advantage of a "nuclear cartel" in which a few producers control the demand from many buyers. For the super powers it meant a significant political and strategic advantage with the smaller states having no choice but ally with them for security.

The Treaty was opened on July 1, 1968 with the signatures of US, UK and USSR and 59 countries and entered into force in March 1970. China acceded in March 1992 and France in August 1992. At the time the Treaty was proposed 25-30 states were predicted to go nuclear within 20-30 years. But most of them including South Africa, Argentina, and West Germany adhered to the Treaty bringing the total number to 190. North Korea which acceded in 1985 announced its withdrawal from the Treaty in 2003, bringing down the number to 189. The clandestine nuclear programmes undertaken by Iran, which is a signatory to the NPT, is currently an issue of international concern.

Of the nations that did not accede to the Treaty,

You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift. You cannot help the wage-earner by pulling down the wage-payer. **Abraham Lincoln**

India has shown its unwillingness to sign the Treaty in its current form because it feels that the Treaty allowed the five NWS to retain nuclear weapons without a specific time schedule for nuclear disarmament, and creating two classes of states- the nuclear "haves" and the "have-nots". Pakistan has maintained that it would sign the NPT if India also signs. Israel refused to sign the Treaty on the grounds that "it is deeply flawed and hypocritical. It ignores the realities of the Middle-East and the real threats facing the region and the entire world". In an ironic twist the states (except Cuba) that opposed the NPT became Nuclear Weapon States after the NPT came into force. Israel, which is known to have developed nuclear weapon capability is yet to officially accept its NWS status.

Yet another nuclear cartel is the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). Initially started with six members in the wake of India's first Pokhran nuclear test in 1974, the NSG has 46 members as of 2009. This group seeks to contribute to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons under the Guidelines formulated for nuclear and nuclear related exports to ensure that these exports are not diverted for military purposes. The state which imports the materials should provide assurances to the NSG members that the proposed deals will not contribute to the creation of nuclear weapons. The recipient state is also expected to have safeguards in place to prevent their theft or unauthorized use and promise that the materials and information will not be transferred to a third party without the explicit permission of the exporting state. The IAEA is charged with putting in place all safeguards to prevent diversion of nuclear material or technology for military purposes.

The guideline regime however is voluntary. The guidelines are implemented by each participating state on political considerations and in accordance with its national laws and practices. For instance Russia transferred nuclear fuel to India in 2001 even though as many as 32 members declared that the action contravenes Russia's commitments to the regime.

In 2008 the NSG agreed under US pressure to exempt India from its requirement that the recipient countries have in place comprehensive IAEA safeguards covering all nuclear activities. This waiver however commits each NSG member to regularly inform the group of the approved transfers to India.

Any state that conducts exports of materials listed in the Guidelines may apply for NSG membership. The applicant state is evaluated on its proliferation record,

adherence to international non-proliferation treaties (e.g. NPT) and national export controls. All existing members must approve the admission of the applicant into the NSG. Strangely the Group contains member nations such as Malta, Cyprus and Iceland which have practically negligible activity in the nuclear field. India is facing hurdles for admission into the NSG though US, UK, Russia and France gave their backing. Small states such as Ireland, the Netherlands and Switzerland expressed their reservations. China stressed the need for equal treatment to South Asia, an apparent reference to its ally Pakistan.



ON THE PERFECT SINGER AND HIS PERFECT LISTENERS

Prof. Manoj Das

*(A seer among scholars the venerable Prof Manoj Das who lives in Aurobindo Ashram, Auroville has graciously permitted the publication of this essay from his book **My Little India**)*

At Haridwar I asked Brijbhushan, editor of the journal published by the Dudhadhari Ashram, 'Can you lead me to Bhartrihari Cave?'

'I know it to be there - but am not sure where,' he said apologetically.

Brijbhushan who had taken to Yoga after taking his Master's and law degrees, was well read in spiritual lore, but not so much interested in legends and antiquities.

'But I will lead you to a Sadhu who has been here since his childhood in a cave and who should know,' he added.

We crossed Hari-ki-Pauri, the central attraction for pilgrims at Haridwar, and entered the town. I was wondering about our destination. If Brijbhushan's Sadhu lived in a cave, we ought to head towards a hill and not into the town.

My guide stepped into a restaurant and signalled me to follow him. Perhaps he was in need of a cup of tea, I thought. We crossed the hall with a few customers eating and talking. Brijbhushan stopped before a closed door, hesitated for a moment and knocked tenderly.

'Come in!'

The voice sounded like a distant roar. Brijbhushan pushed open the door and, following him into what I thought to be a cabin, I felt I had been instantly

transported into a different space and time.

It was a cave - with pristine, rugged rock above and around us. On a bed of deer-skin and tiger-skin sat a hermit, his body and face marked by stripes of ashes. By and by I realised that several hills, once the abodes of yogis, tantriks, hermits and mendicants, had been demolished to make way for residential and commercial buildings. However, some caves associated with great sages had been spared, not so much because the wielders of money-bags respected their memory, but because they were afraid of their own karma if they destroyed those hoary seats.

This was one such cave. The Sadhu was the incumbent of a line of hermits with an age-old tradition.

After a few minutes of chit-chat we asked him about the Bhartrihari Cave. He offered to lead us there himself.

He put on his ochre robe but that was not enough to bring him out on the street. He opened a box and brought out, one after another, some seven necklaces of beads of different colours. He put them on mumbling some hymns.

'Are these beads made of glass?' I asked Brijbhushan in a whisper.

'What do you mean? Some of them must be precious and rare gems!'

'Why must he wear them when coming out to the street?'

'Maybe they protect him from unwelcome forces in the atmosphere or maybe they react to the sunshine in a way beneficent to him.'

'Or maybe he is afraid of leaving them behind in case they disappear!' I observed.

'Maybe!'

'But is it safe to wander with such precious stuff around one's neck?'

'Well, attack on Sadhus is rather rare, even though there are robbers and bandits here.'

'What about robbers and bandits in the guise of Sadhus - since robbers and bandits galore are there in abundance as merchants or politicians?'

'They are there!'

Brijbhushan's response was brief. I chose to trust what I had heard from a veteran Vaishnava traveller, that

the Himalayan climate - at least the occult climate - was an antidote to man's wicked propensities.

We had walked only for a furlong when the Sadhu led us into a temple-like building. I had stopped feeling intrigued and, as expected, I was shown into yet another cave preserved as a cabin in a sprawling modern structure. But this was an Ashram run by the Natha sect and the cave was maintained with care.

Sitting on a lovely spot on the Ganga at night I tried to visualise the Haridwar of ages gone by. It must have been a cluster of hills with hundreds of caves. Darkness must have been dotted by a few flickers of light on different tiers of the hills. There would be hardly any noise apart from the gurgling of the Ganga.

Haridwar's oldest name was Kapilasthan.

Somewhere here was a passage to a nether region with the abode of Sage Kapila. The gods whisked away the handsome horse let loose by King Sagara and tied it to a pole in the sage's hermitage. The king was furious, for he could perform the Aswamedha Yajna which would make him the king of kings only when the horse returned unchecked after roaming over the neighbouring kingdoms.

Sagara's thousand sons, after a systematic search, found their way to Kapila's abode and spotted the lost horse. They pointed their accusing fingers at the great sage and were instantly reduced to ashes by the sage's fiery look. Two generations later, Prince Bhagiratha appeased the sage and got from him the secret for resurrecting his ancestors: that would be possible only if the River of Heavens descended to the earth and rolled on the ashes!

The story of Bhagiratha meditating on Brahma, Ganga's custodian, and persuading him to release the flow to the earth, and Lord Shiva consenting to absorb the first shock of the mighty fall so that its impact did not shatter the earth, is widely known. Much less known, however, is the story of the genesis of the Ganga, the reason for her divine sanctity.

This happened at some remote point in mythical times. The unparalleled Narada, the only god to lead the life of a sage, was on his way back to Goloka, the home of Vishnu, after one of his trips to the earth. The subtle passage linking the earth and the heavens, of course, lay through the Himalayas, and Narada, as he ascended it, merrily playing his Veena and humming a song, was puzzled to see in one of the moon-bathed valleys a small get-together of some supernatural beings, male and

female. Although they were stunningly beautiful, each one of them was maimed. Some had lost a limb each; others appeared to have been badly mauled or whipped.

Narada stopped and talked to them and learnt that they were Gandharvas, the demigods who were the spirits of music. Each one of them represented a Raga or Ragini - the modes of music.

'What deformed or battered you?' he queried. The spirits, though far from willing to speak out, had to satisfy his curiosity at last: Every time a singer or a player of a musical instrument, under the influence of his or her ego, disregarded the sanctity of a Raga or Ragini and made erroneous or whimsical deviations, the Gandharva concerned received a blow. Over the years, thousands of such blows had maimed them.

Narada, himself a musician, stood awfully embarrassed. He must do some penance on behalf of all the musicians.

'Tell me, you noble beings, what can be done to restore your original forms to you?' he asked.

'Only if we could once hear the perfect musician sing!' was the answer.

'Who is the perfect musician?'

'Lord Shiva, who remains lost in silence.' Narada forthwith proceeded to Kailash and appealed to Lord Shiva for a performance for the benefit of the much harassed supernatural tribe.

Said the compassionate Shiva, 'I am willing to sing, but I can be inspired only if I have before me at least one perfect listener!'

Who are the perfect listeners? There were only two: Brahma and Vishnu.

Narada hurried to them; they were only too happy at the prospect of enjoying Shiva's music. A time was fixed. The Gandharvas reached Kailash. So did Brahma and Vishnu and, as the news spread, all the other gods and demigods.

Shiva began to sing. All were in ecstasy. Far below the hills the vibrations brought a touch of spring to Nature. Snows crystallised for ages melted.

And, most unexpectedly, the luminous aura that surrounded Vishnu's body also began to melt as the perfect listener became totally one with the flow of Shiva's song.

The alert Brahma at once captured the melted aura

in his Kamandalu. Later poured into the heavens, the stuff flowed as a celestial river and it continued to do so till the day Bhagiratha ushered her into the human world.

Ganga is sacred because it owes its origin to Vishnu's melted aura - an element of his subtle body.

The Ganga, reviving the Sagara princes, symbolised the power of Divine Grace, its possible triumph over death.

But lesser mortals go content with far smaller expectations:

*The maid or matron, as she throws
Champac or lotus, Bel or rose,
Or sends the quivering light afloat
In shallow cup or paper boat,
Prays for a parent's peace and wealth,
Prays for a child's success and health,
For a fond husband breathes a prayer,
For progeny their loves to share,
For what of good on earth is given
To lowly life, or hoped in Heaven.
Such are the scenes the Ganges shows,
As to the sea it rapid flows;
And all who love the works to scan
Of nature, or the thoughts of man,
May here unquestionably find
Pleasure and profit for the mind.*

Horace Hayman Wilson (1786-1866)



RETHINKING COSMOPOLITAN MODERNITY - III

RABINDRANATH TAGORE ON NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

Prof. Sachidananda Mohanty,
Dept. of English, University of Hyderabad

In his essay on Mahatma Gandhi dated 2 October 1937, he contrasts the Gandhian approach to that of the West. He writes:

But though Christ declared that the meek shall inherit the earth, Christians now aver that the victory is to the strong, the aggressive. And no wonder. For the doctrine seemed, on the fact of it absurd and contrary to the principles of Natural History as interpreted by Western scientists. It needed another prophet to vindicate the truth of this paradox and interpret 'meekness' as the positive force of love and

righteousness, as Satyagraha. This meekness is not submission, or mere passive endurance of wrong or injustice: such submission would be cowardly and would imply co-operation, even though involuntary, with the power of tyranny. But Gandhiji has made of this meekness, or ahimsa, the highest form of bravery, a perpetual challenge to the insolence of the strong.(Tagore,1937 :17)

Similarly in his essay entitled 'East and West in Greater India' dated 1909-1910, he writes : 'we began with a blind foolish,insate begging at the door of Europe with our critical sense entirely benumbed. That was not the way to make any real gain. Whether it be wisdom or political rights, they have to be earned, that is to say to be attained by one's Shakti after a successful struggle against obstructing forces.' (Tagore,1909-10: 84).

At the same time, Tagore is convinced of the underlying humanism of the West. In the essay 'Meeting of the East and West' dated 1930, he declares that an English poem once read by him and a friend stirred them 'deeply'. It was not any thing mechanical. It did not represent any physical or material quality. Ah no. It was the message from the heart of the West that touched us deeply (Tagore, 1930:25). Unfortunately such influences, cathartic in character, are offset by the 'menace of power'. He goes on to say trenchantly:

And what is the harvest of your civilisation? You do not see from the outside. You do not realise what a terrible menace you have become to man. We are afraid of you. And everywhere people are suspicious of each other. All the great countries of the West are preparing for war, for some great work of desolation that will spread poison all over the world. And this poison is within our own selves. They try, and try to find some solution, but they do not succeed, because they have lost faith in the personality of man. (Tagore, 1934: 26)

What is the answer to this problem? He finds one in his essay on 'China and India'. We must 'abide,' he says 'by our obligation to maintain and nourish the distinctive merit of our respective cultures and not to be misled into believing that which is ancient is necessarily outworn and that which is modern is indispensable'(Tagore:129). He is pitted into a debate regarding the question of the uniqueness of each culture in his correspondence with Gilbert Murray.As Murray writes on 17 August 1934:'All generalisations about whole nations are superficial and inaccurate, even when made by scientific students without personal bias. And most of these actually current are made by prejudiced and utterly unscientific partisans.'(Tagore, 1934: 50). He ends the letter by

passionately urging Tagore in a somewhat contradictory manner, to forge 'the intellectual union of East and the West'. (Tagore, 1934: 60).He admits that there are grave perils on the way of world peace and declares his faith in the activities of the League of Intellectual Cooperation' (Tagore, 1934: 63)

In his cordial reply written from Uttarayan ,Santiniketan Bengal, dated 16 September 1934, Tagore confesses to Professor Murray that he does not see 'any solution to the intricate evils of disharmonious relationship between nations' nor can he point out 'any path which may lead us immediately to the levels of sanity'(Tagore,1934 :62).

The Murray-Tagore correspondence foregrounds an interesting aspect of the national-international debate.Are all generalisations about 'national cultures' sweeping and superficial or do nations have 'distinctive merits'? Although the current critical approach, in the wake of the disasters wrought by nations in World War II and after, disfavours an "essentialistic" faith in national cultures, several trasnational thinkers of the early 20th c, like Tagore and Mirra held a more nuanced view of nationalism. Like Sri Aurobindo they were deeply conscious of the dangerous use to which such arguments could be put as manifest, for instance, in the Nazi ideology of racial superiority. Sri Aurobindo warned against such trends in his chapter called 'True and False Subjectivism' in The Human Cycle. However, he believed, as did Mirra and Tagore that each nation has a distinct cultural history, and that each culture could evolve in its own way towards universality. In fact this becomes the basis for the ideal of Tagore's Santiniketan, ['where the world finds its home in a single nest']. The same principle seems to underlie the Mother's Auroville experiment.

By the time of Tagore's correspondence with Murray, the political situation at home had worsened and greatly troubled the poet. He was not only compelled to return his knighthood as a result of the British atrocities against Indians specifically in Punjab, he also felt that it was his duty to protest against the inhuman treatment meted out to the revolutionaries who were incarcerated in the cellular jail in the Andamans. This is what he wrote as a public appeal on 2 August 1937:

The pitiless method of punishment that still persists in many parts of the world in their penal system is enough to condemn human civilization, but of late an aggravated spirit of vindictiveness has suddenly grown in virulence in some Western countries in their dealings

with political victims. India has not altogether escaped in her Government from manifesting some degree of such fascistic infection which has scant respect for legitimate claim of human freedom. And a gloom of despair has spread from hundreds of stricken homes over this unfortunate province where men and women of tender age are made to suffer for an indefinite period of detention without trial undergoing various modes of penalty, physical and psychological...

On the continent of Europe they have their Devil's Islands. ...their Concentration Camps and other specially built hells for punitive exhibition of humanity, but in England they have no such unhallowed places for intensification of suffering by wrenching away the prisoners from their own soil. When to our dismay we find that the infringement of their own rule has been possible exclusively for the subject races, the insult of their distinction humiliates all of us and I offer my protest in the name of my country.(TS:203)

At the same time, Tagore apparently saw little difficulty in asking the colonial masters for financial assistance for his projects in Sri Niketan. While Mahatma Gandhi in February 1930 was 'widely known to considering another campaign of civil disobedience— ...here was Tagore soliciting Government assistance.' (Dutta and Robinson, 2005; 2011:370). Tagore wrote to the Viceroy Lord Irwin:

On the occasion of your visit to our Viswa- Bharati it seemed to us that your Excellency received favourable impression of the value of the work that is being done here. This emboldens me to address my appeal for help directly to you.(Selected Letters, 2011:370

This complexity of response can also be seen as a result of the co-existence of national and international interests in Tagore's consciousness.

(to be continued)



Gandhiji's Concept of Good Governance-its relevance - II

Prof. I.Dosagiri Rao,

Dept. of Political Science & Public-Admn
Andhra University Campus, Kakinada

In a federation of Gandhi's Ideal State there would be no centralization of authority of any kind. "The structure will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by bottom. It is a oceanic circle embracing a number of

concentric circles" he said. Thus Gandhiji was against all centralization because it connotes force and anything based on force is opposed to freedom and morality. Voluntary cooperation of individuals is the essential condition of Gandhiji's non-violent state. In such a state, every one is his own ruler, but he rules himself in such a way that he is never a hindrance to his neighbours.

Gandhi wanted to adopt democracy in his ideal State. According to him democracy remains unachieved in the western nations more on account of the prevailing belief in the efficacy of violence and untruth than on account of mere institutional inadequacy. If people accept the way of non-violence, the democratic State that emerges will be inspired by the ideals of truth and non-violence. He said, "Western democracy is on its trial. If it has already proved a failure, may it be reserved to India to evolve the true science of democracy by giving a visible demonstration of its buttress. Corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be inevitable products of democracy, as they undoubtedly are today. Nor is bulk the true test of democracy. True democracy is not inconsistent with a few persons representing the spirit, the hope and the aspirations of those whom they claim to represent. I hold that democracy cannot be evolved by forcible method. The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within".

The State is a mere means and not an end in itself. The ultimate end or purpose of the non-violent State will be to advance "the greatest good of all". To that end it will give to the individual maximum opportunity for growth. But the State is rooted in violence and by enforcing action restricts the scope for self-rule on the part of the individual. So, in a predominantly non-violent society, the state will govern the least and use the least amount of force.

The state will perform its functions with the minimum use of coercion. In the non-violent state, civil disturbances will also be minimized. According to Gandhi, the police force will be composed of believers in non-violence. "They will be servants, not masters of the people...Infact the policemen will be reformers". There will be no need for army to save the country from any kind of external aggression. The State of Gandhi's dream will have an army consisting of the entire non-violent populace, who meet the aggressor by offering non-violent resistance upto death and to the last man like true Satyagrahis.

I learnt to face adversity with confidence and detachment, if not serenity. Wisdom may have eluded me, but not the joy of living and giving. **K.Natwar Singh**

The state will also intervene in the economic field in order to ensure social justice, to bring about economic self-sufficiency and to equalize the economic condition of the people. The state will promote small-scale industries. It will control forests, minerals, power resources and communications in the interests of the people. Another important duty of the State would be the education of the young. Gandhi attached great importance to education as a means of social regeneration and would make education free and compulsory during the primary stage from the age of seven to fourteen. The non-violent state will co-operate with an international organization based on non-violence.

However, in the ultimate analysis the practicability of the Gandhian ideal rests on the individual. A non-violent state can evolve only when men become accustomed to the Gandhian ideals. This is recognized by Gandhi himself when he said, "the evolution of the stateless non-violent democracy depends on the average individual evolving genuine non-violence and acquiring personal Swaraj.....The individual is above all the soul and in any scheme of social progress the first step always lies with him".

Thus Mahatma Gandhi was deeply concerned with the emancipation and empowerment of common man and especially that of downtrodden and the weaker sections in the society. He was emphatic that the minimum needs of man should be fulfilled. According to him 'earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed'. Hence it is the duty of the government to mobilize the physical, economic and spiritual resources for the well being of all people in the society. The real test of good governance according to Gandhiji is 'Do the policies help the poorest and weakest man in the society'? if yes, that is good governance.

Relevance of Mahatma Gandhiji:

Even after six decades after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, Gandhiji's ideals and message are an extremely relevant to the contemporary society. He led the greatest mass movement and the most peaceful revolution in human history. It was the unique non-violent movement under his leadership that earned for India freedom from the colonial rule. He was interested in liberating his people not only from political bondage but also from social injustice and economic exploitation. The Gandhian technique of mobilizing people has been successfully employed by many oppressed societies

around the world under the leadership of people like Martin Luther King in the United States, Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Julius Nyrere in Tanzania and now Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar which is an eloquent testimony to the continuing relevance of Mahatma Gandhi. In recent past as Banki-Moon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations rightly said, "the principle of non-violence preached by him helped topple tyrannical regimes from Tunisia to Egypt, as people in these countries proved that it is more effective to fire off a tweet than to fire a gun".

Gandhiji was the first political thinker who understood the importance, role and place of villages in the Indian political system. He openly declared that "India is to be found not in a few cities but in its 7, 00,000 villages". His objective assessment of the role of villages in the socio-economic and political panorama of India, has made him to bring them into the mainstream and ultimately win the freedom. According to him, the growth of big cities was not a sign of progress. They were signs of degeneration 'the real plague spots of India'. He considered urbanization as an evil in so far as and it is based on the exploitation of the rural folk and totally divorced from the rural way of life rooted in nature. The unwieldy expansion of urban conglomerations along with abnormal growth of the slums as we witness today clearly justifies the views expressed by Mahatma Gandhiji. He firmly believed that the uplift of India depended solely on the uplift of the villages. But contrary to his views, the policy initiatives taken by the successive governments in India have ignored the Gandhian teachings, resulting in rural deprivation and agrarian crisis. Even after sixty-five years of independence, agriculture is in doldrums-with hundreds of farmers committing suicides and declaring crop holidays across the country. The number of people, especially in rural areas, going to bed partially hungry now is more than the entire population of India in 1947. Maladies like corruption, violence, red tapism and nepotism are eating into the vitals of the democratic system. The decline of institutions, of professional autonomy and above all erosion of values in public life have seriously affected public trust and faith in the democratic political system. As the governments have failed to fulfill the basic needs, the people tend to look for Gandhian solutions.

Gandhiji adopted the ideals of simplicity and high thinking and became the real hope for the common man. The message of love and peace, of non-violence and satyagraha, of the equality of all people, of harmony

between all religions was universal in its appeal to all societies and peoples. In view of its relevance, the United Nations has adopted a resolution in 2007 to commemorate 2nd October, Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, as International Day for Non-Violence. It is a big tribute to Mahatma and recognition of the relevance of Gandhian principles and ideas in today's trouble-torn world.

The dream of the 'Father of the Nation' was "to wipe every tear from every eye". The poor and the exploited were Gandhiji's main concern. His goal was the removal of poverty and human misery. The real India-the India of toiling masses and farmers desperately needs a Gandhiji to fight communal hatred, poverty, rampant greed, widespread violence, consumptive style of living, the corrupt bureaucrat-politician nexus. The Gandhian model and the Gandhian teachings are still relevant to the present day society. As the great seer Sri Aurobindo prophesied in his tribute to the Mahatma, "the light which led us to freedom, though not to unity, still burns and will burn on till it conquers". Gandhiji did not belong to an era or an age. He belongs to humanity for eternity.



BOOK REVIEW:

WALKING WITH LIONS Tales from a Diplomatic Past
K.Natwar Singh Harper Collins Publishers India @2013
pp213, Rs 299/-

The 1983 NAM Summit, held in Delhi, was described as 'the finest hour of nonalignment.' It was a personal triumph for Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who described nonaligned movement as 'the largest peace movement' and inarguably no ordinary achievement for India that so many countries, so diverse politically, socially and culturally, stayed together for so long under the banner of nonalignment. From India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, the architect of the nonaligned movement, to his grandson Rajiv Gandhi and his successor P.V.Narasimha Rao, for almost fifty years, Indian Prime Ministers played a stellar role in making nonalignment a force to reckon with in world affairs.

To narrate the fascinating story of that diplomatic past no one is more eminently qualified than K. Natwar Singh, diplomat and former minister and one of India's most gifted writers and raconteurs. Joining the Indian Foreign Service in early fifties when Jawaharlal Nehru was designing the architecture of nonalignment, Natwar Singh rose to become a distinguished diplomat and

administrator, with the rich experience he gained in a variety of roles he was called upon to play in both domestic and international politics. However, it is his pen more than the positions he held that earned for him wide acclaim and the admiration of the discerning scholar as well as the distinguished statesmen and celebrities he met. He not only 'walked with Lions' but also tamed some of them with his wit and humour.

No hype at all in saying that Natwar Singh's latest book "Walking with Lions –Tales from a Diplomatic Past is unputdownable. Just a slender volume of 210 pages elegantly brought out by Harper Collins with the author's crisp prefatory note that reveals the inspiration provided by *India Today's* Editor -in -Chief Aroon Purie and publisher and Chief Editor Krishan Chopra's selection of the book title.

'The carnival of personalities includes politicians, authors, artists, painters, bureaucrats and sportsmen from many parts of the globe,' writes the author. The compilation of fifty sketches crackles with anecdote, with humour, pungent criticism and fulsome praise of some of the celebrities he met. Natwar is also a master of brevity that enhances the elegance of his prose. The writer's pen becomes a sword in the very first essay when he cuts Morarji Desai to size by describing him as a pseudo- Gandhian. That reminds one of Sarvepalli Gopal's equally contemptuous description of Moraji's style of living as 'ostentatious simplicity.' The same pen becomes an artist's brush in the pages that follow when he portrays leaders and celebrities in different colours. Jawaharlal Nehru was " a great good man... He was one of God's great creations in our time." Indira Gandhi with whom Natwar Singh worked for many years receives high praise, "those who had worked under her and with her were truly fortunate." The historian Arnold J.Tonybee was captivated by Nehru. ' Here was a human being who could win one's heart and keep it,' Toynbee said of Nehru. Rajiv Gandhi, writes the author, " was a risk- taker. At the same time, he was not given to taking unnecessary risks. He had , however, in less than a year learnt that diplomacy was about conciliation, consultation and cooperation."

Of PV Narasimha Rao Natwar writes: "PV was a man of learning, a scholar, a linguist and a thinker of the first order. His roots were deep in the spiritual and religious soil of India. He did not need to 'discover India'. In early 1990 he had decided to retire from politics. He had made all arrangements to go back to Hyderabad. He

used one word where two might do. He once told me that some things should be left unsaid. He conveyed a serene calmness. At the same time he was no saint. His private life inclined towards passion and sensuality. Very few were privy to this aspect of his life. He was astute, crafty, patient. Also capable of biting sarcasm. He smiled without a smile. Nehru had a temper. PV, a temperament."

There is no dearth of humour too. Natwar reveals many interesting and even amusing facets of the personality of the leaders portrayed. 'For instance the joke was that Swaran singh did not know the difference between Ho Chi Minh and Aksai.'

The 'carnival' includes lively pieces on many others including Mao, Margaret Thatcher, Don Bradman and finally film star Dev Anand. A delightful read that is refreshingly different from the boredom and stress inflicted everyday on readers of newspapers and viewers of television. Natwar Singh's literary stroll in the jungle of politics, diplomacy and public life reminds us that there is no substitute for a good book.

A.Prasanna Kumar



CIVIL SOCIETY SHOULD FOCUS ON WATER, SANITATION: DEFENCE EXPERT

(Newspaper reports on the lecture delivered by **Comde. C.Uday Bhaskar** at Centre for Policy Studies on the occasion of the release of its **100th Bulletin** on April 16, 2013.)

VISAKHAPATNAM: Noted defence analyst Commodore (ret'd) C. Uday Bhaskar on Tuesday said the civil society should take up issues like drinking water and sanitation and exert pressure on policymakers for suitable action. He was speaking at a meeting conducted by Centre for Policy Studies (Gayatri Vidya Parishad) in connection with release of its 100th bulletin.

Commodore Uday Bhaskar, former director of Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, regretted that State was not fulfilling its basic responsibility to provide potable drinking water and proper sanitation. Unfortunately, the situation was turning from bad to worse with bottled water industry turning into a mafia, he observed.

He said Sri Lanka and Myanmar had better

sanitation system. Garbage and solid waste disposal particularly human waste was turning into a big problem in India. "Not a single city or town had a proper sanitation system in conformity with the UN mandated norms," he pointed out.

Referring to outbreak of plague epidemic in Surat in 1994, he said it was a big lesson for the policy-makers. He observed that the water crisis faced in Delhi and other urban areas could have been avoided had there been proper policies in place.

Commodore Uday Bhaskar recalled the contribution of his former colleague and defence expert K. Subrahmanyam to formulation of defence strategies after and before Kargil war. "There is no dearth of reports from think tanks on defence affairs, agriculture, education, health and other fields but their implementation is still a big question mark," he remarked. He said there was loss of credibility on the part of all important organs of Indian democracy and referred to how a large section of media was serving the interest of political power or corporate power impacting badly on the democracy. Former Mayor and eminent lawyer D.V. Subba Rao, Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University G.S.N. Raju, director of Centre for Policy Studies A. Prasanna Kumar and P.V. Sarma of Gayatri Vidya Parishad spoke.

(The Hindu, April 17, 2013)



Think Tanks & Public Policy:

"The last two decades have witnessed loss of credibility of not only public institutions but also of the academia and media. Several undesirable elements have come to dominate public life resulting in a huge shift towards power-political or corporate," said Comde(Ret'd) C. Uday Bhaskar, the well known expert on strategic affairs. Delivering the keynote address after releasing the 100th Bulletin of Centre for Policy Studies at a function on April 16, the former Director of Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses and later of National Maritime Foundation, emphasized the role of think tanks in promoting public awareness of issues and policies, at both macro and micro levels. "Informed debate and principled dissent are vital for civilized political discourse and the need to sustain the narrative cannot be overstated," he observed. Paying tribute to the late K.Subrahmanyam, in whose memory The Subbu Forum

was launched in Delhi two years ago, Uday Bhaskar narrated how IDSA originated in the early sixties after India's humiliation in the 1962 war. A think tank on defence studies emerged thanks to the lead given by K.C.Pant and Y.B. Chavan and editors like B.G. Verghese. K. Subrahmanyam who joined IAS and Brajesh Mishra who entered the IFS, both in the early fifties, rose to become outstanding analysts on security and strategic affairs. Insightful inputs were provided for policy formulation in both domestic and external affairs. Whether it was liberation of Bangladesh or nuclear explosions of 1974 and 1998 the part played by experts like Subrahmanyam and others was significant according to Cmde Bhaskar. He lamented the apathy of the government, to act on the important report submitted in 2000 after the Kargil War. Bhaskar who was born in Vizag and trained in Korukonda Sainik School served Indian Navy for 37 years. He suggests the starting of think tanks to study and discuss such vital issues as energy, water supply and garbage clearance.

(*Deccan Chronicle* April 21,2013)



Ultimate Draupadi XII **(Or the Hindu Ideal of an Impeccable Pativrata)**

Sri C. Siva Sankaram

The Divine Mother Universal came to the rescue of Draupadi that she could do away with Simhabala Keechaka. The hand that effected the end of Keechaka was that of Bhima of terrible valour. Of the brothers five Bhima was endowed with Herculean strength. He was born to kill several more of Keechaka's brand of senseless lust. Draupadi's joy knows no bounds in the wake of the victory of chastity over immorality. She lost restraint of tongue and gave a modest ventilation of ecstasy. Shakespeare would coin the term frailty to give apt definition to her state of mind. It was so frail that she was heard prate of her husbands ruthless prowess. This unshackled outburst of boastful elation could catch the uncouth ears of upa-keechakas who were carrying the corpse of Simhabala to the crematory. The giants soon ran to the source of vain prate. They caught hold of Draupadi and enroped her to the dead of Simhabala, their elder brother.

The creator probably forethought that women need a cry of alarm to resort to in the hour of danger to

their honour. Draupadi's shrill yell of alarm rent the air. It hit the ears of Bhima. He hurried to rescue her. He manhandled them to death. The Kingdom of Virat was saved from frequent visitation of tribes of giants.

The serial deaths caused uproar in the calm kingdom of Viraata the man of sanity. The king was worried over the recent unforeseen explosion of violence. He summoned the Court to find out who was the cause of this holocaust. The finger of suspicion was pointed to Draupadi. The sane King took his queen Sudheshna into confidence to find pretext to get rid of Malini as soon as possible. The worldly-wise queen counselled patience to let the matter rest unprecipitated. The tenure of Malini as hand-maid was about to expire within days thirteen. Various instances that followed the episode of Keechaka, contributed to her identity as the ideal and faithful consort of Pandavas. The latter were revealed as the heroes submitted to the wicked plots engineered by Kauravas. Uttara, the daughter of Viraata was married to Abhimanyu the son of Arjuna and Subhadra. King Viraata craved the heroes and their faithful consort pardon for the omissions and commissions during the long dreary year of servitude in the palace.

So, the inhuman sentence of living incognito for an year mixed with tragedy and high drama came to a close. Draupadi in her roles as Malini and Sairandhri acquitted herself well proving at every skirmish as the undisputed offspring of leaping fire. She emerged as molten gold just got out of furnace ablaze.

The Pancha Pandavas and Draupadi were breathing air of freedom. The hour of Draupadi arrived to prove her real mettle, her true identify, her timeless message to womankind. In her, the brave, brainy self-confident Indian womanhood blossomed to its intense glory emitting fragrance of noble conjugal fidelity underscored by practical wisdom and unsullied legacy. Her lineage dates back to Tretayug, when Sita's image was embosomed within Fire-God and fake Sita went with Srirama to the forest who in later centuries incarnated once as Vedavati and still later centuries incarnated as Indrasena until ultimately she culminated in Draupadi as the deathless icon of ageless impeccable connubial fidelity. She was impatient of seeing Pandavas enthroned as legal heirs to the Empire usurped by Kaurava. Kauravas resorted to means prescribed by Machiavelli to usurp thrones governed by kings adhered to high moral conduct and rule. Pandavas were not such political innocents as to fall prey

I am not really so interested in what monkey man derived from,
as I am in what kind of monkey he is to become. **Loren Eislej**

to the vile maneuvers of Kauravas. They were adherent to Dharma at any cost. Dharmaja a man of doctrinaire peace tried every means for a peaceful amicable settlement with the power drunk unethical Kauravas.

Draupadi the daughter of merciless fire was adamant and unprepared to budge an inch in her resolve to regain the kingdom lost to Kauravas. Srikrishna volunteered to usher in talks for peaceful settlement. She told Srikrishna all sorts of humiliations she was put to during their exile. She minced no words to stress her considered intentions of regaining the kingdom. She was firm in her advocacy of violence as the one and only means to play the role of midwife to bring forth their kingdom. Srikrishna was linked by close family relations with both Kauravas and Pandavas. The son of Krishna named Samba was the son-in-law of Duryodhana, and Arjuna on pandava side related to Srikrishna as Subhadra the wife of Arjuna was younger sister of Srikrishna.

She vividly remembered the events that led to the great betrayal. She wanted by hook or by crook to wreak vengeance against falsehood for restoration of rule of law and righteousness. She is a veritable Bharatha Naari, an admixture of Sita, Vedavathi and Indrasena who were to suffer at the hands of Asuric forces. She had not plaited her hair since the day Dussasana dragged her with her hair gripped in his vile hands. She had to drench her hair in the copious blood of the heart of Dussasana. Then and then only she plaits her hair. The submissive Sita of Tretayug asserts her right of equal nobility along with man in the incarnation of Draupadi. Dharmaraja stood to

his principle of pristine Dharma. Draupadi stood stubbornly to the unrivalled noblesse of Hindu womanhood. Never she behaved in the way that blemished the fair faces of Indian feminine principle. She had robust self respect, she had at the same time Aryan flexibility of modes of Dharma. She was invincible in her moral certitude. Her everlasting nobility of character was revealed resoundingly in the hour of forgiving of Aswathama who killed her sons five while asleep. She was embodiment of equanimity, Her knowledge of Hindu scripture, her commonsense were contagious and perennial beacon light. Her noblesse, her unique spirit of human solidarity would for ever remain telling lessons to spice and enoble the lives of generations of humankind not only limited to narrow Hindudom but the whole world.

She did not seek to enjoy the unbridled licentious joys of cosy Heaven removed from the dire problems faced by woman on earth. True to her undeclared profession and convictions she cut short her Mahaprasthan and dropped on the Himalayas may be to reincarnate whenever and wherever woman was ill-treated. She incarnates to shoulder the cause of woman trodden underfoot by selfish male or female. Her strength of character was victorious in all antagonistic theatres of male supremacy.

Panchali! Art not thou the enlightened epitome of heroic passivity coupled with Wisdom?

(Concluded).



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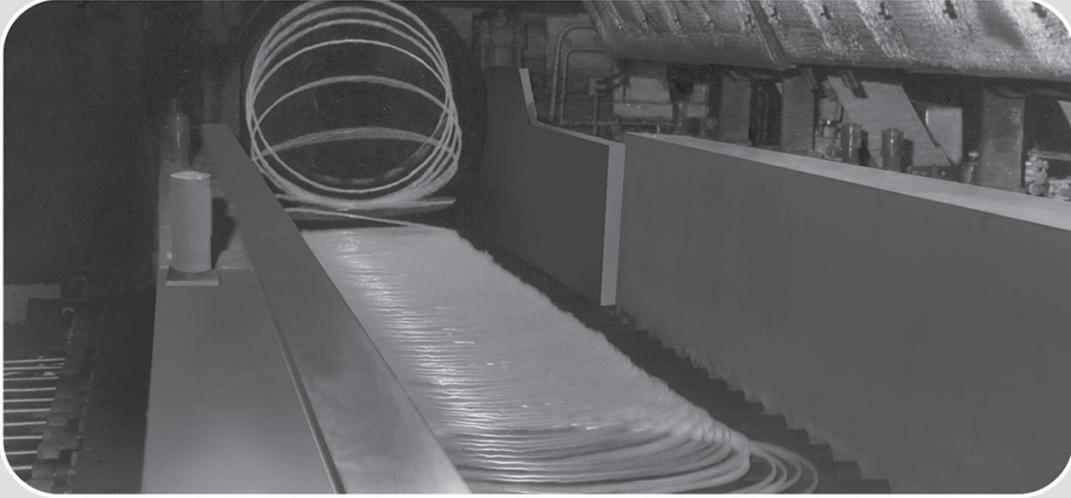
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