

More for Deterrence than for Defence?

by Khurshid Hamid

(This is first of a series of articles by the author on the South Asian crisis. Others will follow in a next few days)

Of the four accepted functions served by military might, that is defense, deterrence, compellance, and enhancement of prestige, one hundred per cent weightage is attached to deterrence and enhancement of prestige, which are the peaceful uses of power, than to defence and compellance or the actual deployment of arms, which are the historical uses of power.

Eyes Focused on the Visit

Sheikh Hasina's high-calibration visit to New Delhi takes place today. An extra-ordinary regional ambience created by the increased nuclear stakes lately acquired by India and Pakistan has propelled her to the Indian capital.

Bangladesh is fully aware of India's global perception of the nuclearisation, or conversely de-nuclearisation issue and as a signatory to both the NPT and CTBT she should be only too keen to see a world free of atomic arsenals.

This is a subject-matter of potential impact on the geo-political environment which in turn is likely to have implications for the sustenance and advancement of SAARC's much-heralded cooperation programmes.

The visit's high profile, however, can hardly make light of the bilateral concerns that are bound to engage the two leaders' attention in their first encounter since the induction of a BJP-led government in India.

In general, we are looking forward to bilateral relations of the short-lived Gujral days which were but reminiscent of 'beneficial bilateralism' introduced by Morarji Desai in 1977.

For a Greener Valley

Yesterday was Kalidas's celebrated Ashadhasya prathama divas. How very poetic of the Bangladesh government to launch its three-month long tree plantation campaign on the first day of Ashadh!

It must be conceded that the nation looks much greener now than a decade or two back. If you travel by road, that is. The roadside plantation activity has yielded very visible eye-filling results.

The government is failing miserably in stopping forest depletion. It is not only fighting some thugs, it is engaging a much more powerful thing — a social force plainly called land hunger.

While recognising the services of the NGOs in greening back the country, we urge upon the government to better their post-operative care of the saplings they plant — as do the NGOs.

It is a good sign members of the public are getting increasingly interested in trees. The tree fauna are a good innovation. Whetting the new-fledged interest.

Police Press Releases

The other day a national Bangla daily reported on an aberration that probably tends to elude notice because of our habitual indifference to propriety.

Then situations are fictionalised just to add a touch of glamour to police's achievement. Often it is said police captured criminals after a two-hour long gun-battle when nothing of that sort happened in reality.

We believe ridding police of these types of soft lapses calls for a grand and sweeping reform in the ranks of the guardians of law. It is a matter of culture.

INDIA has exploded five nuclear bombs and Pakistan followed in one-upmanship with six in the course of last month.

The developed world, led by Judge Dredd United States, have with varying degrees of hoarseness cried foul that the blasts were violations of nuclear power containment agreements.

Underlining the oligarchic, monopolistic, anti-democratic, and fundamentally hypocritical attitude of the five declared nuclear powers and their fellow travelers in the developed world, and noting that nuclear tests do genuinely touch raw nerves in civil societies.

South Asia, the cradle of oriental civilization, with deep cultural roots, with sufficient modernization in its scientific

and technological can-do-ness and democratic governance, has finally stood up, at least in its perceived power of banging on the door of the super-exclusive nuclear club.

Finally, the actual timing of the nuclear blasts is always political. Witness the atomic explosions in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, the only two instances when nuclear weapons were actually used against an enemy.

Much has been written about what triggered India's nuclear tests. Suffice it to say that it was a combination of nationalistic, technological, and political imperatives.

of history for ideological nation-states in a Westphalian world order of military preparedness, which still lingers unfortunately into the end of the millennium, and to deny this is to deny history.

Again, just as France several years ago had to complete its series of nuclear tests to perfect its independent force of frappe based on a different technology than the West.

Kashmir has been dug out of the archives and attracted Western attention as a flash-point for an atomic bang-bang, you're dead war between trigger-happy now nuclear India and Pakistan.

were essentially reactive in their timing, but identical clones of the afore-mentioned imperatives operated in her case too with only changes in nameplates.

Economic sanctions, somewhat weak, unfocused and still ambiguous, have been slapped both on India and Pakistan.

Both India and Pakistan have hitherto been responsible and respected players in the comity of nations and cannot be termed as rogue states.

LETTER FROM AMERICA

Why Obsession with Kashmir, When the Whole World Becons...

Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed writes from Princeton

By making Kashmir the cornerstone of its foreign policy towards India, Pakistan is suffering from tunnel vision. There are 130 million Muslims in India. What would happen to the remaining Indian Muslims if Pakistan were to rescue a few million Kashmiris?

AMERICA believes that a nuclear war between India and Pakistan is a distinct possibility. After all, unlike the US and the Soviet Union, these two countries had fought each other three times before and harbour genuine hatred for each other.

Here is the doomsday scenario: in 'city-busting' nuclear exchanges, 17 million Pakistanis and 29 million Indians are immediately dead! Medical services are overwhelmed.

It is much too simplistic to attribute the Indo-Pak hostility to religion alone. As the Bangladeshis know all too painfully, Muslims of East and West Pakistan did not get along that great.

It is well known that the Hindu Maharaja of Kashmir ignored the wishes of his overwhelmingly Muslim subjects. A cease fire followed with a UN promise of a plebiscite.

Logic is not what we are good at in the subcontinent. Many Indians dream of 'Akhand Bharat' (undivided India).

about Bharat. India was never an undivided unified nation. It consisted of fractious princely states, which the British in their own interest forged into one unit.

India was never a reality in large measure because of the Congress and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's refusal to accept the three-unit solution.

The fact is, Pakistan cannot gain Kashmir through force. The United Nations will not help, because Russia will always veto any resolution

detrimental to India. (One of the reasons why the UN is less than noble is that Russia always protects the interest of its friends even if they are wrong.)

The well respected 'The Statesman' of Calcutta recently suggested that since India is the senior party to the conflict, it should show generosity over Kashmir.

One wonders whether there was an Indian intelligence failure regarding Pakistan's nuclear capabilities.

statements from Mr. Advani in the aftermath of Indian explosions aimed at Pakistan to explode — if it indeed had the bomb. It did, with the consequence that the front line in Kashmir has now been transformed into ground zero.

By making Kashmir the cornerstone of its foreign policy towards India, Pakistan is suffering from tunnel vision. There are 130 million Muslims in India.

By exploding the bomb, Pakistan has assured its security. Regardless of the initial negative consequences, by going nuclear Pakistan has already wrestled the leadership of the Muslim world from Egypt.

The Arab nations such as

potential, placing restraints on freedom of action. It should be noted that after the 1965 and 1971 wars the two countries managed to accumulate more deadly arsenals than ever before.

Even today after the initial necessary confrontational public posturings, the political leaders of the two countries are making 'sane', conciliatory statements and talking of the need to talk to iron out the Kashmir and other problems between them.

While all pointers are that the rational sagacity of the leaders of the two countries will dictate the pace and number of nuclear weapons delivery systems, the joker in the cards is that one country might be tempted to frenzied stock-piling beyond the economic tensile strength of its civil society.

The author is the former Bangladesh Ambassador to Italy and Switzerland.

To the Editor...

Foreign and local medical specialists

Sir, These are some reflections on a news item in the DS on import of foreign doctors in our country.

My son is a victim of maltreatment by one of our so-called high-graded specialists. I could afford to go to a foreign country for the treatment of our son, but I decided to show patriotism and allowed one of our very high-graded specialists to almost maim our son.

After a few days he developed high fever, photophobia and prostration. The worst conceivable thing happened — he developed Meningitis — caused by a

careless, negligent surgeon. Our son was saved because I lost no time, virtually lifted him from the bed and rushed to Dhaka Shishu Hospital.

Most of our very busy/busy specialists have the following qualities — lack of sincerity and professionalism, immodesty, lack of humanity and sometimes lack of proper knowledge too.

Yasmeen Fairouz House No. 572, Block B Lalmeta, Dhaka

So, the government should allow foreign specialists to work in our country with the motive to raise the level of efficiency and accountability, turning the field more competitive, and last but not the least make our doctors humane, well-behaved and polite.

Dr Syed Nasrullah Bara Maghbazar, Dhaka-1217

Choking to death

Sir, Dhaka city is the cynosure of all. Not because of any happiness or joy, but of clamour and jam.

Rickshaws, scooters and bicycles obstacle the way. The passengers are muddled up in their brain. Accidents occur daily, causing pain, mind you, people are not worried about them. They are always tense and distraught, pondering about hantals and strikes.

Policing the police

Sir, The government is going ahead with none too ambitious plans and projects for quantitative enhancement and modernisation of our pathetic police service, in which the public confidence is dwindling.

Today, the criminals use sophisticated arms and techniques. The police must be several steps ahead. There are two key bottlenecks: fast transport and communication network.

Dhaka

the projects, as it depends on the local culture in any profession. The rate of change of culture, good or bad, depends on many factors, which need not be elaborated here.

Go for the reforms, but it should be an integrated one, otherwise it would be unproductive.

A Husnain Dhaka

The Centre and the rest

Sir, It seems to be a daily practice now-a-days for people who read the newspaper in the morning, to throw up their hands and exclaim 'The Horror! The Horror!' in a terror filled voice.

These two infants did not leave behind a whisper left alone a cry to the world they had come to; my query is: how long will this go on? How long can this chaotic condition last? When will the sleeping majesty (like

Egypt who had signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, in spite of Israel's known nuclear capability, are now kicking themselves. They now realise the impact the possession of the bomb can have on a nation's standing in the world.

After Pakistan detonated the bomb, the Israel-loving Chinabashers in the US have suddenly gone silent. No doubt they are busy formulating a new policy, now that Israel's unilateral nuclear threat has been matched by at least one Muslim nation.

By playing its cards right and reducing its obsession with Kashmir, nuclear Pakistan can now widen its sphere of influence to include the whole world.

use) rise from their sleep of satisfaction and try to bring about a change in the quality of life? When? When..... questioner question reverberates round and round one's brain, but there is no answer.

The only thing that stares back at you point blank is that 'the centre cannot hold' and the rest is silence. Fahima Khan Gulshan, Dhaka

"BBC bridge is going down"

Sir, Mr A Husnain, in his letter 'BBC bridge is going down' published in the DS on May 22, '98, so approved of BT's discontinuation of BBC relay that it seems he is content enough with BT's political slavery (the practice of flattering whoever rules the country).

In a country of infomative death like ours, BT's relay of BBC as well as CNN used to keep us abreast of the world happenings. Now that the relay is discontinued, we are left with no option but depend on our very sophyantic television, BTV.