

People's mandate and national security

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Introduction

Today our national security is certainly under threat and there is every reason to believe that the structure on which it is based is weakened.

Democracy has been an accepted system of running the state for over 2000 years. It has taken many shapes and undergone many changes for a state to have a government by, for and of the people. Yet, one sometimes wonders whether democracy, especially in a country like ours, gives us a government by, for and of the people? Why do the electorate vote, after all? Is there any relation between the electorate's mandate and national security? Is there any deficiency in democracy? This article will draw an analogy between the people's mandate and national security. The purpose is to generate discussion on the subject.

Electorate's mandate

Before defining national security, let us identify the reasons why the people vote at all? There are various categories of voters - and, besides all kind of interests, everyone hopes at least for a better tomorrow. These aspirations and the visions vary, depending on the categories of the voters. If we summarise the aspirations, irrespective of their categories, we will find the following motivations of the electorate to vote: Socio-economic development, job opportunities, better and equal education environment and facilities, social harmony and justice, good law and order, protection of life and property, corruption-free society and environment congenial to foreign investment, freedom of expression, protection of the nation from external and internal threats, functioning and flourishing of democracy, freedom of religion and good governance.

These expectations are of the whole nation because, even if someone did not vote for a particular party, the winning candidate is his representative.

National security defined

Somewhere during the growth of civilization, military might began to overwhelmingly determine the power of a nation. Expansionist tendencies led to two world wars in the 20th century. Till the middle of the last century, national security implied territorial integrity and thus military might became the primary instrument of its maintenance. With globalisation and digital technology, military power has ceased to be the sole deciding factor. In post WW-II, the revival of war ravaged economies of Germany and Japan started impacting strongly on the world economy. Simultaneously, the Cold War was encouraging arms race. This became a matter of great concern. The western economists and think tanks floated a new definition of security to reduce defense budget and prominence of Generals in global politics. Economic might got prominence as an essential

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STAR PHOTO

component of national security. McNamara, the then president of the World Bank took the lead in redefining national security as "... not military hardware, though it may include it, security is not military force, though it may encompass it. Security is development and without development there is no Security." Now geo-economics has become the foundation of geo-strategy and geo-politics in international relations.

The present concept of national security embraces a broad spectrum of challenges, threats and responses, and goes far beyond merely defense of territorial integrity of a nation. Economic prosperity has progressively become the major determinant of national security. Economic interdependence started guiding the future destiny of nations. But the complexity of uncertain global order and threat and the aftermath of 9/11 cannot be ignored. Keeping all the issues in perspective, Walter Lippman emphasised on national core values and its protection as an essential element of national security. According to him "a nation is secured to the extent, to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice its core values, if it wishes to avoid war; and is able, if challenged to maintain them by victory in such a war." National Security is therefore, concerned with the protection,

preservation and furtherance of the core values of a nation against both internal and external threats.

National security depends to a large extent on realising national goals and objectives that are again drawn from core values. And the national goal could be "to sustain a vibrant democracy, strengthen the economy and safeguard the national frontier from external and internal threats."

National power and protection - analogy and perception

If we now go back to the people's mandate and their aspirations, we find that they actually vote to protect the national core values. The question is, how the party voted to power protects national security? A few ministers or individuals cannot do it. The electorate handover the instruments / elements of national power to the winning party to protect national security. National power is a mix of strategic, military, economic, institutional and political forces. The elements of national power are: the people, the economy, diplomacy, the military, good governance and faith in Almighty Allah.

National security is not only protecting the frontiers but also of elements of national power. What happens when any government fails to protect national security and the instrument / elements of power?

What happens if it, instead of strengthening, weakens the pillars of national power? Will the electorate have to wait 4/5 years and see in the process, the elements or the institution of national power gradually crumble, just because the constitution says so? Is there a need to redefine or reassess democratic format? Is democracy hostage to constitutional restrictions? These are the issues we need to ponder upon. Anyone or any institution that undermines or weakens the elements, the fabric of national power by their acts, is betraying the nation and the national mandate.

End words

We are passing through a time, when so many complex problems are demanding fresh ideas and new thinking, both globally and also at home. Some of them arise from the sheer uniqueness of global market, technology, lack of knowledge and some inevitably arise from aging and corrupt leadership, problems of failure to groom future generations and criminalisation of democracy. If these are deliberate acts, the nation is very unfortunate. Politics now seems like a declining industry, struggling to keep up, rather than an institution of imagination and energy. Between what politics could be and what it is now, lies the most striking paradox of our practicing democracy.

Democracy after all is a belief in "people's capacity to govern themselves." It is the internal strength of a country. Yet, despite this unprecedented strength, democracy looks remarkably weak and the electorate is losing hope and direction. The people's mandate is now dragged to the floor of the Supreme Court for vetting, and governments are falling short of legitimacy even in the most developed world. Yet we know we need politics and democracy to resolve the conflicts of interest. This clash between culture of democracy and its forms, between will of the electorate being denied and restrictions of the constitution, has undermined the national aspirations, national security and the fabric of national power.

The foundation of national security must rest on the social and economic well being of the people. A socially fractious, economically backward and politically divided nation is unlikely to be secure. Geoff Mulligan rightly said that, "democracy has now become hostage to the party politics" and of course corrupt leadership. Actually, world wide, leadership is in crisis and so is democracy, opines the "Demos", an independent think tank. Public confidence in politics and politicians has slumped. There is a sense that today's leaders are diminishing figures compared to their predecessors and new dynamic ones have to rise up? When people lose hope, lose direction and a country reaches its culminating point, saturated with corruption, I think the country is in distress.

Someone, backed by the people's mandate, has to show us the way.

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SRI LANKA

Deepening crises of peace process

DR. ABDUR ROB KHAN

THE Norwegian envoy Erik Solheim ended his recent bid to resume peace talks inconclusively as neither side budged from its position. Still Sri Lanka is swinging between hopes for resumption of peace talks and rising level of violence that tends to recede peace process to the background.

Whether the stalled peace talks may resume and take the parties to the pre-April 2003 position when LTTE withdrew from the ensuing Tokyo round of the Norwegian-brokered peace process, depends on a number of complicating factors. Prominent among them is the political capacity of the ruling Freedom Alliance headed by SLP and embodying in its fold such motley groups as the ultra-left JVP. It seems taking a strong and coherent position on the part of the Kumaratunga government has become all the more difficult compared to pre-election period.

The second strategic factor is the disposition of the LTTE. It is remarkable that the currently tenuous truce and cease-fire got their momentum following LTTE's renunciation of a separate Eelam. However, prevailing difference over formation of interim self-governing authority has been compounded by a development of strategic nature - rebellion by the second in command, Muralitharan, alias Colonel Karuna with 6000 followers. For LTTE, this has turned out to be a double betrayal because of alleged government protection to Karuna. The eastern districts are rife with hostilities, attacks, counter-attacks and killings over basically the issue of the so-called renegades. Colonel Karuna has gone underground and his followers are reported to be carrying out deadly attacks on the main groups. The main group makes reprisals on the renegades and also on government forces on the ground that the latter are sheltering and helping the former.

But hope for the peace process persists because while each side is accusing the other of violating the ceasefire, each side at the same time also vows its commitment to the peace process. Hopes have further been raised when the Sri Lankan government renewed its request to Norwegian peace broker to resume his mission following a plea in the parliament by LTTE-ally, Tamil National Alliance (TNA) that the government should end its "no war, no peace policy".

Question is: do these transient or significant developments have some enduring features? The Sri Lankan Government has been consistently denying the LTTE charges saying that it was not its policy "to support one terrorist against another" but it was concerned about factional killings. Earlier, signs of escalation were too evident following the resumption of suicide bombings in the heart of Colombo and a series of killings in Eastern Sri Lanka. An analyst warned that the deadlock and growing violence could be "quite dangerous." "There is a possibility that the cease-fire itself would be threatened and ... a return of hostilities," might take place, said Dr. P. Saravanamuttu, a political analyst at the Centre for Policy Alternatives, an independent think-tank.

The strength of government denials was diluted when security forces made a roundabout admission that some elements in the security forces might have helped the renegade's escape. This was reinforced when the only Tamil member of the cabinet, Mr. Douglas Devananda, declared that he helped Karuna escape from the East in the face of overwhelming onslaught by the LTTE forces obedient to Pravarakan. And such self-declaration was followed by an attempt on Devananda by a woman suicide bomber, which however proved abortive. The incident was also followed by discovery of high-powered landmines and suicide bomb kits in Colombo, which is seen as a Tiger warning message that the government should not take the truce for granted. There have also been reports that the Tigers are gunrunning and installing new camps close to a strategic government naval base in eastern Sri Lanka, raising fears the island nation could again face civil war. The LTTE is reported

to have set up as many as forty military camps around the strategic port of Trincomalee.

However, it is remarkable that the truce, which has been holding since February 2002, is still holding and already strong constituencies for peace have been created not only among the Sinhalese community but also among the Tamils. The LTTE finds it difficult to replenish the depleted cadres. It is also reported that 150 eastern youths fled LTTE areas, as LTTE intensified efforts towards recruitment. Military sources revealed about 500 youths have been abducted by LTTE main groups since the Karuna faction broke away. Both Amnesty and UNICEF have criticised LTTE efforts to recruit child soldiers.

Secondly, there have been global pressures for peace and such pressures have only been intensified. Powers that matter are using both carrot and stick to prod LTTE to the peace process. USA urged LTTE to give up violence, suicide bombing and recruitment of child soldiers and asked both sides to resume peace talks. USA also stated that it would not lift the terrorist tag over LTTE despite its observance of truce. Deputy Secretary of State Armitage reviewed the Sri Lankan situation with US Ambassador Jeffrey Lunstead, including repeated violation of the ceasefire. USAID financed project aimed at restoring basic ser-

of resumption of war.

A third development that makes the prospects for peace brighter has taken place on the political front in Colombo. President Kumaratunga has long been ambivalent over the LTTE key demand for ISGA. Her reluctance to accept the LTTE line was reinforced by her coalition partner, JVP's fierce resistance to any autonomy plan. SLP, mentioned above, is heading a minority government. Recently, however, one other Tamil mainstream party, CWC, lent support with its 8 parliamentarians to Kumaratunga's minority government. CWC is known for its support for ISGA and it stated that it would support the government in resumption of peace process including the issue of ISGA. Encouraged by such development, President Kumaratunga said that she would institute the interim authority provided the Tigers were ready to talk about permanent peace. Kumaratunga also indicated that she would strive for consensus among political parties about resumption of peace talks.

In another development, the Tigers have agreed to repay a 'huge public debt' of tax they collected from the Tamil people to finance the war. As is well known, the Tigers levied taxes on almost every economic transaction and goods. Of course, it remains an open question to what extent they would be able to repay the public



and providing improved livelihood support to war-torn segments of the population in Jaffna. The project, costing US\$275,000, will benefit 100,000 local residents.

EU nations slammed the Tiger rebels as fresh killings dimmed Lanka peace hopes. Local EU troika including the EU delegation, Dutch Ambassador and British High Commissioner visited Kilinochchi to discuss the peace process with Mr. Thamichelvan, head of the political wing of LTTE. Japanese Ambassador to Sri Lanka visited the Eastern province during 25-26 August and exchanged views with concerned agencies and officials. Even World Bank, which is to channel international aid to rebuild Sri Lanka's war ravaged northeast, has offered to help revive the island's stalled peace bid amidst fear

debt. But certainly, it will boost their image among the common Tamils and raise hopes of the Tamils to reap further peace dividend.

To resume peace talks under the circumstances requires a series of confidence building measures on both sides, which, however, are miserably lacking at the moment. But a good thing is that both the Sinhalese and Tamil people in general have begun to enjoy peace dividend derived from the two-year long sustained truce, uneasy though. There is, so to speak, ground-swell support for peace throughout Sri Lanka. It remains for the politicians and the Tigers to live up to the expectations.

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What are the causes of war?

BILLY I AHMED

WHAT are the causes of war? It is a question that has often been asked in the past, and which will be asked in the future also. For war is a plague; Martin Luther said, "War is the greatest plague that can afflict humanity; it destroys religion, it destroys states, it destroys families. Any scourge is preferable to it."

The world war since 1914 plus innumerable lesser ones, and now the growing fear of a third world war which will make all former ones look like moderate skirmishes have destroyed the cushy optimism of world peace.

Modern war incorporates the harshness of human aspiration and degradation. Conditions that demand an utter disregard for the value of human life and blind indifference to suffering may be associated with excessive selfishness and courage. Greed, barbarism, totalitarian oppression, domination and submission, cowardice and bravery, self-interest, and self-denial are among the emotions, sentiments, and attitudes of war.

To different people war may have different meanings. To some it is a plague which ought to be eliminated; to some a mistake which should be avoided; to others, a crime which ought to be punished; to still others, it is an anachronism which no longer serves any purpose. On the other hand, there are some who take a more receptive attitude towards war and regard it as an adventure which may be interesting, an apparatus which may be useful, a procedure which may be legitimate and appropriate, or a condition of existence for which one must be prepared. There is a diversity of emphasis on different causes of war. Military nationalists have use old metaphysical arguments for war.

Conflict between states, it has been said in both ancient and contemporary writings, is a manifestation of a universal principle of existence. Supporters of war bring in historical, biological, and ethical reasons for war. They maintain that, from the beginning of recorded history, the fundamental interest of different political communities have been in opposition, and with the advance of civilisation, wars have continued to increase rather than diminish in scope and intensity. There is always contention for survival

and dominance between the more and the less civilised nations, and the struggle will continue to take the form of armed strife, defensive, and aggressive.

The biological-historical case for war has

Whatever might have been the causes of war there is no denying the fact that war is a curse to humanity. It has brought about untold misery, devastation, and degradation to millions of people. There is no evidence that wars are necessary and inevitable consequences of nature as such. The greatest problem to the world today are leaders who regard war as inevitable, and thus prepare their people for armed conflict to kill and get killed. War is at best barbarism...Its glory is all moonshine. It is only those who have neither fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded who cry aloud for blood, more vengeance, more desolation. War is hell!

drawn support from a few distinguished scientists Ernest Haeckel contended that egoism, which he characterised as a universal biological law, maintained itself in human society in a sort of racial cannibalism. The earth, he said, has insufficient resources for all the racial groups that appear upon its surface. The weaker groups

perish not only through their incapacity to compete effectively in the common struggle for the inadequate supply of the means of life but also through their inability to defend themselves against conquest and ultimate annihilation by the stronger groups.

Some writers also exalt war for its direct cultural, moral, and ethnic benefits. There are people who say that innate nature of man as well as certain psychological traits has a bearing on warlike behaviour. Man is endowed with an innate urge or instinct to dominate. The others say that cultural and ideological differences cause it. Still others think that nationalism, colonialism and militarism have been important elements in many wars. There are also economic causes of war. The economic theory of war means that in a satanic spirit for economic gain munitions makers - "merchants of death," and capitalists, provoke wars in order to profit by the blood of human beings.

War arises because of the changing relations of numerous variables - technological, psychic, social, and intellectual. There is no single cause of war. Peace is equilibrium among many forces. Change in any particular force, trend, movement, or policy may at one time make for war, but under other conditions a similar change may make for peace. A state may at one time promote peace by armament, at another time by disarmament, at one time by insistence on its rights, at another time by spirit of conciliation.

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SNIPPETS

'US could hit Pakistan's nukes if Musharraf is removed'

The US may consider military strikes against Pakistan's nuclear assets if President Pervez Musharraf is removed from power, a Democratic candidate for the Senate has said.

Dawn (Sept 28) quoted Barack Obama, a Democratic Party Senate contender, as saying in San Francisco that the US feared that Islamic extremists would take over Pakistan if Musharraf were overthrown. In such a situation, the US would have to consider "going in and taking the nuclear bombs out," he said.

The Senate hopeful's remarks are in line with Musharraf's own argument that it was important for Pakistan to have him at the helm of affairs as the country would otherwise be taken over by fundamentalists.

The admission by A.Q. Khan, the scientist behind Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme, that he had sold nuclear secrets to countries like Iran, Libya and North Korea had added to these fears. Indo-Asian News Service

Nine Nuclear Scientists Slip Out of Pakistan

At least nine senior Pakistani Nuclear Scientists have secretly absconded from Pakistan, the latest defection taking place as late as in July 2002, documents from Pakistan's nuclear power plant CHASNUPP, built with Chinese assistance at Chashma in central Pakistan, have revealed. Eight of the nine absconders were "Senior Engineers" at CHASNUPP and one was an Assistant Engineer. Four of them belonged to the Operations Division of the power plant, two to the Mechanical Maintenance Division and one each to Electrical, Technical and Training Divisions. Many of them are CNS Fellows while others got their fellowship from Karachi Nuclear Power Plant, KANUPP. Six disappeared between February to October 2000, one in April 1997 and two in 2002. South Asia Tribune

US to send nuclear submarine for exercise with India

For the second consecutive year the US is sending a nuclear-powered submarine for a major naval exercise with India to be conducted in the Arabian Sea.

Exercise Malabar 04, to be held off the Konkarn coast in early this month, will see seven frontline warships and submarines of the Indian and US navies practising advanced anti-submarine warfare and anti-terrorism operations.

This is the sixth in the Malabar series of manoeuvres since 1992 and the third such war game held by the two navies since India and the US resumed defence ties after the 1998 nuclear tests by New Delhi.

"The Malabar series of exercises are regularly conducted as part of enhanced cooperation between the two navies," said Garg.

No talks on Siachen demilitarisation

Indian officials have denied any discussions between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf on demilitarising Siachen, the world's coldest and highest battlefield, during their talks in New York.

"There is no basis to the report," a senior official said, commenting on a Pakistani report that Musharraf had assured Manmohan Singh that his forces would not seize the glacier if Indian troops withdrew from it.

The Siachen standoff at heights of up to 6,000 meters is one of eight issues covered under the wide-ranging composite dialogue process the two countries initiated in January to resolve bilateral issues, including Kashmir.

Indian Army officials admit that the maintenance of its positions on Siachen requires a huge logistical exercise, including daily air-dropping of supplies.

Pakistan is keen on demilitarising Siachen and the withdrawal of Indian troops from the glacier to positions prior to the signing of the 1972 Simla Agreement under which the Line of

Control (LoC), which divides Jammu and Kashmir between the two countries, was created.

The 742-km LoC, however, was not extended across the glacier, where the ceasefire line is the AGPL. Over 500 Indian soldiers have died on Siachen during the past 20 years, most of them victims of extreme weather conditions.

Bangladesh army to destroy landmines stock

The Bangladesh army will destroy more than 200,000 anti-personnel landmines in its possession under a treaty signed with the United Nations. Bangladesh is the first country in South Asia to take such an action.

According to a senior Bangladesh army official, it was "part of an international campaign to ban landmines". "We have taken the move under a treaty with the United Nations and we're waiting for a suitable time to initiate the process after the rainy season. It will take several months to destroy all the mines," he told IANS recently. Canada has agreed to bear the expenditure for destroying the mines. The army would destroy all its anti-personnel landmines except a few thousand that would be preserved for training. Indo-Asian News Service

Palestinians continue to die in Gaza

Two Palestinian children were killed by Israeli fire in the northern Gaza Strip refugee camp of Jebalya on Oct 7 as troops pressed a massive eight-day-old incursion into the area. "The pair were hit by a missile fired by a helicopter gunship," a spokesperson said.

The deaths brought to 90 the number of Palestinians killed since Israeli armour first poured into the Gaza Strip on September 28. Five Israelis have also been killed in the territory during the incursion. A total of 4,453 people have now been killed since the launch of the intifada, or uprising, four years ago, including 3,425 Palestinians and 954 Israelis, according to an AFP tally.