

Post-nuclear South Asia

Strategic Basis of Bangladesh's Exclusive Defence

by Khurshid Hamid

Bangladesh fortunately is a country born of a bloody and sufficiently protracted revolution, and in all such instances the best defense strategy for the new nation that should not have been lost sight of is the one spontaneously fused and tested in the heat of the liberation war. A new defense strategy of asymmetric conflict for Bangladesh would thus hark back to our war of independence and require a wide-spread training and maintenance of a people's militia on a part-time basis, which could be readily mobilized in a time of war or crisis.

BANGLADESH has yet to develop her own national defence strategy, a comprehensive and consistent concept of defence in tune with her socio-economic and political realities, the geopolitical facts of the region, and also suited to her national character. Public emotionalism often has raged in the country from time, perhaps intentionally fanned by the governmental regimes then in power, unnecessarily seeing in India a hypothetical enemy and talks of even eyeball-to-eyeball contest being bandied about. Such a valiant stance by Bangladesh has all the absurd and pathetic bravado of Don Quixote tilting against windmills.

Given the geopolitical realities of South Asia, only India could become the most serious threat to Bangladesh's core values, if at all. Supposedly, in the event of an armed conflict between Bangladesh and India I would postulate for Bangladesh's defense the theory of asymmetric conflict, based on the post-Second World War experiences in Algeria and Indochina, the Bangladesh liberation war and the Soviets in Afghanistan, which was born of the attempt to analyze politically the reasons for the defeat of stronger countries by the national resistance of weaker countries. In its essence an asymmetric conflict is a battle based not on military capability but on intention or political will.

A hypothetical armed conflict between Bangladesh and India may be examined as an asymmetric conflict. If one does not take into consideration political intention, will and objective, it is apparent that India possesses the rudimentary military and industrial centres of Bangladesh, blockade the Bay of Bengal cutting off the supply of oil, food and other vital resources indispensable for Bangladesh to put up a viable defense, and finally invading the country by land marches and airborne troops and occupying it. Bangladesh on the other hand cannot possibly attack the military-industrial centres of India nor invade or occupy that country. As long as the meaning of strength is narrowly limited to military capability, Bangladesh does not have an iota of a chance of succeeding in defending herself against India. What this means theoretically is to run at military intentions or will, as was in practice done in the liberation war in respect of Pakistan. The primary point in counter-Indian defense is thus not to allow India any occasion to nurture any intention of invading Bangladesh. This manoeuvre involves two basic elements. First, a path must be

thrashed through that enables India to make optimum use of Bangladesh's economic potential, both as a supplier of raw materials particularly natural gas and a ready market for Indian finished goods, technology and minerals. This can be achieved by building up a mutually trustful and beneficial relationship through trade, economic and technical cooperation, joint development of a gas pipeline to West Bengal, joint construction of permanent waterworks for equitable sharing of the waters of the Ganges and other common rivers, and finally frequent cultural exchanges. The evolution of an interdependent matrix by quantifying the long-term interests for India in maintaining an economic relationship with Bangladesh and the perceptible damages of even a temporary suspension of the relationship would serve as a foundation for bargaining power in the backdrop of asymmetric capabilities.

In view of India's economic and technological predominance vis-à-vis Bangladesh and the long history of enmity in Pakistan times and antipathy later, extreme caution and cool-headedness need to be exercised so as not to sacrifice Bangladesh's genuine national interests while pursuing political bilateral relations with India but at the same time not to be swayed by false perceptions of India's cussedness.

The second element in counter-Indian defense is that the cost of occupying Bangladesh through armed aggression must be made exceedingly high. This can be done through the deterrent of firmly upholding and further intensifying the close and friendly relationship and cooperation between Bangladesh and China, nursing friendly relations with Pakistan, and maintaining a relationship of friendship with the United States, the Islamic countries and the West.

There may be doubting Thomases who would question the strength and dependability of Bangladesh-China friendship and cooperation and its effective anti-Indian deterrent power. But when one recalls China's actions in the past—the unexpected mass intervention in the Korean war, the punitive incursion into Vietnam for the latter's misdeeds in Kampuchea, and the grave threat of not sitting idly by in the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965, to believe that China might leave Bangladesh in the lurch in an emergency is to regard China as a second-rate power not concerned with her credibility in

the region and the world. It is much more sinister to allow such distrust and suspicion to lead to greater distancing between Bangladesh and China, providing India with a viable option of political manoeuvring against Bangladesh. It is of prime importance that Bangladesh's relationship with third countries, particularly China and Pakistan, should be strictly limited to bilateral ones, so that India's wariness and sensitivity towards Bangladesh is not overly touched-to-the-quick by any real or perceived militarization of the Bangladesh-China-Pakistan triple entente. A most important task in Bangladesh's policy towards India is that of minutely scrutinizing the straws in the wind with regard to the political aims and intentions of India's policy towards her neighbours and in the region, including Bangladesh, and attempting to exert an influence on such intentions in a direction favourable to Bangladesh.

Fortunately an asymmetry of intention exists between the big powers and smaller countries in addition to their asymmetry of military capability. That is to say, India as a big regional power has an interest not only in the affairs of Bangladesh but also in the rest

of South Asia, including Pakistan, as well as in the north in China, in fact literally in all directions, including the United States, Europe, Russia, the Middle East, and South East Asia. India, as a big power with the aspirations and responsibilities attendant thereon, cannot concentrate all her might and attention on Bangladesh alone. For the smaller countries one source of bargaining power lies in the manipulation of this asymmetry of spheres of attention. This is why Bangladesh's counter-India defense strategy must be based on a global point of view.

II

Thus in a hypothetical war against India, Bangladesh must adhere strictly to an exclusively defensive posture, straining to wear down the enemy's patience and endurance, break her intention to continue fighting, or change her political aim of attacking and occupying Bangladesh for any length of time, and must attempt to force a withdrawal if the enemy should carry out an invasion. It is neither possible nor necessary for Bangladesh to achieve a military victory over India in the conventional sense; instead the minimum requirement is not to be defeated. Bangladesh must possess sufficient re-

sistance to last out an Indian invasion, even if a massive one with the political aim of long-term occupation, for several days and maintain a minimum fighting capability.

It goes without saying that the Bangladesh armed forces, if they fought by the book along the conventional concepts of warfare, have taken upon themselves a Herculean and almost impossible task for the defense of Bangladesh against the Indian military juggernaut in a hypothetical war with her. For a credible military defense of the country Bangladesh would require a greatly extended armed forces establishment equipped with more sophisticated weaponry in bigger quantities, but these are economically unfeasible ideas and are best discarded.

Bangladesh fortunately is a country born of a bloody and sufficiently protracted revolution, and in all such instances the best defense strategy for the new nation that should not have been lost sight of is the one spontaneously fused and tested in the heat of the liberation war. A new defense strategy of asymmetric conflict for Bangladesh would thus hark back to our war of independence and require a wide-spread training and maintenance of a

people's militia on a part-time basis, which could be readily mobilized in a time of war or crisis. This could be accomplished with a minimum expenditure. The regular Bangladesh armed forces would now as then have the most crucial and decisive leadership role to play in an asymmetric conflict, but they would have to conduct the war as they did then through guerrilla tactics with their main reliance on a large rear-support people's militia.

Constraint of space here will not permit going into the mechanics and details of such a people's militia, the selection of all able-bodied citizenry, the duration of their training, the geographical scattering of arms and ammunition all over the country but with effective political control, the gradual merger Canadian-style of the regular army, navy and air force into one hard-core exclusively defensive force with no attack capabilities, and finally their dovetailing into the broad-based people's militia. Nor is it warranted here to go into a detailed study of strategy for guerrilla manoeuvres in a hypothetical war with India, for which sufficient source material in terms of practical experience and theoretical literature already exist.

Suffice it to say that Bangladesh's conditions are ideally suited for guerrilla warfare. It is an agricultural society with the majority of the people living in the countryside and a large proportion of the urban population also having their roots in the villages to which they can disappear in the event of a war. Being a low-income society the consumer requirements of the people are very low while that of a large number at subsistence level. Self-sufficiency in food, indispensable to effective resistance or guerrilla warfare, is likely to be managed if the circumstances are difficult. It is difficult to accept the contention that Bangladesh does not have the depth of territory ideally required for guerrilla manoeuvres, for this would be relative to the strength of troops India

would be able to deploy in Bangladesh in a hypothetical war, circumscribed as she would be by a hostile China and Pakistan on her north and west. Again it is true that there is great density of population in Bangladesh, but they are ruralised and the climate is mild, and not in urban concentration and extreme climatic conditions which would take a much higher toll in human misery in the event of a long-drawn guerrilla war.

The liberation war proved the Bangladeshi people's mettle for guerrilla warfare when the politically motivated people with very scrappy military and arms training, under the leadership of the regular armed forces themselves partially decimated and dismembered, took on and caused the debacle of the efficient, well-trained and well-armed Pakistan occupation army. The civilian population too put up an effective resistance with dire risks to their middle-class security. Given Bangladesh's asymmetry of capability vis-à-vis India, the regular armed forces acting as the vanguard of a part-time militia and reliance on guerrilla warfare are the only ways of strengthening of Bangladesh's national resistance power and reinforcing her ability to repel and endure an attack.

Asymmetric conflicts have a built-in advantage. In a hypothetical Bangladesh-India war the asymmetry apparent in the national struggle of a people against foreign expeditionary forces will arouse world sympathy for the weak and condemnation of the strong. As long as Bangladesh does not commit the folly of making a pre-emptive incursion into Indian territory, she will possess the moral advantage of the weaker side being clearly on the defensive. The asymmetric conflict is likely to lead to the growth of a substantial domestic anti-war movement in democratic India and bind her hands. India, with her interests spanning the region and the globe, must necessarily concern herself in all directions at once, including relations with China, Pakistan, the United States, and the Islamic countries, the defense of her economy and the rupee, etc. Her patience and endurance exhausted by the high cost of opportunity, India would eventually be forced to downgrade her political aims in Bangladesh and withdraw all her troops. All the fore-going

factors were operating against Pakistan in the Bangladesh liberation war and the natural de-motivation of a self-achieved victory of our people was to unfold within a year or two, when India made her pre-emptive intervention to cut short the war in December 1971.

Of cardinal importance in asymmetric conflicts is the mobilization and support of international opinion. In the event of a war with India, Bangladesh, with the same enthusiasm as shown by them in the liberation war, must mount vigorously diplomatic efforts so as not to be isolated from the rest of the world. Diplomats and bureaucrats of high calibre and articulation will be needed in greater numbers to carry out an aggressive and effective diplomacy of intimate international involvement. Towards the end of the war, Bangladesh should endeavour still harder to send more and more personnel of the Bangladesh armed forces to take part in the various peace-keeping activities of the United Nations. This redefinition of the significance of or justification for the military in a least developed country, by extending their scope to the range of global crises management or domestically disaster relief operations (both non-defence areas), would be eminently in consonance with the new attitudes in a moratorium world.

In fine any hypothetical counter-Indian defense strategy must be anchored on an exclusively defensive posture postulated on the doctrine of asymmetric conflict. Since such a struggle involves not military capability but manoeuvring of India's political will or intentions so as to lead her aims concerning Bangladesh in a direction favourable to Bangladesh's security, diplomacy with its intricacies and nuances comes to play an excessively predominant role. In order to pursue these diplomatic policies vigorously and effectively it is essential to be rid of ill-informed and half-baked notions about Bangladesh's foreign policy and its pursuit for her national interest and security that seem to enervate the thought-process of our political leaders and senior civil servants. Bangladesh's political leaders will have to mutate themselves into true statesmen, the senior bureaucrats into responsible patriots, and diplomats selected for their intellectual substance and articulateness.

The author is former Bangladesh Ambassador to Italy and Switzerland. The above is the third of his series of articles on the South Asian crisis.

Tribal Children Face Language Problem

by Rajib Humayun

The mother tongues of the different tribal groups of Bangladesh should be introduced at least at the primary level and the primers should be prepared in the tribal languages.

BANGLADESH is quite rich in tribal culture. There are about thirty-five tribes living in different parts of the country. The major tribes are Chakma, Murma, Rakhain, Garo, Santal, Tipra, Khasi, Murang, Shendhu, Pankho, Hajong etc. The Chakmas and some other major tribes live in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The Garo and Hajong live in the hilly expanse of Mymensingh and Tangail. The Khasis live in Sylhet, while the Santals live on the plains of Rajshahi division. Each tribe has its own language and dialect. They are named after the names of the tribes, such as, Chakma, Murma, Garo, Santal and so on. Languages of the Lusat, Tipra, Oraon and Garo are sometimes called Dolen, Hal-lam, Hemor and Mandukol respectively (Abdus Sattar, *My in the Sylvan Shadows*). The languages are oral excepting the language of Chakma and Murma. The Chakmas and Murmas have written scripts which are sometimes used in the religious circles. Most of the tribal people can't speak, read or write Bangla. Some of them, particularly the tribal children, can't even understand Bangla. There is no lingua franca in the tribal areas.

There are primary schools in different tribal areas. The planning section for the primary education in the CHT had a programme of establishing 383 schools in early nineties. The present government has taken up non-formal programme along with the formal education. The medium of instruction in all the educational institutions of CHT and other tribal areas is Bangla. The government has been trying to increase the literacy rate. It won't be increased if the mother tongues of different tribal groups are not introduced in the

tribal areas. There is a clause in the recent peace-treaty about the introduction of the mother tongues in the CHT region. But so far I know, no attempt has yet been taken to do so.

The tribal intellectuals have been writing regularly to introduce their mother tongues at least at the primary level. The tribal children face linguistic problems in the primary schools. The language of the books is Bangla but the mother tongues of the children are not Bangla. Besides the linguistic problems, there are problems in the contents of the primers also. The tribal children are familiar with the hills, deep forest, wild animals etc. since their early boyhood. But there is no reflection of their tribal life in any primer. So the schools do not attract them at all (Hemor Dewani). Mr. Sukhweswar Chakma Paltu writes, "The indigenous children do not speak Bangla. Most of the children have not even heard a single word of Bangla. It is not at all scientific to teach them in Bangla. The tribal children will feel comfortable if they are taught in their mother tongues. Mr. Sugata Chakma and some other writers also are of the same opinion. I have had discussions with the Chakma King Barister Debashish Roy, Mr. Dipankar Talukdar MP and with three leaders of Jum aesthetic council. All of them are in favour of introduction of the mother tongues of the tribal people."

India has solved the linguistic problems of the different regions by introducing trilingual system (regional language, Hindi and English). We would like to propose a trilingual system (tribal language, Bangla and English) for different tribal groups of Bangladesh and suggest the government to introduce the tribal languages at least at the primary level.

However, many of our tribal groups do not have their own alphabets and primers. Therefore, the first step will be to devise suitable scripts for them. It is very much possible for a linguist to devise appropriate written system for the tribal people once the written system is devised the primers and other school books can be prepared in a short time. The Chakma and Murma are fond of their scripts though they are used in extremely limited circles. The other tribes also are interested to discover the written systems of their own. Since there is no lingua franca in the tribal areas, it won't be practicable to introduce 35 written systems for 35 tribal groups. I would like to suggest Bangla script for all the tribal languages at the moment. The majority of India use Bangla alphabet and I don't think they suffer from any inferiority complex. If the tribal groups of Bangladesh accept Bangla alphabet for their language, it will help them more to be in the mainstream. The tribal children will be able to read and write Bangla language easily and they won't face any problem in their higher education. It will also help them to compete in all the public examinations.

Most of the tribal writers use Bangla scripts in their creative writing. Some of the tribal leaders also are ready to accept Bangla scripts for the time-being. They told me about the differences in the phonological structures of the tribal languages and Bangla. Of course, there are some differences. But these are linguistic problems and the linguists can easily solve them.

Finally, we must say that the mother tongues of the different tribal groups of Bangladesh should be introduced at least at the primary level and the primers should be prepared in the tribal languages.

Double Savings

Industries will now have access to cost-effective heating and small-scale captive power generation thanks to an energy-saving boiler which has been launched by Pune-based Thermax Ltd. The product is based on the fluidized bed technology which uses low grade Indian coal characterised by high ash content and low calorific value. The new boiler designed by the company can efficiently burn low-grade fuels such as coal and coal fines, washery tailings and rejects from coal washeries. It is capable of generating three to 12 MW electricity.

Dry Remedy

KAJIMA Corp of Japan has developed a system to process wet garbage and sludge at one-fifth the energy cost of similar systems currently in use. The new system is based on steam-compression technology under which the waste is placed in an airtight container and heated up to 90 degrees C and consequently dried.



Australian Agency for International Development
Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) - 1999 Intake

Applications are invited from Bangladeshi (tribal and non-tribal) students for study under the Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) scheme at postgraduate level in Australia.

- The total number of scholarships will be 24. Twenty (20) will be in the general (male and female) category and 4 in the tribal (male and female) category.
- Scholarships will be provided at postgraduate (ie. Masters) level.
- Fields of Study offered are Agricultural Science, Business Administration, Computer Science, Demography, Development Economics, Education, Engineering, Environmental Studies, Medical Science, Public Health and Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language.
- Candidates fulfilling the following conditions may apply:
 - Age: the applicant must be less than 40 years on 1 January 1999;
 - Minimum Qualifications: minimum four years undergraduate or combined undergraduate/postgraduate course(s);
 - General category: minimum three first class and no third class SSC/HSC (or O/A level equivalent)/undergraduate results;
 - Tribal category: no third class SSC/HSC (or O/A level equivalent)/undergraduate results;
 - Work experience: candidates applying for Business Administration must have two years of work experience.
- Candidates fulfilling the above conditions must apply in English on plain paper (one application) along with bio-data and one passport size photograph. Bio-data must contain (a) name; (b) father's name; (c) present address and telephone number; (d) permanent address and telephone number; (e) occupation; (f) educational qualifications including (i) name of examination, (ii) Board/University, (iii) year of passing, (iv) Division/Class, (v) total marks with percentage. Copies of all certificates and marksheets (duly attested) must be attached.
- Tribal candidates must submit certificates of tribal descent duly signed by the respective Deputy Commissioner.
- Candidates may select only one field of study. The proposed subject of study should be clearly be indicated in capital letters on the top of the bio-data. Candidates must submit a separate statement, in English and preferably typewritten stating why they have selected this field of study. In particular, candidates should outline how the proposed field of study will benefit you in carrying out your job on return to Bangladesh.
- Candidates who are in the public service should apply through the proper channels.
- Applications with incomplete papers, faulty or false information shall not be considered.
- Candidates who are already selected for any other scholarships will not be considered. Candidates who already have foreign graduate or post graduate degrees are discouraged to apply.
- The field of study applied for should be related to past academic background.
- The application must be sent to Australian High Commission, 184 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka. Candidates must write "ADS 1999" and specify category and subject applied for on the top of the envelope containing the application. The last date of submission of applications is 16 July 1998. No applications received after this date will be considered.
- The decision of the Australian High Commission shall be final.

Chittagong University
International Re-Tender Notice

Fresh sealed tenders are invited from the bonafide Publishers/Suppliers or their Local Agents for supply of Foreign Books of about Tk. 25.00 lakh to Chittagong University against L/C on C&F Chittagong by Air basis. Interested Publishers/Suppliers/Agents are requested to purchase the tender schedules from the Office of the Librarian of this University on cash payment of Tk 500.00 (Taka five hundred) (non-refundable) only during office hours from 9.00 AM to 1.00 PM up to 23.07.1998. The tender schedules must be submitted in the tender box kept in the Office of the Librarian up to 12.00 Noon on 02.08.1998. The tender will be opened on the same day at 12.30 PM in presence of the tenderers (if any). Those who applied earlier against this tender should also apply afresh.

The authority is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders or part thereof without assigning any reason.

Registrar (I/C)
University of Chittagong
Chittagong.

Tender Notice
DU/E/T/23/98-99

UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA: Sealed tenders are hereby invited from bonafide agents & suppliers of Hans Lutz for "Fortnightly checking & monthly servicing of 5 Nos passengers Hans Lutz Lifts of different halls of Dhaka University for the session 1998-99 and will be received by the Executive Engineer (Elec) up to 12:00 Noon on 12th July '98 & will be opened on the same day in presence of the contractors who may remain present. Contractors will have to deposit as earnest money a sum of Tk 2260/- only in Demand Draft/Pay Order from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh in favour of Executive Engineer (Elec), Dhaka University. Specification and particulars may be had from the office of the undersigned up to 12:00 Noon on all working days except on the date fixed for submitting the tender and on application by a certificate from an officer not below the rank of an Executive Engineer under he worked during the last five years and on payment of Tk 100/- only (non-refundable) to the Janata Bank, TSC Branch. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason. The contractor is liable to abide by the decision of the authority.

Md Mozibullah
Acting Executive Engineer (Elec)
University of Dhaka

University of Rajshahi
Wanted

Advertisement No 18/98 Dated: 23-6-98

Applications are invited from Bangladeshis nationals for one permanent post of Associate Professor, Department of Public Administration.

Scales of pay:

- Associate Professor : Tk 7100-200-8700/- plus usual allowances and pay & allowances will be paid as per the Clause No 10 and sub-Clause No 2 of the new pay scale.

Forms and particulars regarding qualification requirement may be obtained from the office of the Registrar by sending a self addressed envelope with postage stamp worth Tk 4/-, 12 copies of application form for the post of Associate Professor duly filled in along with application fee of Taka 80/- (eighty) in Bank Draft in favour of the Registrar, Rajshahi University must reach the undersigned on or before 26-8-98. Incomplete applications will be rejected without any reference. Candidates already in service must apply through proper channel.

Registrar (In-Charge)
Rajshahi University