

FOCUS

South Asian Nuclearisation and Weaponisation

The Conceptual Dimension: No First Use Option

by M Shahiduzzaman

We are moving into the next century while the two sub-continental giants have now chosen to take the clock back and force us to relive the last fifty years of this century once more — except that the fifty years involved a global context while the current balance of terror is to be relived in a regional context.

PART of the absence of an aims control dialogue, which perpetuates a basically unstable deterrent posture, there are several other dimensions of the conceptual perspective...

the early fifties, namely, George Kennan, Robert McNamara, Gerard Smith, et al. There were the men who are almost rated as the intellectual fathers of the Domino Theory...

sian adventurism or even any provocation. NATO still retains the right of first use even if confronted by a conventional attack. Now applying the Doctrine in South Asia implies that if both parties agree on discarding the "First Use Option"...

Cold War, when things had begun to look far more conciliatory to such original hardcore specialists as the authors who initiated it, similarly, Pakistan confronts the same option. Being a strategic inferior, Pakistan's options are far less than India's and once she has the bomb, her only tactical option is to rely on the threat to use it first...

dialogue or regular exchange of data. But nonetheless, giving up the "Right of First Use Option" as the Indians put forth, would simply deny Pakistan the deterrence value of weaponisation. Just as much as Pakistan has had to pay a very high price to opt for a weaponised status, it would all be of no consequence at all once she ever shows any interest in accepting the "No First Use Option"...

to use the nuclear option is maximized. The "No First Use Option" is a weak doctrine and possibly a potentially dangerous doctrine. It creates the scope for a false sense of security and potential bluffing, while one already keeps the finger-tips pressed on the nuclear button. It may offer a superficial sense of security rather than the use of a preventive medicine.

Wars plans. But what propelled such a doctrine like the "No First Use Option" at that time was to arrest further deterioration of the weaponisation climate after a decade full of arms control dialogue and very optimistic confidence-building measures between the two superpowers.

weapons covering a distance of twenty to fifty miles could be targeted at advancing armoured columns in about five seconds or even less. In this particular scenario, who wants to give up the advantage of surprise, if in fact battlefield use appears feasible? In that case, nuclear weaponry assumes the character of defence weapons, with little deterrent value.

Letter From America

The Hundred Best Movies Ever Made

Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed writes from Princeton

How can "Gandhi" (Ben Kingsley), a film that cleaned up at the Oscars in 1983 be omitted from the top 100, whereas cross-dressing Dustin Hoffman's slapstick "Tootsie" make it at 62? How can "Beckett" (1964) featuring memorable acting by Peter O'Toole and Richard Burton be ignored in favour of "A Clockwork Orange" (number 46), best known for stylized rape!

LAST month, the American Film Institute came up with a list of the hundred best films ever made. The list is given below for the benefit of the readers; the annotations are mine. The list was announced on a CBS television show hosted by Julie Foster, with comments by just about anyone who matters in the film world.

holocaust epic "Schindler's List" was number nine. Finally, Gene Kelly's heartwarming, "Singin' in the Rain" rounded out the top ten. And now to controversies. How can "Gandhi" (Ben Kingsley), a film that cleaned up at the Oscars in 1983 be omitted from the top 100, whereas cross-dressing Dustin Hoffman's slapstick "Tootsie" make it at 62? How can "Beckett" (1964) featuring memorable acting by Peter O'Toole and Richard Burton be ignored in favour of "A Clockwork Orange" (number 46), best known for stylized rape!

Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, 3. The Godfather (1972), Marlon Brando, Al Pacino, 4. Gone With the Wind (1939), Clark Gable, Vivien Leigh, 5. Lawrence of Arabia (1962), Peter O'Toole, Omar Sharif, Alec Guinness, Anthony Quinn, 6. The Wizard of Oz (1939), Judy Garland, 7. The Graduate (1967), Dustin Hoffman, Ann Bancroft, Katherine Ross, 8. On the Waterfront (1954), Marlon Brando, 9. Schindler's List (1993), Liam Neeson, Ben Kingsley, 10. Singin' in the Rain (1952), Gene Kelly, 11. It's a Wonderful Life (1946), James Stewart, 12. Sunset Boulevard (1950), William Holden, 13. The Bridge on the River Kwai (1957), Alec Guinness, William Holden, Jack Hawkins, 14. Some Like It Hot (1959), Marilyn Monroe, Jack Lemmon, Tony Curtis, 15. Star Wars (1977), Alec Guinness, Harrison Ford, 16. All About Eve (1950), Bette Davis, 17. The African Queen (1951), Humphrey Bogart, Katherine Hepburn, 18. Psycho (1960), Anthony Perkins, Janet Leigh, 19. Chinatown (1974), Jack Nicholson, Faye Dunaway, 20. One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975), Jack Nicholson, Louise Fletcher, 21. The Grapes of Wrath (1940), Henry Fonda, 22. 2001: Space Odyssey (1968), 23. The Maltese Falcon (1941), Humphrey Bogart, 24. Roman Holiday (1959), Audrey Hepburn, 25. E. T. The Extra Terrestrial (1982), 26. Dr. Strangelove (1964), 27. Bonnie and Clyde (1967), Warren Beatty, 28. Apocalypse Now (1979), 29. M. Night Shyamalan, 30. The Treasure of the Sierra Madre (1948), 31. Annie Hall (1977), Woody Allen, Diane Keaton, 32. The Godfather Part II (1974), 33. High Noon (1952), Gary Cooper, 34. To Kill a Mockingbird (1962), Gregory Peck, 35. Happenings One Night (1934), 36. Midnight Cowboy (1969), Dustin Hoffman, Jon Voight, 37. The Best Years of Our Lives (1946), 38. Double Indemnity (Fred McMurray, Barbara Stanwyck), 39. Dr. Zhivago (1965), Omar Sharif, Julie Christie, 40. North by Northwest (1959), 41. West Side Story (1961), Natalie Wood, Richard Beymer, 42. Rear Window (1954), 43. King Kong (1933), 44. The Birth of a Nation (1915), 45. A Street Car Named Desire (1951), Marlon Brando, 46. A Clockwork Orange (1971), Malcolm McDowell, 47. The Taxi Driver (Robert De Niro, Julie Foster), 48. Jaws (1975), Richard Dreyfuss, Robert Shaw, Rob Scheider), 49. Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937, Disney Animation), 50. Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969), Robert Redford, Paul Newman, Katherine Ross, 51. The Philadelphia Story (1940), James Stewart, Katherine Hepburn), 52. From Here to Eternity (1953, Frank Sinatra, Burt Lancaster, Ernest Borgnine), 53. Amadeus (1984, Tom Hulce), 54. All Quiet on the Western Front (1930), 55. The

The Women's Reservation Bill: A Dialogue

Priya Prakash writes from New Delhi

The women's reservation issues cuts across all sections of society. Women's inclusion in the decision making process, and governance enlarges the base and transforms the structure of politics and governance. The women's perspective is by the very nature of women's lives, interest and existence, an inclusive one.

THE 81st Constitutional Amendment Bill 1996, was introduced in the Parliament and the report of the Joint Select committee was presented to both the houses in December 1996. However the process was halted as the 11th parliament went in for a mid term poll. The National Agenda of the ruling coalition has also accepted this as an important item. The 81st Constitutional Amendment Bill proposes to introduce the reservation through a new Article 330 A (1) and (2) that states 'seats shall be reserved for women in the House of the People; and that seats shall be reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes as the case may be. The Article 332A recommends reservation of seats for women in the State Legislatures and union territories, provided the States act that have less than three seats are exempted from the reservation as above. In order to resolve and integrate various suggestions raised by these Member of Parliament, the Bill was referred to a Joint Select Committee of the Two Houses. In course of deliberations, the Committee received 102 Memoranda containing comments/recommendations from women's organisations and individuals; the committee recorded oral evidence from prominent political leaders Smt. Pramila Dandavate, the Attorney General Sri Ashok-Desai, Former Secretary in the Ministry of Law, and advocate Sri S S Ramiah and representatives of leading women's organisations. The Joint Committee, that included representatives of all political parties and Independent members, agreed that this Bill but they meet their approval and reservation for women in legislatures etc. also proposes suggestions to improve the provisions to make the amendments more effective. The committee was of the view that there should be no exception to the principle of reservation and the States having less than three seats three nominated members by the President of Anglo Indian community in the Lok Sabha

and also elected Capital Assembly of Delhi. In such States having less than 3 elected members the reservation for women candidates should be rotation for the third elected position. The committee also recommended that government should work out the modalities for reservation of seats in Rajya Sabha, and legislative council in the States. For reservation of Other Backward Caste women, committee recommended that at present no reservation has been provided for Other Backward Classes in the constitution, similar to that of ST/ST. Therefore committee was of the view that the government may consider this provision as and when this issue of reservation for general category of Other Backward Classes is taken up by the Parliament. Thus it will be seen that various issues related with

the recipient. The "Sarda Act" Hindu succession Act punitive provisions against Dowry and many others have never received the serious implementation, and it appears, attitudes are likely to hardened to stop the participation of women in politics also. Looking at the increasing criminalisation of politics, Crimes against women and increasing cases of abductable would keep the women from active participation in politics. The latest in the series are the reported cases of criminal assault and rape of women candidate in Panchayat election in West Bengal, a party candidate of Trinamuly Congress in the Panchayat elections, and repeated assault and rape of Saheli worker, student of Jaipur University in Rajasthan, would deter women in critical numbers to join the mainstream as they did during

should social conscience, especially when perpetuated to terrorise a section of the population from seeking who are striving for social change. India's strength is in its large pool of manpower skilled men and women. Therefore to deny one section of the population be deprived of political activism, in the name of orthodoxy they prevent development of half of the population that are women, the nation is going to be caught in an economic backwaters. This distorted scenario, fifty years after Independence highlights the need for reordering macro-societal priorities, political restructuring, with a view to directory development to focus on women and girls so that they do emerge as a key to economic growth with social justice. Women calls for critical mass participation in the country's political and policy making structures is broader than the needs of any one sections of society. The women's reservation issues cuts across all sections of society. Women's inclusion in the decision making process, and governance enlarges the base and transforms the structure of politics and governance. The women's perspective is by the very nature of women's lives, interest and existence, an inclusive one. It is therefore a strategic instrument effecting an urgently needed shift in politics towards the basic needs of society in general and the large numbers of the disempowered. As a result of 73/74th amendment large number of women are already participating and contributing to the democratic process. The vehicle that has helped grassroots women making this journey has been the Reservations. It is widely expected that 81st Amendment, providing a similar participation opportunity in the State Legislatures and Parliament would complete the political cycle, and harmonious change to gender-equitable political partnership. — Mandira The writer is former Secretary to the Indian Planning Commission.

The Top 100 Movies 1. Citizen Kane (1941), Orson Welles, 2. Casablanca (1942,

Will RiceTec Gobble Up Thai Rice Next?

THAI farmers are afraid that RiceTec Inc, the US-based company that was in the news recently for its attempts to pirate an Indian rice variety, may strike again and walk off with a patent on Jasmine rice. The company is already marketing a brand called Jasmati, which has nothing to do with the Thai Jasmine rice or with the Indian Basmati, except the similarity in name. Jasmati is derived from a variety called Della, which has been developed in the United States. Della is in turn a selection from Bertone, from the Piedmont area of Italy. "RiceTec deceives the public and uses an Asian-sounding name, which connotes quality, to lure people to believe they are being offered a cross between Jasmine and Basmati" says the Thai Network on Community rights and Biodiversity (BIOTHAI). Jasmine rice is a local Thai variety, which originated in the eastern part of the country, Chachoengsao, where the soil is saline and sandy. Rice grown in this area is soft and perfumed, so it is called Khao Dawk Mali — the perfume of the white Jasmine flower. RiceTec and other companies in the US, which are marketing "their own versions" of Jasmine rice have not patented the germplasm. They are, however, exercising their own claims to the name.

When asked why they market a rice called Jasmati if it is not derived from Jasmine or Basmati, RiceTec breeder Jim Strikely responded that he considers Jasmine rice to be a term for "any aromatic, sticky rice" and Basmati a term for "any aromatic, long grain non-sticky rice". Strikely went on to say that Thailand should not bat an eye about this because, according to him, Thai farmers got the rice from Madagascar in the first place. According to BIOTHAI, however, the rice goes back a hundred years when it was developed by their ancestors. In 1959, after nearly two decades of testing, the Thai government rice board officially released

Jasmine rice. This was before the Green Revolution, so foreign agencies like the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) had nothing to do with it. It grows well in drought conditions and on saline soils, and suits the farming conditions of northeast Thailand. By contrast, IRRI's famous IR8 and other subsequent rice varieties are made to suit high-input chemical agriculture in irrigated lands, which the poor cannot afford. By now, the breeding efforts of Thai farmers and scientists have resulted in more than 200 different lines of Jasmine in Thailand. Virtually all Thai Jasmine rice is produced by five million farmers in the north-

east. These are resource — poor farmers, whose income does not exceed the poverty line of US\$ per month, per person. Their livelihoods depend on Jasmine rice. More than 25 per cent of the rice exported by Thailand is now Jasmine rice. India's recent experience at the hands of RiceTec has raised serious concern in Thailand. "Here is an American company claiming monopoly rights and giving nothing in return," said a BIOTHAI representative. "Of course, RiceTec says their patent is not on India's Basmati but on 'their own' Basmati, which they claim to have invented." CSE/Down To Earth