

SRI LANKA

A bed of thorns

M ABDUL HAFIZ

EVEN as the prospect for a negotiated peace settlement gained momentum with the swearing-in of Ranil Wickremasinghe, the crafty UNP leader as Sri Lanka's prime minister who is for going whole hog in giving the stalled Norwegian peace initiative a fresh chance, the impediments to peace-making seem no less formidable.

Wickremasinghe himself warned in his new year's message to the nation that the road to peace is strewn with thorns and not flowers. Because, after having witnessed at close range the nation's turbulent history of past two decades, he could not be oblivious of how previous attempts to talk to the LTTE repeatedly ended in failures and wars resumed with more fury than before. This time with split authority in the government as a result of the presidency and the parliament belonging to the rival parties, the handling of the peace process can be still more messy.

Yet, peace is an inescapable imperative for both sides. With almost a quarter of the government expenditure already devoted to defence the Sri Lankan economy will hardly afford another war. In last year alone almost a billion dollar was spent in fighting the tigers. Till last year the nation's economy plummeted inexorably and touched its all-time low. For the first time in country's history the economy shrank and registered a growth rate of minus point six. With the expenditure crossing an unmanageable level and revenue dropping the last thing the government wants is another war.

Therefore, as expected, one of the first steps Wickremasinghe took on his assumption of office was to announce his government's decision to cease hostility in response to LTTE's similar announcement which it did unilaterally from the Christmas's eve.

Back from a visit to India where he sought the latter's support for the resumption of Norwegian role in the peace process, Wickremasinghe, seizing the opportunity of a lull in the conflict telephoned his Norwegian counterpart Mr Boudevik to officially invite Oslo to resume the facilitation for peace talks with the LTTE. Only weeks before, through the Norwegians both the government and LTTE have converted the prevailing truce being unilaterally observed by both sides into a structured ceasefire with mutually agreed rules.

Wickremasinghe is proceeding in restoring peace in Sri

Lanka although it was during the regime of his wily uncle Jayewardene that the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka erupted in 1983.

As regards LTTE the war is not an option also for them — particularly in prevailing anti-terrorist mood the world over. The international campaign against terrorism after September 11, 2001 has already restricted its manoeuvrability. The LTTE already remained on the US list of the terrorists' groups and India's list of proscribed organisations. Now it has been added to the terrorist lists of Australia and Canada. Last year Britain also banned it under a new anti-terrorist legislation. The Tamil expatriates from these countries had been great help to the LTTE in the past. The Tigers' concerns over dwindling support for their cause were apparent in the speech made by Prabhakaran, the LTTE supremo on 27 November, the day observed by the outfit every year as 'Heroes Day'. Prabhakaran was markedly reconciliatory in the speech which made a case for peace talks and political settlement of the ethnic problem. For the first time he described the aspirations of the Tamils as "neither separatism nor terrorism." From this many have started to believe that LTTE is finally prepared to settle for something less than 'Eelam'.

But in a government headed by an executive president having sweeping powers the incumbent head of the state, Chandrika Kumaratunga does not believe that way. She has already called for a review of the ceasefire agreement signed by her rival, the UNP-led UNF government and threatened to block the peace process, if required in the interest of Sri Lanka's sovereignty. Notwithstanding Ms Kumaratunga's bracing word in Kathmandu's SAARC summit in early January that the peace process had her support and 'blessings', she, as the commander-in-chief of the country's armed forces is very well in a position to scuttle the process as the rivalry between the president and the prime minister intensifies.

Wickremasinghe's measures so far provide welcome relief to the rebels, but the military is understandably worried. They are bitterly used to the peace processes and ceasefires abruptly ending in even more savage fighting after the LTTE made use of the lull period to rearm and regroup itself. They, therefore, remain sceptic and want to give top priority to intelligence gatherings so that they are not taken by surprised again. In response to LTTE demand to remove all economic restrictions restore 'normalcy' the previously banned items like

cements and iron rods are now allowed into LTTE-held northern areas. But the military's top brass fears that if the fighting were to begin once again, they have to deal with well fortified force. There are already sporadic syndromes of renewed conflict.

In the early hours of January 21, the Sri Lanka Navy missile boat 'Nandhimitra' while on a routine patrol south of point Pedro detected a flotilla of LTTE boats. Nandha Mitra fired on the flotilla when it did not respond to the Navy's call. The Sea Tigers also responded with fire. More fires were exchanged in the process. Because of restraints from both side more violent confrontation was averted. On order from Colombo the Navy was asked to pull back before further escalation and the Tiger's flotilla also beached safely at Sea Tiger base on the Northwestern coast. Nevertheless, the incident has raised disturbing questions about Sea Tigers' mission in the high sea when the ceasefire was in force.

While the military believes that the government has given away too much too soon to the rebels, the LTTE's wish list is rather ambitious. Apart from their demand for the full restoration of normalcy as the foundation of peace negotiation, now the LTTE comes up with yet another condition for participating in peace talks. It argues that it can not participate in the negotiation as an 'illegitimate organisation' and demand to be 'de-proscribed' by Sri Lanka. That alone, they think, will enable LTTE to participate in the talk as equal partners. Amidst growing concern that the peace process is fast becoming an one-way traffic in which the government is making all the concessions, Prime Minister Wickremasinghe indicated that this pre-condition might as well be met. But the most thorny point of the negotiations still remains unresolved. The optimism generated by Prabhakaran's speech on the 'Heroes Day' that the aspiration of the Tamil people were 'neither separatist nor terrorist' indicating a settlement without separate Tamil homeland was later diluted by London-based Tamil ideologue Anton Balasingam and the leader of LTTE political wing SP Thamilselvan. They said it was not 'prudent' for the LTTE to commit itself on whether it was prepared for anything less than independent state.

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PAKISTAN

The murder of Danny Pearl

BENAZIR BHUTTO

THE brutal murder of Wall Street Journal reporter Danny Pearl heralds a deadly phase in Pakistan's politics. It indicates that militants, retreating from Afghanistan and Kashmir, are regrouping in contiguous Pakistan. Geography, history and ideological sympathy in key institutions make Islamabad attractive for regrouping Islamic militants.

The Islamic militants comprise persons and groups that forged alliances while fighting the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Having defeated one superpower, they claim they can defeat another one. With skills of organisation and warfare learned during the war against the Soviets, the militants are versed in guerrilla warfare. Well educated, their adherents include possibly nuclear scientists as well as graduates of the finest schools and universities in Pakistan and the Western world.

Shaikh Omar Sa'eed, the main suspect in the kidnapping of Danny Pearl, went to the prestigious Aitchison College, established by the British for the sons of the Kings of the Indian states. He was admitted to England's premier London School of Economics which he left to join the jihad. He seemed to defy death when he admitted the Pearl kidnapping claiming his fight was to keep Pakistan independent of America.

Educated and often well to do, the new militants also have backgrounds with law enforcement, military and intelligence. They bring a deadly sophistication to the war they declared against Non Muslims. If the Harvard Professor Samuel Huntington spoke of a Clash of Civilisations, the militants' activities could be the catalyst that breaks down relations between the Muslim and the Non Muslim world by creating fear, anger and retribution.

The video of the brutal decapitation of Danny Pearl was released on the eve of the Muslim festivities marking the sacrifice that the Prophet Ibrahim made as a demonstration of his love of God. Symbolically, Danny Pearl was decapitated in a macabre demonstration of militant determination. He was made to say that he was a Jew and that his Mother was a Jew.

This demonstrated that he was killed equally because he was an American and a Jew creating hatred against Muslims. In such moments, much as Muslims would insist on it, it becomes difficult to distinguish between the actions of an individual and the sentiments towards a community. Frighteningly, it appears that one of the purposes of the Islamic militants is to create hatred and war between different religious groups belonging to the same Ahle-e-Kitaab tradition.

Muslims are presently numerically, militarily, financially and technologically weaker than Non Muslims. Many years for the days of glory when the Muslim world was much stron-

ger and want to balance the equation. The last way to do that is for Islamic militants to take on the superior force provoking it into oppressing and repressing the Muslim world to ensue its own security.

There is little debate today on the repercussions on the Muslim world that can occur as a consequence of Islamic militancy.

Most Muslims condemn the World Trade Centre bombings and understand America's need to strike back for its own security. However, given the killings in the Middle East, the retreat in Kashmir, the foreign presence in Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan, the description of other Muslim countries as "evil", the inability to distinguish between freedom struggles and terrorism, the mood in the Muslim street is turning.

And dialogue between civilisations is still to begin.

This, then, potentially carries with it the seeds of a war between civilisations. Already barriers are coming down, racial profiling is taking place, and suspicion has replaced trust. Movement of people stopped being open and free after the bombing of the World Trade Centre.

If militants drive out foreign capital through terror caused by the kidnapping and killing of Danny Pearl, the economy of Pakistan and other countries if they are affected, could shrink. Poverty creates desperation. Desperation creates the mood that militants need for recruitment.

The abduction and murder of Danny Pearl contained messages at different levels. The first message was by militants exposing the military regime's impotence. It came one week after the so called crackdown against them started on January 16.

Shaikh Omar was not arrested although he was a suspect in the murder of five Western hostages and suspected of sending Hijacker Atta one hundred thousand dollars for the execution of the World Trade Centre bombings.

Secondly, Islamabad claimed that the Pearl abduction India's work. This move to sour relations between India and the U.S failed when the U.S refused to buy the story.

Third, the timing of the abduction close to General Musharraf's visit to U.S conveyed the importance of Musharraf to American geo strategic interests.

Fourth, for unknown reasons, Musharraf and his men insisted Danny Pearl was alive even after prime suspect Omar claimed that Pearl was dead.

The Pearl abduction and murder is a result of the failure of the Musharraf regime to reshuffle the federal and provincial cabinets set in place at the time when hardliners brought Musharraf to power in 1999. The Jaish-e-Mohammad Group, suspected of carrying out the kidnapping, was formed in January 2000.

This creates an interesting situation. The General makes

the right noises while militant sympathisers hold key positions in his regime.

Shaikh Omar's custody was kept a secret for five days again for unexplained reasons. Its announcement coincided with General Musharraf's arrival in Washington.

Pearl was kidnapped on his way to a meeting arranged by an ex military intelligence official, who had also been a key player in the Bin Laden/military intelligence backed destabilisation of Pakistani democracy in 1988-1990.

In the Pearl kidnapping, Afghanistan, Kashmir, ex-ISI, democratic destabilisation and Islamic militancy intermingle. Shaikh Omar fought in Kashmir. His accomplices fought in Afghanistan. The ex-ISI/military intelligence was familiar with them.

As militancy rose in military intelligence and became public, the god fathers of the fight against Soviet occupation morphed into non state players. Today they run NGOs and businesses. They now run like a mafia that pulls the strings of government through sympathisers in government.

When they seized power, Musharraf and his men promised to curb militancy. But militancy has risen. In January, Musharraf admitted that the writ of government had collapsed. Islamabad, an emerging capital market five years back, is now increasingly described by scholars as a state in disarray. Poverty rates rise even as per capita income falls. The growth rate refuses to bounce back and revenues remain deflated. The country faces external and internal threats.

Its commercial city of Karachi with 14 million people, is succumbing to incipient war lordism. Different ethnic groups (MQM, Haqiqi, Dawood Ibrahim, sectarian groups) control different parts of the city. There are killers on hire. Thousands of people already lost lives to ethnic violence. The brothers of a Prime Minister, a Chief Minister and an Interior Minister were killed during their tenures in office.

While Pearl's killers formed the Defence for the Sovereignty of Pakistan, a group called Al Saqia emerged in the area bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan. Bin Laden's group is reportedly run by a former Colonel of the Egyptian As Saqia brigade. Even as these groups formed, police found five rocket launchers near Karachi's airport.

The Islamic militants are bent upon destabilising the world community hoping to establish a Taliban type Islamic society. Now the emphasis is less on theocracy and more on nationalism. Those causes need to be denied to them. Otherwise, they could end up destroying the world we know today by bringing about the Clash of Civilisations.

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INDIA

Jayalalitha returns

ZAGLUL A. CHOWDHURY

JAYARAM Jayalalitha has returned to power in the important Tamil Nadu state in India as the controversial but popular lady politician has once again showed her impressive control over state politics despite being tainted by charges of corruption. She took oath as the chief minister after her loyal colleagues kept the post practically vacant for her as only interim arrangements had been made to run the administration.

Jayalalitha was the chief minister after her AIMDK party won a landslide in the polls in the state late last year but quit the position. A court verdict ruled that she could not remain in the top position after being disallowed to contest the elections because of earlier conviction in corruption cases.

She was not a member of the state legislative assembly as her nominations were rejected on the ground of moral turpitude. Still, Jayalalitha took over as the chief minister after the massive win of the AIMDK party but relinquished the post under convulsive court judgement. She did not break down and finally returned to the centre-stage of politics.

The verdict of the Madras high court a few months ago clearing Jayalalitha of conviction in corruption cases by the lower court had come as a shot in arms for the supremo of the AIMDK regional party in the Tamil Nadu. The former movie actress-turned-politician is popular in her state but has often been accused for maintaining luxurious life style and in the process she faced corruption charges and was convicted in two of them. This prevented her from seeking election in the state assembly polls but Jayalalitha did not hesitate to become chief minister after her party won the polls. But the supreme court of India ruled that her chief ministership was improper because of court indictment and she had to resign fuelling speculations that her political career was on the wane after the big setback. But the ruling of the high court setting aside the lower courts conviction has once again brought her back on way to the top.

She contested the elections the other day when four-state assembly went to the polls and won a seat. This time her nominations were not rejected since she is no more a convict after

the clearance by the Madras high court. Jayalalitha took little time to be back to the seat of the chief minister. The popular politician and chief minister of the important state more than once, has now bounced back in the political arena with greater importance after many had almost written off her top role in the Tamil Nadu state. As chief minister a few years ago, she was well-known for her lavish life and often used to be called as "Imelda Marcos of the East", an euphemism of corruption and high-flying life style of former first lady of the Philippines Imelda.

When president Ferdinand Marcos was forced to quit power



and leave the country facing a pro-democracy movement led by Corazon Aquino, an appalling picture of the wealth of the fallen president and his family came to the fore. But what was more gaudy information the personal belongings of the first lady which covered several hundred pairs of costly shoes along with similar kind of luxury items including very expensive rings.

Obviously, all these were procured at the state expenditures or ill-gotten money. The number of guests and cost of a the marriage festival of her adopted son was a matter of spicy talks in those days since it was simply unbelievably enormous. She is also easily identifiable for her penchant for costly sarees and other form of luxury items. This was one of the factors for the

defeat of her party in the elections that followed more than five year ago when rival DMK won. But the DMK and its leader chief minister Karunanidhi during the five year tenure lost popularity giving way to revival of Jayalalitha's AIMDK party which made a clear sweep in the last state polls.

Jayalalitha was not a legislator but was willing to take up the position of the chief minister as the constitution permits a non-legislator to head the government provided he or she becomes a public representative within six months. But her matter was seen by the supreme court as different because conviction. Later, the story took a different turn bringing her at the top again.

Jayalalitha's AIMDK party was a partner of the previous National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in India but it was she who triggered a collapse of the government by withdrawing support from the NDA, which, however, returned to power with a greater majority in the midterm polls.

The AIMDK is no longer a constituent of the NDA and Jayalalitha has so far restricted herself within the state politics although she did play key role in national politics before. Jayalalitha was a leading player in the formation of the NDA but she later quit it. It means that she has not totally isolated herself from national-level politics.

If political crises engulf the centre causing stability of the government and necessitating new government, fresh equations may take place and some political analysts feel that Jayalalitha may throw her hat into the federal political ring in such a possibility provided she stands a chance to become prime minister.

There are instances that politicians from regional importance suddenly shot into national level and that too to the extent of becoming prime minister. Karnataka's H.D. Deve Gowda is a glaring example. However, such developments take place in a fluid situation when somewhat strange equations take place or dark horses emerge as sudden choices for coveted positions. Jayalalitha is content with regional role but may not be averse to an important national role when situation turns favourable.

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Contempt contretemps

The Supreme Court's sentencing of award-winning writer Arundhati Roy to a symbolic day in the clink will be disputed by a fresh petition challenging the sentencing, reports Shamy Dasgupta

BOOKER PRIZE-WINNING writer-activist Arundhati Roy has been convicted by the Supreme Court for contempt of court, and has been sentenced to one day's symbolic imprisonment in the capital's Tihar jail in connection with the Sardar Sarovar dam issue. Roy has also been ordered to cough up Rs 2,000 as a fine, pending which she will be sentenced to a further three months in prison. The bench, comprising Justices G B Patnaik and RP Sethi, gave the verdict today, sparking off protests and sloganeering from the already agitated Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) supporters.

Passing the sentence, the apex court said, "Arundhati Roy is found to have committed criminal contempt of court by scandalising it and lowering its dignity through her statements made in her affidavit." In 1999, the Supreme Court deliberated charging Roy and the NBA with a contempt of court trial - in the midst of a *satyagraha* by the NBA protesting the displacement due to an increase in dam height from 80m to 85m. While the Supreme Court did not pursue this case in 2001, they charged lawyer Prashant Bhusan, NBA leader Medha Patkar, and Roy with a contempt of court case on the basis of a petition filed by some lawyers. The Supreme Court subsequently dismissed these cases, but initiated a fresh one against Arundhati Roy on the basis of her affidavit filed in the first case.

Roy's lawyer and fellow accused Prashant Bhusan countered the sentence by the Supreme Court saying, "This sentence is in response to the first affidavit filed by her. The part in the affidavit they found objectionable is where Arundhati says that the court's dignity will not be lowered by anything she or anyone else says, but by the quality of judgments they make. The court decided that this amounted to an attack on the integrity and credibility of the Supreme Court. The judgment completely confirms all that she wrote in her affidavit. It says that no one should criticise the court, and if they do so, they will do it at their own peril."

Bhusan also criticised two other aspects of the judgment. These were about allowing Justice Patnaik to be part of the set up, and a part of the announcement, which said that she is being given only a day's sentence because she is a woman. Bhusan said, "Though it is a side issue, it is indeed strange that the court decided to let Arundhati off easy only because she is a woman. Also, Justice Patnaik shouldn't have ordered the sentence, because she had accused him as well in her affidavit, and this could qualify as bias." Commenting further, Bhusan announced that Roy will now file a fresh affidavit, which he will prepare today.

As for the issue that the judgment is a violation of the principles of natural justice, Bhusan said, "Yes, they have greatly undermined their credibility by making such an arbitrary judgment. They have showed themselves to be an arbitrary institution that serves to exercise its power to harass and intimidate protesters into silence. The dignity of the court has been further diminished by this sentence, which clearly violates the principles of natural justice. Arundhati had criticised Justice Patnaik separately in her petition, and it doesn't make sense for the same judge to sit for the case, when Arundhati has suggested motives to him specifically."

Countering that, Justice Sethi suggested, "All citizens cannot be permitted to attribute motive to the court or the judges if public faith in judiciary has to be preserved. Even the freedom of speech of the press is same as that guaranteed to the common man under Article 19 of the Constitution, which also provides for reasonable restrictions. The judiciary has been under a constant threat in



recent times from within and outside, and to restore the confidence of people in judiciary, contempt of court provision should be invoked if anybody was found to flout the dignity of the court or its mandate. No citizen, howsoever mighty, powerful or popular, could escape the contempt laws if he or she lowers the dignity of the court or scandalises office."

Going back to the original issue, the court had issued a *suo moto* contempt notice to Roy, taking exception to a few paragraphs in an affidavit filed by her. The reply was sent along with Patkar's and Bhusan's affidavit, in response to a petition seeking initiation of contempt proceedings against her for allegedly raising slogans against the Apex Court during a demonstration held at its gate in December 2000. The court had discharged her from the proceedings in that petition but issued notice to her on the basis of some paragraphs in her reply affidavit, which it found "prima facie" to be contemptuous. At the time, Amicus Curiae Altaf Ahmad, who is also Additional Solicitor General, had argued that the court has always been magnanimous to pardon all those who had "erred" but tendered unconditional apology in contempt of court cases. Ahmad had said, "But the reply affidavit by Roy is full of attributing motives, blatant pontificating, sans an iota of regret."

Familiar shouts of "*Supreme Court bikao ha*" and "*Anay nahin, nay chahiyee*" and "*Baand nahin ban denge*" filled the corridor outside court three, where the proceedings were conducted. Some of the protesters were also picked up for excessive agitation, detained, and then taken to the Tilak Marg police station next to the Supreme Court. Patkar and other NBA leaders were seen leading the protesters towards Tihar jail, where, Patkar promised, there would be a *dharma*, and a possible hunger strike.

Courtesy: tehelka.com

NEPAL

No time for games

A section of Kathmandu's elite is waging a psy-war to sabotage the government's will to fight the insurgency. CK Lal writes from Kathmandu

DESPITE SPRING, hopelessness hangs in the air like a shroud of blue cremation smoke over the banks of the Bagmati. Isn't this the state the terrorists want us to be in? By giving into passive mourning, we end up capitulating unwittingly. So far, the terrorists have succeeded exceedingly well in undermining the political will to fight the worst menace facing this country since the demise of the Khukuri Dal in the 1950s.

The mayhem in Mangelsen and the slaughter in Salyan last week revealed the deadly determination of the Maoists. The barbaric burning of innocent passengers on a night bus to Birgunj showed that for the Maobadi, the end justifies the means. And what exactly are these ends? Nothing less than subverting democracy. Worse, it may be to undermine the very existence of this state.

A challenge of this magnitude requires that the political class face it with a sense of purpose. This should be the time to shelve little differences that inevitably exist in every democratic polity. Some of us in the media had unrealistic expectations of the Royal Nepal Army. We scoffed at the doubts of more perceptive analysts. An army that had virtually no experience in fighting an insurgency was doing so in a terrain designed to favour guerrillas.

Now that we know better, we are reconciled to the fact that this is a messy war. We have to be prepared for the long haul. There is no magic wand any more. When it comes to facing a rebel group as ruthless and crafty as the Maobadi, the Royal Nepal Army is as vulnerable as the much-maligned Nepal Police. This is a sobering realisation that should prompt our political leadership to rethink its strategy to counter the insurgency.

To channel scarce resources in the right direction, the state must begin by identifying its real enemies. Poverty, unemployment, lack of governance, and corruption are some of the fashionable causes that holier-than-thou analysts brandish about with reckless naivete

. Sure, these are socio-economic diseases that need to be treated for the political health of the country. The point is, how do you do that when you have a gun to your head, a knife at your back, and a bomb beneath your feet?

By incessantly harping on the terminal diseases that afflict our state, we make the insurgents look like mercy-killers. The time for moralising is now over. Even wars have certain rules of engagement. Terrorists observe no such codes, and have no hesitation in defiling corpses and setting innocent people on fire.

Not that Messrs Koirala, Nepal, Thapa or Deuba are paragons of virtue, but to compare them unfavorably with those who storm police posts, raze military barracks, kill innocents by the hundreds, and burn bus passengers is not just ignorance, it reflects the complicity that the Kathmandu cabal with a Panchayat-era past has with the enemies of democracy. A sizeable section of the traditional elite has not reconciled itself to the reality of popular rule enshrined in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990, and is bent upon giving democracy a bad name. This is the enemy within, subverting the rule of law by shouting itself hoarse that laws are not being observed.

Take the most glaring recent example. Have any of the legions of incorrigible Koirala-knockers been able to prove in what way his expulsion from Singha Darbar has helped Nepal? Do we have less corruption, more good governance, a higher level of democracy and more investment in poverty alleviation under Deuba than what we had under Koirala? Let me extend this logic a little further: what is the guarantee that whoever replaces Deuba will have a more competent and incorruptible set of ministers than the one we have at present?

A concerted effort to undermine the legitimacy of a democratically elected and constitutionally formed government is on. A psy-war to sabotage the government's will to fight the insurgency is being waged

by an influential section of Nepali buddhijibis (This word has no exact equal in English. "Intelligentsia" lacks the menacing undertones inherent in the Nepali term.) The help they extend to the insurgents is too generous to be entirely coincidental. If it isn't a conspiracy, the capital's "opinion leaders" are morons incapable of seeing the harm they do to the Nepali state.

Kautilya's Arthashastra, believed to have been compiled between 321-296 BCE, lists four dangers to the state and declares, "... that which is of internal origin and internal abatement" is the most dangerous. Nepal's democracy, economics, society and nation are faced with exactly this danger, and it can mean the end of its independent identity. This is no time to prove one's intellectual prowess by picking holes in the "democratic alliance" that has been proposed by the ruling party's president. It is the classic TINA option of politics. There is No Alternative. Forces that believe in nationalism and democracy have to come together and defend the gains of the People's Movement of 1990.

Krishna Prasad Bhattarai is dead right: this is not the time to play power games. Constitutional amendments can wait. What needs to be done right away is collect our collective wits and face a ruthless enemy staring us in the face. The last word must go to Sun Tzu, almost a contemporary of Kautilya: victory comes from cold-blooded tactics, not vague warnings. If you want to win, first think your strategy out. No one is going to come immediately to save Nepal from the Maobadi. After all, the world just watched while the Taleban had a free run of Afghanistan. By the time help arrives assuming that it does it is often too late. The state must sort this mess out all by itself. The least the buddhijibis can do is stop being such a nuisance.

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