

## Co-habitation in Turkey

It now seems certain that Suleyman Demirel will become prime minister of Turkey for a seventh time, following his centre-right True Path Party's (DYP) narrow but significant victory over President Turgut Ozal's Motherland Party. Demirel, who was overthrown by the military twice in his long and eventful political career, is regarded as a bitter rival of the president, although the two men's ideological orientations are rather similar.

From one viewpoint, the certainty of two such traditional rivals occupying the highest executive seats of the country would seem to be a recipe for disaster, with each leader trying to steal a march on the other, by trying to obstruct the other's function or by engaging in some sort of power struggle as to who should have the final word in formulating Turkey's domestic and foreign policies.

That is the pessimistic view. On the other hand, however, the occupation of the presidency and the prime ministership by mutually hostile politicians should not pose an insurmountable problem for a country that has managed to preserve its democratic character more or less intact in spite of enormous temptation to the contrary. With authoritarianism dominating the political landscape to the south, east and immediately to the north, it is to Ankara's immense credit that it managed to hang on to pluralism. The challenge now is to conduct its state of affairs on the basis of what the French call "co-habitation" — an executive president living in peace with a hostile parliament and cabinet.

Co-habitation is now essential for Turkey, not only to confirm the maturity of its democratic system, but because political instability is the last thing needed by Turkey in the present political environment.

The problems facing Ankara are massive. To begin with, it desperately wants to become a member of the European Community for economic as well as security reasons. Political maturity and economic development are vital if Brussels is to be impressed. The flare-up with the Kurds, with the Turkish military carrying out cross-border raids into Iraq to attack Kurdish bases, is not a healthy development, and one suspects, the Turkish political leadership recognises the developments as such. In more recent days, Turkish leaders have spoken of a desire to look for a political solution to the Kurdish problem, which has done immense good to inter-ethnic relations inside the country. The task now is to carry that forward to actual deed. In order to meet Kurdish demands even half-way, Turkey needs to achieve a broad political consensus inside parliament, and that should be the priority of both Ozal and Demirel.

In addition, the continuing ethnic strife inside the Soviet Union, with Azerbaijan and Armenia still at each other's throats across the border from Turkey, it is vital that Ankara maintains internal stability and aid European powers in defusing the potentially explosive nationality crisis. That crisis has opened up centuries-old ethnic tensions in central and southern Europe. A stable, politically mature Turkey could play a vital role in achieving peace, if not harmony, in the region. But to do that, Turkey must be at peace with itself. Which requires successful co-habitation between Ozal and Demirel.

## Turning the Menace into a Boon

Unauthorised VCR shows have become rampant in different parts of the district, so says a report from Sirajganj. It could indeed have come from any of our district towns and published in the whole gamut of our national press. In fact, that is what has been happening for the last so many years. And complaints from disturbed minds — teachers and religious preachers and journalists are among them — gain in frequency and intensity as the number of VCR sets in the villages mounts and the whole of our population keeps on being netted inexorably by the small machine's ever-spreading tentacles.

The Sirajganj report's opening sentence, quoted exactly from the Daily Star, is of course in horrible jargonese, complete with 'rampant'. And with practised sloppiness it talks about 'unauthorised' VCR shows without even caring if there were 'authorised' VCR shows. Commercial exploitation of pre-recorded video-cassettes is illegal and there is no way of shows charging gate-money can be 'authorised' without infringing upon copyright restrictions. But this is a fine point compared to other more weighty concerns generated by the new fad. Commercial exploitation of pre-recorded audio-cassettes are also banned by law — but no more an issue now because of a literal cassette revolution.

More than any copyright behests, the VCR—or precisely VCP—shows are disturbing the minds of leaders of society because of the fare they offer. Commercial VCP shows, to get round an insured clientele of addicts resort to the forces of the prurient and lurid — presenting exhibitionistic perversions of that most sacred activity that propagates and as such preserves life. In a society that has been singularly distinguished for sex repression over centuries the 'blue film' images of moving pornography sets a train of cultural and emotional disorientation and act as an agent destroying a man's taste and a whole system of norms. Leaders of opinion and society are not far wrong in their denunciation of the evil influences of the VCP commercial shows.

Be that as it may, the VCR thing with its myriad variations and possible innovations has come to stay and no amount of denunciation by anyone and in form is going to make it beat a retreat. It is imbecile even to think of inhibiting the boom it will continue enjoying far into the future. The question now is how to put it to uses leading to social and individual good.

We have now possibly a hundred thousand VCP machines strewn throughout the length and breadth of country and they may be catering to as many as fifty lakh viewers every day. The first and foremost problem with this supremely powerful magic box is that not a second or a centimetre of what the boxes project is locally produced — and produced for any other reason than selling the human body. Fact remains that the potential of this medium to do good is as immense as it is powerful. The job at hand is to explore those potentials and to seriously set about making and marketing video cassettes of educational, informational and cultural as well as artistic value, rather than denouncing the thing to no purpose at all.

## OLD CONCERNS, NEW SIGNALS

# Country Awaits a New Agenda for Development

**S**TRONG signals are being sent to Bangladesh by donor nations and aid agencies, which, on the one hand, reflect their assurances of support for the democratically-elected government and, on the other, underscore their concern at the slow pace in the formulation of a new agenda for development for the country.

In recent weeks, these signals have come at the meetings of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), held in Bangkok, and during the visit of a high level delegation of the European Economic Community (EEC), led by the noted development expert, JP Pronk of the Netherlands.

In a different context, the subject also cropped up at the Commonwealth Summit at Harare, where British Prime Minister John Major announced his government's decision to write off nearly \$one billion debt owed to the United Kingdom by some of the poorest nations, but reaffirmed that henceforth his country's aid would be linked to the record of a recipient country in good government, economic management and human rights. Observers here say that the British leader brought up these issues in his bilateral discussion with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at the Zimbabwean capital.

Last but not the least, there will be a discussion on all these issues, in a broad academic context, at a seminar opening in Lahore, Pakistan later this week. Organised under the auspices of IMF, the discussion will centre on "Structural Adjustments" as proposed by IMF and WB, which cover controversial conditionalities urged by the two Washington-based aid agencies. Governor of the Bangladesh Bank, SB Chaudhury will be representing the country at this seminar.

Generally speaking, government leaders have mixed feelings about these signals, feelings which are shared by non-official experts and members of the private sector, who also held talks with the Pronk mission.

In the first place, if officials take comfort from the assurance, offered by both WB and EEC

officials, that aid to East European countries and the Soviet Union would not lead to a reduction of assistance "to the poorest nations like Bangladesh," they also note, with some dismay, an indication from an important source of aid that, a ceiling has nearly been reached on the volume of international assistance received by Dhaka and that, in future, a possible increase may be only minimal.

Again, the assurance that new demands placed on aid sources by East European countries and the Soviet Union would not affect the assistance to the poorest countries in Asia and Africa is treated with some reservations by experts here. After all, no one yet knows how much funds aid agencies and industrialised na-

What causes further concern to officials here is an insistence by aid agencies and leading donor nations that any increase of aid to a country like Bangladesh would be linked to the government's implementation of conditionalities of the WB and IMF. At the same time, there would be much closer scrutiny of the government's economic performance than ever carried out in the past.

"It will be a new ball game altogether," said an economic expert here the other day. "We will be placed in a take-it-or-leave-it situation."

This may well be an extreme view. If there is more flexibility in the implementation of conditionalities — a message heard from the recent Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Meeting in

development process from an elitist domination at all levels; and secondly, whether the new government is addressing all the old concerns, such as poverty, accountability of the administration and the development of agro-based industries which alone can raise the purchasing power of the rural population, in its planning strategy.

On these issues, there appears hardly much disagreement between visiting experts and local ones, except in emphasis and details. For instance, at this moment, heads of trade bodies are more concerned about continuing sickness of industries, lack of access to credit, smuggling across the border and inconsistencies in the privatisation programme than with the grass-root development of the kind promoted by the Gramen Bank and BRAC.

Discussions with WB officials in Bangkok, with members of the EEC delegation in Dhaka and with Commonwealth leaders in Harare have probably convinced our policy-makers that there are no simplistic solutions to our problems and that a new agenda for development must be carefully drawn up to deal with our old concerns in a complex global aid environment. If one cannot talk about passing on only the losing industries to the private sector, it is also absurd to make a case for a wholesale or an across-the-board privatisation of the main sectors of the economy of Bangladesh. Last but not the least, one cannot suggest that Bangladesh — or any other developing country — should copy any model for development, such as the four dragons of East Asia — or assume that a massive export-oriented growth alone will put the country on the road to progress.

In the end, it is all a question of designing a package of policies, a package that meets the unique and pressing needs of the country. It should be put together by our own officials and leaders, through a series of consultations with other players on the scene. In such an exercise, interaction with aid agencies, especially with experts like Dr Pronk, would be an essential positive factor, provided we can draw the line between advice and dictation.

## AT HOME AND ABROAD

Kuala Lumpur — a more balanced relationship than one seen in the past may still evolve between donor agencies and Bangladesh.

However, in promoting the much-needed balanced relationship, experts, both official and academicians, must get used to a lot of plain speaking in a two-way communication with donor agencies on the economy of Bangladesh.

By now, it is obvious that if international experts are genuinely pleased with the return of a democratic rule to Bangladesh, seeing it as an opportunity for promoting a people-based development, they remain concerned over contradictions and inconsistencies which mark the slowly-evolving development strategy of the government of Begum Zia.

As experts here found out during their meetings with the EEC mission, their concerns touch on two different but related areas: First, the failure of the successive administrations to reduce the level of absolute poverty which has remained almost constant at close to 50 per cent for past 20 years, a failure compounded by the inability of successive administrations to free the

# Balance of Terror Still Reigns Despite Cuts

by Daya Kishan Thussu

*President George Bush won kudos around the world for his unilateral move in September to cut US tactical nuclear weapons. Within days, President Mikhail Gorbachev responded in kind. Despite the fanfare over cuts, there has been little discussion of the massive nuclear arsenals still in place.*



In addition, Bush has not halted development of the B-2 Stealth bomber or the controversial Strategic Defence Initiative project known as Star Wars.

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev responded to Bush's initiative by announcing that Moscow will eliminate nuclear

artillery shells and nuclear warheads from all its tactical missiles.

Gorbachev also promised to destroy some nuclear-equipped surface-to-air missiles and pull all of them back from battle-ready forces to central bases.

With the Soviet Union apparently on the verge of disintegration, Gorbachev has sized the moment to announce the cuts while he is still in control of the country's nuclear policy. He justifies the moves by saying they are in line with the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) signed in July.

Gorbachev has also announced a moratorium on Soviet nuclear tests. This may have been prompted by the decision of the president of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, to shut down test sites in the central Asian republic.

Bush's proposals were undoubtedly influenced by a realisation that negotiated disarmament would be much easier while the Soviet nuclear arsenal was still under the

Kremlin's exclusive control. With the weakening of Moscow's authority, and delay in disarmament could lead to a proliferation of new nuclear powers in the newly assertive republics, whose nuclear ambitions the US wants to keep in check.

Already, Kazakhstan and Ukraine have opposed a suggestion by Boris Yeltsin, president of the Russian Federation, that all former Soviet nuclear weapons be concentrated in Russia.

The Bush administration has urged the Soviet Union to make radical cuts in its huge nuclear arsenal so as to revitalise its ailing civil economy.

Omitted from Bush's disarmament proposals are the air-launched tactical nuclear weapons based in Europe. That omission could lead to a dispute with Germany, which has resisted any increase in foreign nuclear presence on its soil, particularly since the decline of communism in the Eastern bloc.

Under Bush's programme

some 1,400 US nuclear bombs will remain on British and German airfields, and an estimated 5,440 nuclear warheads will stay aboard US ballistic submarines.

Moreover, the US proposals do not address the issue of British and French nuclear capacity.

In recent years Britain has increased the number of nuclear warheads on its submarine fleet from 128 warheads to 512.

For their part, the French now possess an estimated 600 warheads and their new submarines and air-launched missiles are expected to have more than 1,500 warheads by the late Nineties.

Moscow wants Britain and France to join any superpower disarmament negotiations. But both Britain and France have insisted that their nuclear stockpiles are too insignificant to warrant their joining in any global round of disarmament.

Nonetheless, it is estimated that present armament plans will see Britain and France in control of more than 2,000 warheads by 1995. By that time the US and Soviet Union will have an estimated 10,000 warheads in their arsenals.

French President Francois Mitterrand has called for nuclear disarmament talks among the US, the Soviet Union, Britain and France. But it is difficult to imagine how any meaningful global disarmament could be achieved without the participation of

China, the world's other major nuclear power.

China has welcomed the US-Soviet disarmament initiatives. But its leaders have been silent on the implications of those moves for its own strategic arsenal of 12 inter-continental and 60 medium-range nuclear missiles.

In the past China has indicated that it would be ready to negotiate nuclear disarmament only when the other superpowers have achieved a 50-per-cent reduction in their nuclear capabilities.

The West is delighted at the Soviet nuclear cuts, coming as they did eight days after Bush's proposals.

Still, Gorbachev may be able to take some credit for the Bush initiatives. He can argue the US moves came in response to his own "New Thinking" in foreign policy, a fundamental shift in strategy for which he was awarded the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize.

However, much work remains to be done before Gorbachev's vision of a nuclear-weapons-free world by the year 2000 can be realised.

A total nuclear test ban would promote disarmament and improve the chances of implementing the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) now signed by 142 countries. But both the US and Britain oppose such a ban.

Unless the big nuclear powers drastically reduce their combined arsenal many new members will want to join their exclusive club, and the capacity for Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) that has haunted our age will continue to dominate global strategic thinking.

— GEMINI NEWS  
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## To the Editor...

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space. For reasons of space, short letters are preferred, and all are subject to editing and cuts. Pseudonyms are accepted. However, all communications must bear the writer's real name, signature and address.

### 'A TV Folly'

Sir, I've gone through your editorial 'A TV Folly' in your 17th Oct issue. I can't help writing a few lines about it. Few of my old acquaintances are working with TV News. So I was also one of them who took the trouble of making calls to BTV News for its folly in editing or handling our Prime Minister's performance of Omrah in their 8 o'clock news. Was it an advertent mistake (as 'old habits die hard') or an inadvertent one?

Anyway, it was interesting to learn the fact from BTV Newsroom that could be succinctly put here. The producer who was reportedly in charge of editing Begum Khaleda Zia's Omrah performance is quite a new hand in that. However, the real trouble came for him when his boss allegedly approached him with a suggestion like that — "Keep all the shots. We spend a lot of money for the feed".... And after a while yet another ordeal said to have awaited him when his boss reappeared — this time reportedly quoting some ministerial instructions that alongwith the visual, sound should also go on air. Thereafter the concerned producer must have sapped his own individual sense of judgement and thought he would be on safe side if he edited it the way his predecessors did and then followed that loose automatic editing of our democratically elected PM. The sensible viewers reacted sagely.

Now who is to blame? The producer or the chief News

Editor who coordinates the whole bulletin or the Director of News who heads the Rampura office of the special envoy of the Information Minister, the DDG?

Another lapse made by the BTV news officials was telecast by the BTV News itself on the previous day. It went like this — "There was no official representation from BTV News to receive the AsiaVision award for their excellent and timely coverage and speed". The ceremony was held in Kuala Lumpur recently. Are they sluggish in contrast to their said news speed?

I am glad to know that an inquiry committee is reported to have been formed regarding this matter. The cause of BTV's frequent folly should be found as soon as possible before there hardly comes any recurrence of this error.

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### Post-war responsibility

Sir, Bangladesh's independence war ended 20 years ago, yet an undesirable but mass spoken 'issue' is still being kept operative by addressing one 'Rajakar' by another. For the freedom, those who fought the fight, are freedom fighters (FFs) and those inside the country, helped Pak-army, are termed as collaborators. The sudden war started un-planned, and as such it was very difficult to see and say about the roll played by each

and every body clearly. Only those, who found no way to live in Bangladesh, first crossed the border, then categorical fleeing took place. Many of them turned FFs and fought the fierce battle and fortunately freed the country. The nation is proud of them. Their sacrifice will remain ever bright in the hearts of us all.

Whatever might be the reasons in favour of those who appear to have acted against the FFs, it is clear that the collaborators' activities were nothing but sabotages and heinous. But not all the suspects are 'collaborators' or 'Rajakars' in reality. And for the greater interest of a poor country like Bangladesh this sort of enemy such as calling one 'Rajakar' by another within the same nation must no longer be allowed to prevail. Enemy weakens both the parties, and unity strengthens the nation as a whole. The very proverb, "respect begets respect," may be taken as a lesson to follow by both the parties. Enmity, jealousy and hatred never help anybody. Now, if we are patriots, we must work with responsibility, and to do that, we must learn to love and respect others.

It must be borne in mind that only bringing independence is not enough. Responsibilities for the safety, security and prosperity of the country are also equally important, and ensure that fellow-feeling and co-operation work as precondition. In discharging this responsibility, everybody must work hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder, forgetting all the bitterness that emerged in the wake of Liberation War or otherwise in the past. Some people were decidedly bad and were war-criminals, who have either already been killed or fled to other countries. The rests are none but the sons of this soil. Let us come forward with great

open hearts.

Keeping this difference between the two parties, we have walked a long way in 20 years, but could not help our country to develop significantly. Love for country is shown not by mere words but by effective works. What we see now is difference of opinion and intolerance due to which hundreds of political parties have evolved and opposed groups are fighting and killing each other's workers. So long this 'difference' will prevail, we cannot expect any thing better. We must want an end to it.

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### Bangalee superwoman

Sir, Who says 'Bangalee women are lagging behind'? Average Bangalee woman is no longer shy, modest, conservative housewife having overcome many phobias by now and has been disproving age-old concepts of Weaker Sex one after another.

Flying an airplane used to be a men's risky job, but to a Bangalee woman flying a DC-10-30 was a task equivalent to assaulting Mt. Everest until 27 September 1991 when a Bangladeshi female pilot landed as the "first woman in Asia" to have flown a wide-body jet.

Like babysitting, western women have been experimenting in the outer space, which is encouraging women flyers around the world today. Likewise, this jetting performance of the Bangladeshi mother-aviator has given the nation's pride a smooth-as-silk take-off, as has boosted the ballooning hopes of Bangladeshi womenfolk who are overlooked as unsuitable for a cockpit because of gender gap.

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## OPINION

### BOT

Sometime back The Star published an interesting article on BOT — Bring, Operate, and Transfer. The international funding agencies are reported to be interested in this new way of undertaking projects in some of the developing countries. Expert multinational companies (or consortiums) with the necessary expertise undertake mutually agreed high-tech projects, by bringing in all the equipment, carry out the installation; and operate the project for sometime to recover the cost (with some profit margin); and then transfer the whole system to the local authorities free of charge, for future local operation and management. The merit of such schemes are said to be quick implementation of a project; on the job training and experience of local staff, and later, management at high efficiency. The beneficiary country would not have to incur any expenditure in foreign exchange.

The idea looks good on paper. It needs to be examined whether BOT would be successful in Bangladesh. The results obtained in other countries have to be studied carefully.

There are several projects which come to mind which might be considered for initiation under BOT, which could not so long take off for one

reason or another; the main hurdle being the harnessing of the foreign exchange component, especially in the case of huge projects.

Even if the feasibility report on a pilot project be positive, there are formidable psychological barriers to be overcome in obtaining national consensus from the public, the opposition parties, and even within the administration itself.

BOT looks like an attractive option in view of the tight international money market, with the combined resources of the donor agencies not being able to meet the increasing demands from more and more applicants from newly emerging countries, who are becoming eligible for aid.

Some of the new projects which might be considered for accelerated execution are: i) modern telephone network, modular, first in the national capital and the divisional headquarters, to be followed by completion of the national network; ii) gas distribution in the northern zone; iii) commercial exploitation of the proved coal resources; iv) exploration of new oil and gas reserves; v) setting up of the infrastructure for primary education.

There is no harm in having a closer look at BOT.

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