

Aborted March Shatters Status Quo in Kashmir

Pakistan cannot have Kashmir by force, nor can India give it away without destroying the secular fabric it has sustained since the sub-continent's division. Political realities cannot be erased by rhetorics and emotions...Both have to work for a peaceful settlement.

tries have not solved any problem; the fourth, which will be more destructive than the ones before, will not bring the solution any nearer. Both have to work for a peaceful settlement.

World Bank and Harsh Realities

In Bangladesh the World Bank (WB) has it both ways. First it puts up harsh and sometimes impossible conditionalities that hamper the implementation of projects and then it blames the country for having a low implementation and disbursement rate. From what we could understand of the WB Resident Representative's comment published in this journal on Monday, it now wants to take the process a step further — impose harsh conditionalities, blame us for low implementation rate and then use the latter argument to justify a lower aid commitment by the Paris Consortium, due to meet next April.

There is no ginsaying the fact that our implementation rate is too low for our own good. We share the WB representative's deep concern about our low disbursement rate. However, we cannot ignore the fact that the process of project implementation has been greatly complicated. This has led to avoidable, and previously non-existent, delays in project implementation. Now it has imposed a series of conditions upon the government without fulfilling which its funds are not released. Today, all fund committed for the agricultural sector is being held up because the government is yet to withdraw subsidy from fertilizers and sell out all the BADC pumps and tubewells. Another of the WB's conditions that government is finding hard to implement is to deny additional loans to defaulting farmers regardless of how poor they are. This provision may be quite justified in the case of rich farmers, and the government would perhaps be happy to implement it at that level. But to condemn a poor subsistence farmer to a situation of no loans because he failed to repay in one instance, is something the government — for the sake of fairness — cannot do.

We agree to much of the conditionalities of the WB concerning the power sector. Yes, we must bring down the so-called system loss and reduce the amount of receivables. But here again the government must be given adequate time to proceed. In democracy things cannot be done through fiat.

A more fundamental issue and one of principle — one in which the World Bank, the IMF and the Western donor countries are practicing a double standard — concerns blanket tariff reduction. Bangladesh is being asked to open its doors to imports by reducing tariff by 50 per cent. At the same time, because of the inconclusive nature of the Uruguay Rounds, EEC, Japan and the bastion of free trade — the US — are all raising tariff walls to keep the products of the developing nations at bay. The weak is being asked to compete with the strong, and yet the terms are unequal.

A point needs to be made about the suggestion that we should devalue our currency to maintain the competitiveness of our exports. We are not sure whether this is in the best interest of our economy. Given the fact that our exports are rather limited and that local production is not yet sizeable, devaluing our currency will increase the price of our imports which is not likely to be offset by an increase in the volume of our exports.

Having taken a critical view of the WB's conditionalities, we would like to state categorically that the current rate of implementation of projects is quite unacceptable. We would like to argue for a drastic simplification of our bureaucratic procedures which in many cases still remain archaic. But while we plead for a simplification of procedures at the national level, we lay equal emphasis for doing the same at the international level where it has tended to become more and more complicated in the recent past.

The WB representative also mentioned that the donor countries are in recession and a considerable amount of their aid money is going to East Europe. Let us seriously consider the implications of these developments and do our best so that the Bangladesh Aid Consortium, commensurate with our needs, commits more funds this time around than before.

An Irish Tragedy

Rarely has a case so thoroughly exposed the hypocrisy of a modern, Western state than the abortion controversy involving a 14-year-old girl in the Republic of Ireland. The girl, as yet unidentified, says she was raped by the father of a friend. She wants to abort the resultant pregnancy, but Irish abortion laws, which are little more than an expression of religious bigotry covered by a shroud of Catholic "tradition," prohibits her from doing any such thing. The young victim's decision to travel across the Irish Channel to Britain to undergo the abortion now hangs in the balance because the Irish government is refusing to allow her to leave the country until it is too late to abort the embryo.

The whole episode is threatening to send Ireland into a spin over constitutional provisions against abortion and their wider implications as demonstrated by the plight of the 14-year-old rape victim. Those campaigning for an amendment to the constitution on the issue have suddenly found themselves with a cause to highlight the essential injustice of a law which has failed to satisfy some basic requirements of a modern society.

To begin with, by refusing to allow the 14-year-old girl to have an abortion, the law has clearly shown itself to be incapable of distinguishing between "morality" based on religious tenets and individual rights. Furthermore, the unfortunate girl is now being victimised by the law after becoming the victim of a brutal rape. On top of all that, the government in Dublin is clearly violating all its lofty commitments to uphold human rights by denying her the right to travel to Britain. Where does this leave the United Nations charter? Or the European declaration of human rights? Or the principle of free travel across European borders? Despite all its pious attitudes when framing laws on abortion and contraception, the government has clearly failed to build a society in which rapes would not be committed. At least Dublin could have compensated for that failure by upholding the victim's right to choose.

It is ironic that a country that has produced human rights crusaders like Sean McBride who co-founded the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Amnesty International, should also be governed by a system so heavily influenced by medieval concepts of "morality." It is a further shock to learn that the "democratic" government of Ireland, a member of the European Community, is incapable of rising above such blatantly negative and ultimately repressive tenets of religious fundamentalism.

EVEN two weeks after the aborted march into Kashmir, it is hard to assess who has lost the most: India, Pakistan or Amanullah Khan, chief of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front. Assuming that India has been the worst sufferer, how has its loss brought the Kashmir issue closer to solution?

True, New Delhi's reaction to the march was panicky. It committed a diplomatic blunder by inviting the envoys of the permanent member-countries to the Security Council together at the foreign office for talks on the march. They reportedly touched on some other aspects of Kashmir because the march had more ramifications than the mere crossing of the line of control.

For a country, which has been emphasising on a bilateral approach to its problems with Pakistan, keeping the door ajar for outside support was a thoughtless move. The way the Indian Foreign Secretary J.N. Dixit has been singled out for the blame proves that there is a belated realisation of the mistake made. (He reportedly consulted the Prime Minister's Office before inviting the envoys.)

Foreign Minister Madhavsinh Solanki has tried to cover it up by arguing that the envoys were consulted in their personal capacity. He should, more than anyone else, know that no envoy has any personal representation in a country to which he is accredited. He is his own government's eyes and ears. Suppose he were to make a suggestion in his personal capacity on how to settle the Kashmir issue, would New Delhi entertain his proposal?

Indeed, New Delhi has committed a faux pas. But how does it help Islamabad? There is no reason to believe that India's diplomatic lapse will affect the policy of major powers on Kashmir. A similar situation arose two years ago. Shahbazada Yaqub Khan, the then Pakistan's foreign minister visited Delhi and hinted at a war if Kashmir continued to remain disturbed. The West felt so concerned that America sent Robert Gates, now the CIA chief, to Islamabad and New Delhi to neutralise the effect of the threat and counter-threat. This time even that exercise was missing.

International attention, if worked up, cuts both ways. The countries are guided by self-interest and they use the opportunity for their own purpose. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, then Pakistan's president, told me in 1972 at Rawalpindi that he was sick of going around the world chanceries. His exasperation was reflected in the Simla Agreement, which laid down that the two countries would iron out their differences bilaterally.

Pakistan's reported thinking to raise the Kashmir issue at the UN may take the two countries back to square one. Nothing concrete is likely to come out at the UN. Three out of the five permanent members, America, the UK and Russia, have come to prefer the Simla Agreement to the 1948 UN resolution, which had proposed a plebiscite. The other two members, China and France, may abstain because

they may not like to take sides. My impression is that all the five will refer the issue back to India and Pakistan if raised.

Islamabad must have realised that when the chips were down it had to kill a dozen people to stop the march because, according to the Simla Agreement, "the line of control resulting from the ceasefire of December 17, 1971," (when the Bangladesh war ended) had to be "respected by both sides." Even without an agreement, Pakistan would have acted in the same manner. There is no

under its influence and, two, to refix the gaze of the world on Kashmir. He has succeeded in both. Islamabad and prime minister Abdul Qayyum Khan of Azad Kashmir could not dissuade him. In fact, Amanullah Khan's call for 'independent Kashmir' seems to have annoyed Pakistan, understandably because it has always wanted Kashmir to be part of its territory.

The Nawaz Sharif government has even given him a warning. Its Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Mehtab Ahmed Khan, when asked

month help? If the purpose of the march was to emphasise that the Kashmiris living on either side of the line of control should not be taken for granted, it has been served. Their say will count whenever there is a settlement on Kashmir. Indeed, the march has added another factor to the situation, much to the embarrassment of Islamabad and New Delhi. How to reconcile the three points of view will be a problem in the days to come.

I still do not see any better solution than the one on the lines of the Trieste agreement (October 20, 1954), which provided for the partitioning of Trieste between Italy and Yugoslavia on the demarcation line between the two. What it means in our context is that both India and Pakistan retain their respective part of Jammu and Kashmir but make the border in the valley soft so that the Kashmiris could travel to both sides freely, without any visa. They can trade jointly, start ventures jointly or attract foreign capital and tourism jointly. This will give them freedom in their own affairs, without New Delhi or Islamabad looking over their shoulders.

Pakistan cannot have Kashmir by force, nor can India give it away without destroying the secular fabric it has sustained since the sub-continent's division. Political realities cannot be erased by rhetorics and emotions. Three wars between the two coun-

The war cries at the all-party meeting in New Delhi on the eve of the march were unusually shrill. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao had to use all his tact to calm the participants down and to reject their almost unanimous demand to oust the Pakistan High Commissioner, Abdul Sattar, for his observations on Kashmir. On the other hand, the dominant opinion among the retired top brass in Pakistan still is that "India can be defeated at this time." Any wrong move can set the two countries to fire.

A Pakistani writer has summed up the situation realistically: "How can we ask for Kashmir as a commodity from a shop? If we have this misunderstanding that we can occupy Jammu and Kashmir by running our troops across it, then such childish ideas should be set aside. Our shouting for lien on Kashmiri Muslim brothers will not impress anyone. The steps that we are led to take by our leaders are based on emotional or abstract notions that have no practical dimension."

The hawks in India are no better. Their brim-and-stone talk has only aggravated the conditions in Kashmir. So far they have only added a third factor to the situation. If they do not mend their ways, and continue to demand the abrogation of a special status for Kashmir, India might have to face the third option.

Between the Lines

Kuldip Nayar

escape from certain obligations, whatever the state of equation with a neighbouring country.

For some reasons, the Indian foreign office still maintains that the march was at the behest of the Pakistan government. Were it so, it would not have invoked the ire of its people which it did after suppressing the marchers. It is possible that the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) may have blessed the march but then that is the third chamber of Pakistan, over which Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has little control.

When I talked to Amanullah Khan at Islamabad long before the march, he said he wanted to do two things: one, to let Pakistan know that he was not

about Amanullah's alleged involvement with RAW, India's CIA, said that his government "does not want to harm the integrity of any Kashmiri mujahid by initiating inquiry against him." It was a loaded reply to a loaded question, a clear hint that there could be an inquiry against Amanullah and it could "harm his integrity."

True to his word, Amanullah was able to attract the world media. The western press, radio and TV were there. And as he said at a public meeting in Muzaffarabad on the eve of the march, they had worked at the global level for two months to mobilise international support. "But where does he go from here? How does another march next

Andean Coca Producers Oppose Militarisation Plan

by Alvaro Pan

For the time, coca producers in the Andean region united to reject the militarisation plan imposed by their own governments and the United States and to try to find ways of opposing it.

DELEGATES from Peru and Bolivia were present at the First Meeting of Coca Producers, held in the city of La Paz.

During this meeting it was agreed to oppose the eradication of coca plantations, to create self-defence committees in very production area, and to demand thorough development policies of the government, which should include the analysis of soils, the supply of high-yield seeds, sowing, production, marketing, technical assistance, industrialisation and exploitation.

Producers set out to struggle for the free and legal production of coca, which, according to them, is a natural resource providing food and medicine to the majority of the population in the region.

Medicine and Drug

During the post-glacial period nomadic groups discovered the coca bush in the eastern slopes of the central Andes. The oldest archaeological evidence of human consumption of coca leaves dates back to the fourth Preceramic

period, which spans from the year 2,500 to the year 1,800 BC. For centuries Andean peoples have buried their dead with bags of coca leaves. The chroniclers of colonial times narrate the habit of dropping coca leaves to the ground to honour Mother Earth (Pachamama), or of offering them to God (Inti) or to the fire.

In the early 16th century the Spanish conquerors incorporated the coca leaf into their economy. In 1548 a part of the taxes the Spaniards exacted from the Indians was levied in coca leaves. Gradually, doctors adopted the plant as a cure for asthma, haemorrhages, toothache, vomiting, diarrhoea, etc. Colonial society used it in the form of inhalations, infusions or poultice.

At present, Indian miners still use coca leaves for 'acullico' (chewing), in order to mitigate hunger and fatigue. In the hotels in La Paz a city 4,000 metres above sea level, as well as in other cities in the Peruvian cordillera, coca tea is offered after meals to prevent the feeling of sickness and palpitations known as 'jorochi'

or 'soroche', that is, mountain sickness. Besides, coca is used in the preparation of medicinal syrups, toothpaste, wine and cakes. In Bolivia, 10% of the leaves are still used for chewing in the traditional native way.

In Peru, one of the main cocaine producers in the world, an area of over 180,000 hectares is planted with coca. Thus, the crop provides support to thousands of poor families.

Bolivia follows, with an area of 60,000 hectares planted with it. Nearly 370,000 peasant producers are involved in its production. (Bolivian) production is carried out by families, and that explains why women take part in it and understand full well that their family's survival depends on it, says Bartolomeo Sosa, executive secretary of the National Federation of Peasant Women.

The peasants of the Chapare region claim that the lowest price paid for a coca 'carga' (an Inca measurement which varies from one place to another) is four to 10 times higher than that paid for any other local crop.

During this First Meeting it was agreed to set up an Andean Council for the Permanent Defence of Coca Leaf Producers. The Council is to create an Andean Legal Commission, in order to produce a bill on the subject of coca to be submitted to the Convention of the United Nations. Besides, it aims at having a distinction drawn in Bolivian legislation between coca leaf production and cocaine trafficking.

Cooperation or Interventions?

Moreover, the Council will be entitled to summon

political parties to hold public debates on the agreements signed between Bolivia and the United States. These agreements were signed between presidents Jaime Paz Zamora and George Bush in 1990, and in Annex II they included a commitment to cooperate. By virtue of this, the United States, committed itself to assist in the fight against drugs. However, this assistance included sending American advisers from the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the body in charge of drug control, whose aim would be to cooperate with the local antidrug squadrons.

This US intervention is based on the argument put forth by the US Department of State, according to which drug dealers have close links with guerrilla movements. The former are supposed to provide resources and weapons, and the latter are allegedly responsible for providing protection and cover. Besides, as drug consumption seems to be out of control in the United States, the US government is attempting to cut down production mainly in the

Andean countries. In the hope that this will bring down consumption at home.

Thus, the fight against drug trafficking enables military forces to enter Andean countries, to control revolutionary movements, while also diminishing coca production and indirectly cutting down on consumption in the United States.

The American advisers who took part in the area's militarisation reached Bolivia before Parliament authorised their entry. Workers reacted against this, as Feliciano Chavez, a member of the Chiapata community, explains: "I pray to God and to Pachamama for militarisation not to destroy the sacred leaf, for if it does we are ready to fight. War against coca is a serious offence against all peasants and miners who chew it, for since times immemorial Aymaras and Quechuas have consumed it in order to work." — Third World Network Features

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Kenyan Crusade Against Alcoholism Flops

Paul Amina writes from Nairobi

President Daniel arap Moi blames alcoholism for many of Kenya's woes: crime, low productivity, even poor exam results. So in an ambitious anti-alcohol campaign, he has shut down liquor stores and banned traditional brews. Yet Moi's crusade has failed. Wealthy drinkers remain unaffected by the new laws while police use them to extract bribes from bootleggers and drinkers. Meanwhile, local economies have been thrown into disarray and alcohol-related crime is as widespread as ever.

WHEN Daniel arap Moi took power in 1978, one of the first tasks which he gave himself was to eliminate alcoholism in Kenya. Thirteen years later, the teetotaler president's efforts have failed.

Statistics show that alcohol consumption is greater than ever. Liquor stores banned in a presidential decree the year Moi took power have been converted into bars. Factories which produce wines, spirits and beer have been expanded and new ones opened in a bid to create jobs.

Alcohol-related cases outnumber all others before the courts. Half of Kenya's prisoners are believed to have committed alcohol-related offences.

Moi has blamed Kenya's alcohol consumption for low productivity in farms and offices. Moreover, poor performance by schoolchildren in national examinations has been attributed to absenteeism by teachers who sneak away from their classrooms to guzzle beer

in local bars. It was these considerations which prompted Moi to order the crackdown on liquor stores. Officials closed premises selectively, sparing larger ones. In one crackdown, police canteens were allowed to stay open. Moreover, no one was consulted before mass shutdowns in the countryside.

Some Kenyans were infuriated, but religious leaders were pleased. In 1989, Moi stepped up his efforts to combat alcoholism by slapping a total ban on indigenous brews — even for traditional ceremonies such as weddings, circumcisions and harvest celebrations.

Some traditional ceremonies are incomplete without local brews. But pleas to revoke the ban because it infringes on local custom have been ignored. Moi has expressed shock that despite the threat of alcoholism, some leaders had called for traditional brews to be legalised in the countryside. To make his case, Moi has cited cases in which children had died in house fires blamed on drunkenness.

Moi has had nothing to say, however, about drinks consumed primarily by the middle and upper classes, such as commercially — produced beer, wines and spirits. Such

beverages are standard fare at State House functions. Police and officials have a vested interest in the ban because of the bribes it allows them to collect. Only a few hundred Kenyan shillings will generally allow drinkers and bootleggers to escape prosecution.

One bootlegger, Jane, has been in the business for the past eight years — five of them after the imposition of a ban affecting her business — but has never been imprisoned and boasts of good relations with police and officials.

Another bootlegger complains that the ban has im-

posed hardships on families that once depended on earnings from their breweries to pay school fees. Farm earnings, another traditional source of income, have also been hit since authorities have taken to delaying crop payments for months or years.

Kenya's national minimum wage of 800 shillings a month is barely enough to cover monthly rental accommodation in a slum, food, transport to and from work and other basic necessities.

As a result, most Kenyans cannot afford commercially produced drinks such as beer, wines and spirits because they

are prohibitively priced. Instead, they turn to unhygienically prepared and potentially lethal brews.

As little as 25 cents is enough to buy a glass of indigenous changaa gin. By contrast, a half-litre of commercially-brewed beer costs between 50 cents and a US dollar; a glass of spirits or wine sells for up to 120 Kenyan shillings in bars.

Elsewhere in East Africa, local brews are legalised. But Kenyan authorities flatly refuse to discuss the merits of legalising traditional brews or of setting up a factory to process them.

Former Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda had tried unsuccessfully to control the drinking habits of his citizens. If Moi succeeds in his efforts, he will be the first African president to do so.

— GEMINI NEWS

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To the Editor...

UN Security Council membership

Sir, It has been reported that UN Secretary-General wants to increase the number of Permanent Members of the UN Security Council from 5 to 10 by admitting Germany, Japan, India, Brazil and Nigeria by 1995. Of the proposed five members none is a member of the OIC.

With the world-wide oppression of Muslims, any move to preclude representation of 50 States constituting one billion Muslims should be eyed with suspicion by Muslims from Indonesia to Morocco. If colonial powers like England and France still qualify as Permanent Members of the Security Council, if nuclear

power is the criterion then Kazakhstan, now appearing more powerful than England and France, should qualify. We believe that present world realities should be reflected in any re-constitution of the UN Security Council and regional blocs rather than nation-states should be represented with exception for China and Japan e.g.

- 1) NAFTA (US/Canada/Mexico) may be represented by the USA;
- 2) EEC by Germany, France or Britain;
- 3) OAU by Nigeria;
- 4) SAARC by India;
- 5) OIC by Indonesia;
- 6) South American Bloc by Brazil;
- 7) ASEAN by the Philippines;
- 8) CIS by Russia;

9) China and 10) Japan individually.

The regional blocs represented should retain the right to rotate or change among the nations which represent their respective blocs. Today in an unipolar world, the Muslims, after the Gulf crisis, are suspicious and rightly so — that the UN has evolved as an extended arm of neo-Western imperialists and specially of Pax Americana.

Any change which does not reflect the new world realities would re-inforce this suspicion and the UN could well end up as the League of Nations after the World War II which led to the World War III. The collapse of the UNO will bring the world to the brink of World War III. The emerging power

of the OIC of 50 states and one billion Muslims must be given a Permanent Seat in the Security Council as also because of the fact that they constitute nearly 1/3 of the UNO membership. The UN Security Council must not become an exclusive Western Club to coerce or cajole the Islamic world.

SK Islamabad Chittagong.

Barbaric actions and police

Sir, The BTW presentation on the barbaric broad-day-light gruesome murder and eye-gouging on public road was a bizarre scene beyond toleration. Although children were

requested to go off the TV, yet the announcement was more catchy for them. Peeping from under the quilt, my 5-year-old daughter screamed and slept that night with trouble and wake up wizened during the night several times.

However, BTW has taken off the responsibility of such adverse effects.

We cannot forget the harrowing trails of barbaric actions so freely undertaken by the jack-hearted people and could not bear at all why the local police personnel could stand it or do not come forward to bring the culprits to book. It was more shocking than murder and eye-gouging when the lone valiant son of a dead man who had to dig out his own grave for the sheer re-

fusal to pay the unauthorised and illegal subscription for vandalism, approached the Home Minister and Secretary but could not move and stir them.

We condemn the inactivity of the police personnel responsible for bringing the culprits to book and demand that all administrative people shirking off their responsibilities related to the series of such incidents at Chittagong should be brought to justice without fear or favour in the greater interests of establishing exemplary deterrent for the culprits and collaborators, and ensuring law and order in the society and restoring public confidence in the police service.

Vox Populi