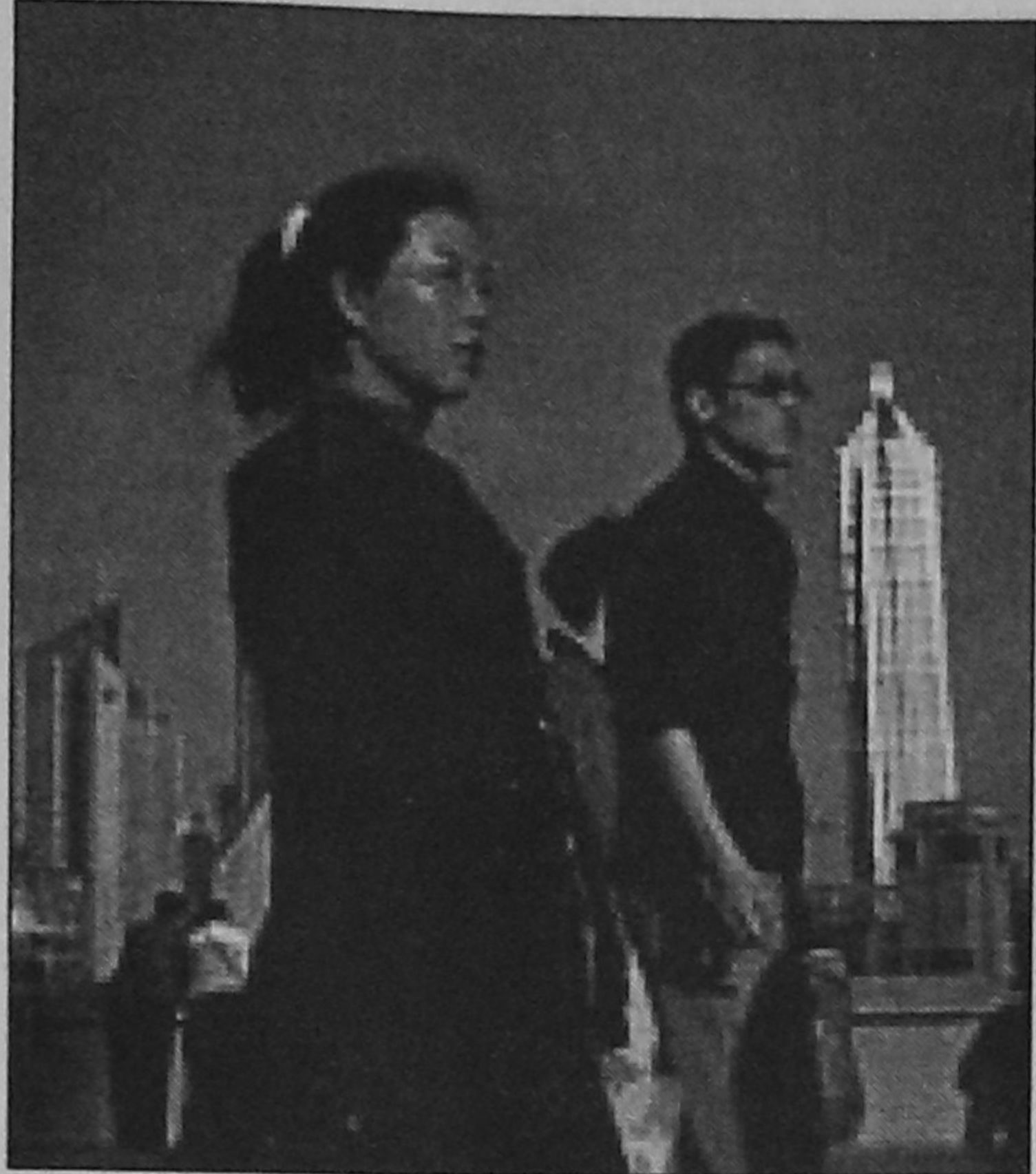


The US role in the Asian dream



GEORGE YEO

In the coming decades, the Pacific Rim will become the main driver of the global economy. The big change in the region is the rapid emergence of China as an economic power. China has always been the predominant power in East Asia and is likely to resume its historical position later in the 21st century. Plus, China already has two-thirds of the population of East Asia. It is only a matter of time before its economy reaches a similar proportion.

Over the last 20 years, China has grown at a compound annual growth rate of almost 10%. China's foreign trade has grown even faster at a compound annual growth rate of 15%, rising from \$117 billion in 1990 to \$474 billion last year. China has become the second-largest trading partner of Japan and the fourth-largest of both the United States and the European Union. In every East Asian country, China will thus loom larger on its balance sheet. That is why we find, in parallel with the growing use of English in the region, the growing use of Mandarin Chinese as well.

Against this shifting East Asian landscape, how should the United States position itself in Asia for the future? Because of three major wars World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War the United States has become an organic part of East Asia in a way that Europe can never be. During the Cold War, it was American companies and their investments that brought economic development to many countries in non-Communist Asia. U.S. universities have trained hundreds of thousands of East Asians, many of whom have gone back to help in the economic development of their own countries. As China's role in the region grows, it is crucial that the U.S. should remain engaged.

Many Asians may not admit this out of a sense of national pride, but the reality is that the American dream has become the Asian dream. Today there are more than 50,000 students from mainland China studying in the United States. Chinese students make up more than 10% of the foreign students in U.S. universities. China's leaders may criticize the United States, but they send their children to study there. Without the contribution of American-trained Chinese who have returned home, China's economic development today would not have been as rapid.

When East Asians interact, the terms they use and the concepts that they take for granted are often American.

ican in origin. Ordinary Chinese look at the United States as a land of opportunity, which is why so many risk their lives to come to its shores.

The way the new Bush administration manages its relationship with China will be very important. On the one hand, the United States must engage China strategically as both a competitor and a partner. It has to be both. It cannot be either one or the other. In any case, the Chinese themselves expect it to be both.

On the other hand, the United States should also give equal emphasis to the rest of East Asia. Both approaches must be in balance. It should not send the message that the United States considers Asia to be somehow of lower priority now that China is likely to join the World Trade Organization.

At the same time, we have to acknowledge that with the end of the Cold War, Southeast Asia has become less important in the strategic calculation of the United States. In the minds of many Southeast Asian leaders, the way the United States and the International Monetary Fund responded to the Asian financial crisis confirmed this view. It will be a great mistake for the United States to allow this view to take hold.

Southeast Asia is both a bridge and a buffer between the two great civilizational areas of China and India. Neither China nor India has ever invaded or occupied Southeast Asia because it serves as a useful buffer without impeding trade. It is in the interest of all the major powers to have a Southeast Asia that is peaceful, economically dynamic, open to trade and friendly with everybody.

Businessmen, academics, tourists and students travel back and forth between Asia and North America as if this is the natural order of things. Hundreds of millions of poor Asians now see prospects of a better life for themselves by joining the global marketplace. Yes, there will be all kinds of trade disputes. But better trade disputes than disputes that require the deployment of missiles and submarines.

We must keep America in the Asian dream or the dream will become a nightmare. If we do not mismanage the politics, there is every hope that we can maintain this peace in the Pacific for at least another one or two generations.

George Yeo is Singapore's minister for trade and industry. This article is adapted from a longer set of remarks he delivered at the Institute of International Economics in Washington, D.C., on March 15.

The Taliban man speaketh

M.ZAFAR

"Much of response to the legacy of the ancient world must, however be subjective. It is up to each generation to make what use it wishes of tiny proportion of classical art and literature which survives."

-Charles Freeman in 'Egypt, Greece and Rome Civilisation of Ancient Mediterranean'

TALIBAN rulers of Afghanistan could not comprehend any use for the two giant statues of Mahatma Buddha carved out of the mountains at Bamian between 300-500 A.D. Armed with a ruling from Afghanistan's highest court and a firman (decree) from the Amir al Momineen, Taliban troops reportedly used rockets and anti-aircraft ammunition to destroy centuries old statues. The operation had an element of suddenness as the world came to know about the destruction after the operation had already begun under a veil of security. For days media kept on feeding conflicting accounts about the status of statues to the public. The two gigantic figures of Lord Buddha 53 and 35 metres high recessed into high cliffs had stood in serenity for over centuries in an inaccessible area near Bamian, some 205 miles north-west of Kabul and 8200 feet (2500 metres) high straddling across the ancient route from Balkh to Taxila.

The art-pieces created during Kushano-Sasanian period represented the colossal cult image of Buddhist art. (Rowlands) The configurations, wall paintings and stucco decorations indicated an eclectic hybrid mixing of Indian, Central Asian, Iranian and classical European art styles and ideas'. (Louis Dupree). The loss caused by Taliban action to the cultural heritage of the world was immeasurable. Pakistan, along with other Muslim countries, reacted immediately and asked the Afghan government to review the decision and pleaded for restraint. The world at large expressed shock and indignation. Pierre Lafrance visited Kandahar, as a special envoy of UNESCO but was unable to find any possibility of a bargain. Philippe de Montebello Director of New York's Metropolitan Museum offered to purchase and transport the pieces of statues to United States. The offer was declined.

In the crescendo of condemning cacophony the viewpoint of Taliban was hardly audible. peacemonger.com sought an interview with the Counsel General of Afghanistan in Karachi, Maulvi Rahmatullah Kakazada, in order to present the view from across the hill. Request for interview was promptly granted. This correspondent was welcomed with traditional Afghan

warmth and hospitality. The Press Attaché Mr. Kalimullah gathered the gist of my questions and informed the Consul General of my arrival. In less than five minutes the Consul General came over. A young man perhaps in mid thirties Maulvi Rahmatullah Kakazada comes across as a polite and fairly well informed person. He made this correspondent feel at home and within the first few minutes an atmosphere of cordial frankness was established that lasted throughout the interview. He opened the interview with a small statement.

He said that "Afghanistan has been in a state of war for the last 22 years. During this period the people had suffered immeasurably. Russian atrocities were of indescribable proportions. Near Pul-i-Kun the Russian buried 70,000 Afghans in a single mass grave. Russian occupation was followed by an unending civil war. Taliban took up arms to put an end to the internal disorder. Their movement the Islami Inqilab (Islamic Revolution) was limited to Afghanistan only. There were any intentions of exporting our revolution. Afghanistan adheres to the policy of Non-Alignment. We do not have aggressive designs against any country. Yet the attitude of international community remains inimical towards us. We do not understand it. Why have sanctions been imposed on Afghanistan? Why are people of Afghanistan being isolated?"

Excerpts:
Q: You know the sanctions are related to the presence of Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan.

Maulvi Rahmatullah Kakazada (MRK): We have no problem in that. We are a sovereign nation. We should be treated as such. If those who want Osama to be handed over to them for trial for some alleged acts of terrorism, let them present proof of his involvement. Let teams from Organisation of Islamic Countries or United Nations be involved in fact-finding.

Q: Then you have worsened your situation by some precipitate actions, destruction of Lord Buddha's statues, for instance? What was the compelling need to destroy a precious legacy in the name of Islam?

MRK: First we must make a distinction between the personality of Mahatma Buddha and the statues of his person. We hold the Mahatma in high esteem. One set of scholars thinks that he was a Nabi (Prophet) while the rest believe that he was a great good man who preached a moral way of life. Statues are however forbidden in Islam. Breaking a statue is wajib (mandated) upon all Muslims as opposed to Farz (ordained). So when we break a statue we do a religious bidding and do

not in anyway mean to insult the personage. Secondly it was not done suddenly. Some six months ago the Supreme Court of Afghanistan gave a fatwa (a formal legal opinion/decision issued by a Muslim juridical authority) in accordance with the tenets of Shariat. Amirul Momineen after extensive consultations with the Cabinet issued a firman that had to be carried out.

Q: Islam came to Afghanistan 1100 years ago and Muslim kings have ruled over the country ever since. Why no one thought about it earlier?

MRK: Afghanistan was home to thousands of statues and figures. Those are no longer there. During Zahir Shah's regime also an effort was made to break the Bamian figures but was given up. Statue breaking is not new in Islam. The Holy Prophet himself broke the statues of Marium (Mary) and Ibrahim (Abraham). A book by Dr Yousaf al Kardaw titled "Al halal wa haram fil Islamis" recommended to those who wish to further acquaint themselves with the Muslim law and traditions in this regard.

Q: Shouldn't the Afghan authorities have given some thought to the effect that their actions will have on the communal harmony in the region? A few days later the Holy Book was desecrated in Delhi and a Hindu-Muslim riot took place at Kanpur.

MRK: Communal riots have been a regular feature in the history of the region. A frenzied Hindu crowd at Ayodhya demolished Babari mosque about ten years ago and riots followed in almost all the major towns of India. In Pakistan also a few temples were desecrated. Maintenance of peace and order is the responsibility of concerned governments.

Q: What is the state of the economy in Afghanistan?

MRK: There has been a prolonged drought in the region and this has its effect on the economy. Human situation in the country requires serious international attention.

Q: Plans for economic development?

MRK: We have a long-term industrial development plan, spread over 25 years which is being executed within the obvious constraints.

Q: Your geo-political view of the region?

MRK: There are hidden hands (Pas Manzi quwwatain) that wish to destabilise the region. They desire to see some major changes in the political geography of the region. Pakistan, Iran Afghanistan are under focus.

This interview first appeared in peacemonger.com a newly-launched online magazine dedicated to peace in South Asia.

THAILAND

Greenpeace and GMOs

DAVID SWARTZENTRUBER

ONE of the advantages that I have in writing a once-a-week political column is that I can observe an event take place and then examine how the media analyzes and deals with it over the ensuing days and weeks.

One such event occurred this past week in Thailand. This event was not spontaneous like the recent explosion of a munitions warehouse at Don Muang airport, but a staged event meant to garner the attention and focus of the media.

What I am referring to is the recent public relations happening at the Tesco Lotus store during which the group Greenpeace announced that seven food products, including baby food, had been found to contain evidence of genetically modified organisms.

The products identified are all manufactured by large, international food companies. They are: Unilever's Knorr instant cream of corn soup, Nissin Cup Noodle (duck flavour), Vita-Tofu soybean curd, Good Time instant cereal beverage, Lay's stax and Pringles potato crisp.

The Bangkok Post newspaper gave the story a front page placement including a photo on April 11, using the subheading "Greenpeace: Thai consumers being made guinea pigs."

At the end of the story, a manufacturer noted that "anti-GMO moves in the international community derived from protectionism rather than health and environmental concerns."

To fully understand this issue one must know something about Greenpeace and genetically modified organisms.

Type in the word "Greenpeace" for a web search and you will find a host of sites for the organisation as well as some that are critical of the group. I have listed some sites at the end of this article.

Greenpeace was born out of protests against American military

testing in the Aleutian Islands off Alaska in the 1960s. It then spread to various countries and by the mid-1980s boasted five million supporters including such celebrities as Sting, Sir Elton John and Tom Jones, who supported its save-the-rainforest campaigns, according to the Sunday Times.

Recently, however, times have changed for Greenpeace, which is based in Amsterdam and receives most of its support and funding from European countries, according to the Wall Street Journal. Membership had dropped to four million in 1994 and since then has shrunk to 2.4 million.

Among the defections from the organization have been some prominent members. Patrick Moore, who has a PhD in Ecology and helped found Greenpeace in the early 1970s, was quoted in New Scientist magazine earlier this year as saying, "The environmental movement abandoned science and logic somewhere in the mid-1980s, just as mainstream society was adopting all the more reasonable items on the environmental agenda. This was because many environmentalists couldn't make the transition from confrontation to consensus."

"I believe we are entering an era where pagan beliefs and junk science are influencing public policy. GM foods and forestry are both good examples where policy is being influenced by arguments that have no basis in fact or logic."

The Sunday Times reports that in 2000 Greenpeace executive director Thilo Bode resigned and the entire board of Greenpeace US, which was once the largest national group, resigned leaving the organisation in disarray.

The newspaper also reported that Greenpeace has lost more than 1.6 million members and has seen its income decline by 30 million pounds.

This piece first appeared in the Bangkok Post.

KOREA

The student uprising

JOHN KIE-CHIANG OH

HUNDREDS of flowers blossom as the spring breaks through in April. Usually, it is a balmy month of rejuvenation when gentle breezes caress all creatures and inspire the celebration of life.

April 1960, however, witnessed the sudden death of the First Republic of Korea, headed by President Syngman Rhee. His vice president's entire family carried out a suicide pact at a guest cottage on the presidential compound, then Kyongmudae. When the dust settled from the student uprising of April 19, 1960, it turned out that the Korean police killed 125 and wounded over 1,000 young students during week-long demonstrations. Soon thereafter, Rhee, whom an American Ambassador to Korea once called the George Washington of Korea, slunk off to Hawaii where he died in lonely exile some five years later.

The turbulence that erupted in 1960 has been variously called the 4.19 student revolution, the democratic revolution of April, and the righteous student uprising of 1960, as I wrote in my 1968 book, "Korea: Democracy on Trial" (Cornell University Press). What should be the most appropriate name for the events of April 1960?

The characterization may depend on two central questions:

the nature of the Rhee government and of the events of March and April 1960. As one reflects on these questions, they may be matters of history for some younger Korean readers and those from abroad. Such a reflection may also suggest a sobering perspective on Korea today.

The character of the Rhee government had been controversial from the day of its birth in August 1948. The Korean people had to live under an often-bungling American Military Government for three years before they faced the establishment of a separate government in South Korea headed by Rhee. Given Korea's international and domestic conditions, particularly the almost simultaneous inauguration of a hostile regime in the north, the separate government in the south was the Hobson's choice left for the South Korean people. Half a loaf was better than none, as I told them.

The new Republic of Korea had to have a president elected by the National Assembly according to the first formally adopted Constitution, that had a curious mixture of a presidential system and a parliamentary form of government. The constitution drafting committee favored a parliamentary system, while Rhee insisted on a presidential government. Rhee emerged, as he confidently expected, as an overwhelming choice for president - with a smattering of votes cast for Kim Ku, an austere and revered

patriot who led the Korean exile government in China.

It is true that the Rhee regime had to face what Clinton Rossiter in his book, "Constitutional Dictatorship," called the three well-defined threats to its existence as both a government and a constitutional democracy, namely, economic chaos, rebellions, and war.

While battling all these threats, the Rhee regime quickly became - some say, understandably - combative, autocratic, and caesaristic. The septuagenarian president declared martial law in the summer of 1952 in the wartime capital of Pusan and had a constitutional amendment railroaded through the National Assembly, where he had become an anathema. The amendment provided for a direct, popular election of the president and vice-president, among other matters. Many National Assemblymen had observed Rhee at close range and detested him by 1952, but a majority of South Koreans still looked upon him as "the father of the nation."

About two years later, Rhee had another constitutional amendment declared "adopted" through a mathematical manipulation of rounding off the last 0.33 percent of the vote needed to pass the amendment. The opposition Assemblymen howled in protest, but this amendment made it possible for Rhee to be elected as president without a term limit - in effect for life. President Rhee, obedi-

ently supported by the Liberal Party of his creation, now monopolized absolute power, and corruption was predictably rampant. Lord John Acton was once again proven correct in observing the co-relation between power and corruption.

As Rhee, at age 85, sought his fourth term as president in the March 15, 1960 elections, Yi Ki-bung was his running mate. The vice presidency was crucial in case of succession to presidency, given Rhee's age. The Rhee camp was determined to win the 1960 elections by any means necessary, including whole scale election rigging. When returns were "counted," Rhee was declared elected with 92 per cent of the vote, with his running mate Yi receiving 4.5 times the vote garnered by the opposition vice presidential candidate, Chang Myon. The Korean election laws allowed such an election contest at the time, and Rhee's victory margin was reminiscent of election returns in totalitarian countries. Some National Assemblymen, who had a semblance of the freedom of speech on the Assembly floor, charged that some 40 percent of total votes had been fabricated to pad the Liberal Party vote.

The Rhee administration rejoiced, but the country knew that the elections were stolen brazenly. For a month after the election, however, discouraged Korean peo-

ple shrugged their shoulders. They felt unable to carry out any effective protests against the Rhee regime, if only because the Liberal Party and its supporters in every quarter of economic and political life were all too able to invoke sanctions. In a nation where a large number of the labor force was unemployed, a job was a precious commodity. The vice atmosphere in South Korea was one of sullen resignation and brooding for a month following the March elections, and occasional riots were reported.

On April 11, a fisherman discovered in the southern port city of Masan the body of a 19-year-old student with a tear gas shell imbedded in one eye. This became the spark that ignited the people's pent-up fury. Demonstrations, non-violent at the beginning, were started by university students in Seoul, and quickly spread to every major city of South Korea.

President Rhee characteristically declared martial law. Troops and tanks were menacingly mobilized, but the troops under the tactical control of the United Nations Command were not issued live ammunition. When the Korean government publicly blamed the "devilish hands of the Communists" for the disturbances, the U.S. Secretary of State, Christian A. Herter, issued a statement that the United States believed "that the


demonstrations in Korea are a reflection of public dissatisfaction over the conduct of the recent election and repressive measures unsuited to a free democracy."

Rhee constitutionally commanded the fourth largest standing army in the world then, but the troops and tanks showed no efforts to disperse the students. By April 26, Rhee was isolated in his mansion that was surrounded by howling students now demanding his resignation. When the life of his regime was at stake, the soldiers did not fire against students and the last line of defense evaporated. The utterly dejected president issued a statement that he would resign "if the people wished it," according to my conversations with former Defense Minister Kim Chong-yol and the late Gen. Song Yo-chan, martial law commander at that time.

In sum, the events in the spring of 1960 were not a revolution with identified leaders, political ideologies, dogmas and programs, e.g., the American Revolution or the Communist Revolution led by Mao Zedong. The 1960 events were a spontaneous and righteous uprising against a corrupt and autocratic regime that lost its raison d'etre.

As the spring returns, we should pause to remember the lessons of recent history.

Courtesy: The Korea Times.



DESA Local Tender Notice

Memo No PS2/Pro-2/17 Dated: 4-4-2001

নিয়মিত বিদ্যুৎ বিল পরিশোধ করুন
সন্ধ্যাবেলায় বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবহার হ্রাস করুন

Dhaka Electric Supply Authority invites bids for vehicles against the following tender. The authorised distributors/agents/manufactures are eligible to participate in this tender. The vehicles shall be brand new & unused.

Sl No	Tender Enquiry Number	Materials	Last Date For Buying Tender Document	Tender Submission/Opening Date	Cost of Tender Document
1.	17/O&M/Vehicles	Double Cab Pickup, Jeep & Micro Bus	22-5-2001	24-5-2001	5000/=

Tender documents will be available for inspection and purchase (through application) during normal office hours in any of the following offices:

<p>a) Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka-Division, 1st 12-storied Govt Building, Dhaka.</p> <p>c) General Manager, Consumer's Services (South), Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, 12/1/A, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka.</p> <p>e) Director, Procurement & Store Management Dte, Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, 1, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000</p>	<p>b) General Manager, Consumer's Services (North), Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, House No-73, Road No-S/A Dhanmondi, Dhaka.</p> <p>d) Project Director, Greater Dhaka Power Distribution Project, House No 47, Road No 135, Gulshan, Dhaka.</p> <p>f) Secretary, Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, 1, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka.</p>
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The cost of tender documents (non-refundable) shall be paid through Pay Order/Demand Draft issued by any scheduled local bank favouring Director, Finance & Accounts, DESA. Tender document shall be obtained personally and DESA will not take any responsibility for sending tender documents to anybody.

Tenders shall be received in the abovementioned offices on the specified date up to 11:30 hrs (BST) and tender received will be opened publicly on the same day at 2:30 PM (BST) in the office of the undersigned in presence of the bidders/their representatives, if any. Late tenders, if any, shall summarily be rejected.

DESA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids at any stage without assigning any reason thereof.

DFP-9461-10/4 **Director**
G-704 Procurement & Stores, DESA



DESA Local Tender Notice

Memo No. PS-2/Pro-2/18 Dated: 4/4/2001

নিয়মিত বিদ্যুৎ বিল পরিশোধ করুন
সন্ধ্যাবেলায় বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবহার হ্রাস করুন

Dhaka Electric Supply Authority invites bids for Electrical Materials against the following tenders. Reputed manufacturers/their representatives are eligible to participate in this tender.

Sl No	Tender Enquiry Number	Materials	Last Date For Buying Tender Document	Tender Submission/Opening Date	Cost of Tender Document
1.	18/Grid/Lightning Arrester	132 KV Lightning Arrester (Surge Diverter)	21.05.2001	23.05.2001	5000/=

Tender documents will be available for inspection and purchase (through application) during normal office hours in any of the following offices:

<p>a) Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka-Division, 1st 12-storied Govt Building, Dhaka.</p> <p>c) General Manager, Consumer's Services (South), Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, 12/1/A, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka.</p> <p>e) Director, Procurement & Store Management Dte, Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, 1, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000</p>	<p>b) General Manager, Consumer's Services (North), Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, House No-73, Road No-S/A, Dhanmondi, Dhaka.</p> <p>d) Project Director, Greater Dhaka Power Distribution Project, House No. 47, Road No. 135 Gulshan, Dhaka.</p> <p>f) Secretary, Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, 1, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka.</p>
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The cost of tender documents (non-refundable) shall be paid through Pay Order/Demand Draft issued by any scheduled local bank favouring Director, Finance & Accounts, DESA. Tender document shall be obtained personally and DESA will not take any responsibility for sending tender documents to anybody.

Tenders shall be received in the abovementioned offices on the specified date up to 11:30 hrs (BST) and tenders received will be opened publicly on the same day at 2:30 pm (BST) in the office of the undersigned in presence of the bidders/their representatives, if any. Late tenders, if any, shall summarily be rejected.

DESA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids at any stage without assigning any reason thereof.

DFP-9462-10/4 **Director**
G-705 Procurement & Stores, DESA

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

National Board of Revenue, Dhaka

Ref No. 5(3) Board Administration-3/নওব/98/ Dated: 10-04-2001

Tender Notice

Sealed tenders are invited from interested firms for auction sale of condemned motor cycle No. Dhaka Metro-A-03-6822 of the National Board of Revenue. The said motor cycle is kept at the office premise of the undersigned and may be inspected during office hours.

02. Sealed tenders quoting rate for the said motor cycle will be received at the office of the undersigned up to 1200 Noon of 03-05-2001 and opened on the same day at 12-30 PM in presence (if any) of the tenderers.

03. Earnest money at the rate 5% in case of tender quoted amount being Tk 501/= to Tk 5000/= & at the rate 2.50% in case of the amount being above Tk 5000/= should be submitted with the tender in Bank Draft/Pay Order from any scheduled bank.

04. The National Board of Revenue reserves the right to accept or reject any tender.

Md Golam Rahman
Second Secretary (Board Administration-3)

DFP-9786-15/4 G-723