

Global warming and vulnerability of Bangladesh

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THE earth was a hot planet once. It gradually became cool and eventually became congenial for life to grow. Through this process the ice era began. Till the 18th century the rate of increase in the earth's temperature was quite slow. But shortly after the Industrial Revolution, there was a rapid rise in global temperature. It is a fact that the earth is the only planet where life can survive. Because, along with other factors (like water, oxygen) one of the important reasons is that in other planets the temperature is not congenial for human and animals. Till the 18th century there was no great threat to our environment.

Three quarters of the surface of the Earth is water which is in liquid and ice form. Most of the water is in the form of ice in the polar area. But, as the earth is warming the polar ice, which has been in this form for millions of years, is now thawing, causing the sea level to rise gradually. And that is the cause of growing concern for Bangladesh because it is only 30 feet high at an average, from the mean sea level. Environmental experts have predicted that if global warming continued at the current rate, one third of Bangladesh would go under water after 50 years.

The cause of global warming is the greenhouse effect that has warmed the earth for over 4 billion years. The greenhouse effect results from the interaction between sunlight and the layer of gases in the earth's atmosphere that extends up to 100 km above the earth's surface. Sunlight is composed of a range of radiant energies known as the solar spectrum, which includes visible light, infrared light, gamma rays, X-rays, and ultraviolet light. When the sun's radiation reaches the earth's atmosphere, some 25 percent of the energy is reflected back into space by clouds and other atmospheric particles. About 20 percent is absorbed in the atmosphere. For instance, gas molecules in the uppermost layers of the atmosphere absorb the sun's gamma rays and X-rays. The sun's ultraviolet radiation is absorbed by the Ozone layer, located 19 to 48 km above the earth's surface.

About 50 percent of the sun's energy, largely in the form of visible light, pass through the atmosphere to reach the earth's surface. Soils, plants, and oceans on the planet



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The developed industrialised countries, notably the G-8 countries, are producing the deadly greenhouse gases to make their economy more robust. The competitive open market economy is also using huge quantity of fuel to produce more greenhouse gas. The United Nations and other international environment organisations have to address the issue in order to ensure the survival of countries like Bangladesh.

absorb about 85 percent of this heat energy, while the rest is reflected back into the atmosphere, most effectively by reflective surfaces such as snow, ice, and deserts. In addition, some of the sun's radiation that is absorbed by the earth's surface becomes heat energy in the form of long-wave infrared radiation, and this energy is released back into the atmosphere. Certain gases in the atmosphere, including water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, absorb this infrared radiant heat, temporarily preventing it from dispersing into space. As these atmospheric gases warm, they in turn emit infrared radiation in all directions. Some of this heat returns back to earth to further warm the surface in what is known as the greenhouse effect, and some of this heat is eventually released to space. This heat trans-

fer creates equilibrium between the total amount of heat that reaches the earth from the sun and the amount of heat that the earth radiates out into space. This equilibrium or energy balance, the exchange of energy between the earth's surface, atmosphere, and space, is important to maintain a climate that can support a wide variety of lives.

The heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere behave like the glass of a greenhouse. Average global temperature also has increased by about 0.6° C within the past century. Atmospheric scientists have found that at least half of that temperature increase can be attributed to human activity. They predict that unless immediate action is taken, global temperature will continue to rise by 1.4 to 5.8° C by the year of 2100.

The consequences of such a modest increase in temperature will

be devastating. Already, scientists have detected a 40 percent reduction in the average thickness of Arctic ice. Warmer temperatures could melt parts of polar ice caps and most mountain glaciers, causing a rise in sea level of up to 1 meter within a century or two, which would flood the coastal regions. The problems that may develop include a rise in sea level that would completely inundate a number of low-lying island nations and flood many coastal cities, such as New York and Miami. Many environmental experts assess that Bangladesh is more vulnerable to such type of environmental disaster. Many plant and animal species will probably be driven into extinction; agriculture will be severely disrupted in many regions, and the frequency of severe hurricanes and droughts will likely increase.

Bangladesh is a country of 144,000 square km with a population nearly 160 million. It economy is agriculture based, nonetheless per capita cultivable land in Bangladesh is as low as 0.29 acres. With the already disproportionate land to man ratio in Bangladesh this will create a disaster of epic proportion causing crises in food and demographic imbalance.

The climate change is very noticeable this year in Bangladesh in the form of late arrival of Monsoon. The long summer came as another trouble to the people of Bangladesh, which caused the deaths of many people. This is the sign of climate change.

In December 1997 at the Third Conference of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Kyoto, Japan; more than 160 nations formally adopted the

Kyoto Protocol. This agreement calls for the 38 industrialised nations that now release the maximum greenhouse gases, to reduce their emissions to levels 5 percent below 1990 emission levels, between 2008 and 2012.

Negotiators have met regularly since 1995 to iron out the details of how this treaty could be enforced in ways that are agreeable for industrialised countries such as the United States, which releases more greenhouse gases than any other country, and the developing countries that are struggling to become industrialised and often cannot afford the expense that restrictions on greenhouse gas emissions would require.

George W Bush and all Americans have to take the initiative, because America is the largest producer of greenhouse gases. As she is the only dominant country of the prevailing uni-polar system, she can impose something on other countries. Therefore their effective initiative will help to reduce the production of greenhouse gases. The recent conference in New York held in the last week of June 2005 was on environment issue. The delegation of 180 countries congregated there being concerned about global warming in particular. They agreed upon a series of initiatives to save the environment.

Bangladesh have to think about possible solutions as early as possible and have to take initiatives immediately. First we have to halt the high growth of population through immense proclamation by electronic and print media. All informed and educated citizens of this country have to be involved in this program. The government has to take measures to apprise the world leaders about the impending disaster.

The developed industrialised countries, notably the G-8 countries, are producing the deadly greenhouse gases to make their economy more robust. The competitive open market economy is also huge quantity of fuel to produce more greenhouse gas. The United Nations and other international environment organisations have to address the issue in order to ensure the survival of countries like Bangladesh.

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Political unrest in Uzbekistan

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In Central Asia, President Islam Karimov has established the most powerful army with the help of the Russian Federation. Although, Mr. Karimov's excuse of possessing such a powerful army is for Uzbekistan's security, in true sense Karimov wants to survive with the unique support of the army. The Uzbek Army also knows that lack of a powerful opposition will help them ensure their parochial interests in the long run.

Security experts on Central Asia are in a quandary having to identifying a post-Karimov popular President in Uzbekistan. The Opposition in Uzbekistan are on the run now in this poverty-torn country where daily arrests of the opposition supporters, long existing socio-economic problems, lack of social and political freedom and of freedom of expression, are common features.

After the 1991 disintegration of the USSR, Islam Karimov's regime quite deliberately proceeded to suppress people's demand, ignoring their basic needs. Although in the beginning of 1992 Karimov played secular politics, his organised suppression of opposition leaders (who are really not radicals or fundamentalist—they are peace-loving Sufi Muslims) gave rise to questions about his real aim of using the secularism card in Uzbekistan politics. On May13 2005, Karimov's army killed between 850 and 1,000 people in Andijan, according to human rights groups, although government sources put the number of deaths at 159 only. In 2004 Karimov's army had killed 50 people during an uprising. On May13 the killing of Andijan was so massive because Mr. Karimov was in great fear of losing his presidency because of the impact of the Tulip Revolution of Kyrgyzstan in March 13 this year. Mr. Karimov now threatens Kyrgyzstan as a large number of panic-stricken and politically suppressed Uzbeks have fled to Kyrgyzstan, which share a common border with Uzbekistan.

It is true that 9/11 has brought Mr. Karimov close to the US. It is also true that the West and US helped Karimov to consolidate total political power in return for his consent to allow the US to open an air base in Uzbekistan for the US army to fight against terrorism.

NATO, EU and US are now pressing Mr. Karimov to allow an independent enquiry of the killing in Andijan which seems a tactic bluff to the people and an attempt to divert the increasing dissatisfaction in the moderate Muslim counties which are in internal crises after 9/11 for supporting George W. Bush's global war on terrorism, in another direction

Supporters of opposition leader Bakhtiar Rahimov and others who back traditional Sufism in Uzbekistan are less violent people, although Karimov's regime usually terms them as extremists. These people possess only sticks, stones and knives to protest against the heavily armed Karimov's army. On May19 Uzbek government troops seized the Uzbek town Korasuv where the people dream of establishing an Islamic state which will be really peaceful and secular instead of Karimov's oppressive Uzbekistan. After the killing of Andijan Russia's foreign minister Sergei Lavrov's comment is really against the increasing popular sentiment of the Uzbeks as Mr. Lavrov cited the killing of Andijan as an internal matter of Uzbekistan. It is really unfortunate that President Vladimir Putin backs Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestine Authority to create a new state-Palestine, the same Mr. Putin backs the autocrat Karimov to suppress the peaceful Sufi Muslims of Uzbekistan.

In any sense, a radical Islamic state will not emerge in Uzbekistan where the popular demand is for the regime change. It is not true that minority Russian's (ten-percent) and Kazakhs (three percent) live very well in Uzbekistan as they suffer the dictatorial psyche of Islam Karimov. Mr. Karimov rarely pays heed to the Russians. In the past he was in the role of playing anti-Russian sentiment (1998,99). Russian still supports Karimov as Vladimir Putin does not want to embarrass this old and weary politician.

However, time is not far when the influence of September the 11 will not work. Definitely, new emerging upheavals in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan and even in Kazakhstan will create tremendous impact in Central Asia. Oil and gas reserves of these countries will not be able to stop them. Vladimir Putin's democracy is Russia's state of democracy. But Central Asian democracy will arise with real democracy.

Russia and the US can turn a blind eye after the killings in Andijan and capture of Korasuv, but the OSCE and EU are aware that Central Asia needs real democracy with its elements to survive in the 21st century.

Islam Karimov stands very far from this point of view with his failure strategy after 2000.

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The economics of war

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What distinguishes man from animals is the insight into the advantages that can be gained from cooperation to divide labour. Man restrains his inherent instinct of aggression to cooperate with other human beings. The more he wants to improve his material well being, the more he must expand the division of labour. To develop, the international division of labour needs the total abolition of war. Such is the essence of the non-intervention philosophy.

Concomitantly he must more and more restrict the sphere in which he resorts to military action.

This philosophy is, of course, incompatible with statolatry (literally, worship of the state analogous to idolatry as worship of idols). In this context the state, the social apparatus of violent oppression, is to protect the smooth operation of the market economy against the onslaughts of antisocial individuals and gangs. Its role is indispensable and worthwhile, but it is an ancillary role only. There is no reason to idolize the police power and ascribe to it omnipotence and omniscience. There are things that it can certainly not succeed. It cannot conjure away the scarcity of the causes of production; it cannot make people more prosperous, it cannot raise the productivity of labour. All it can achieve is to prevent gangsters from frustrating the efforts of those people who are intent on promoting material well being.

The liberal philosophy of Bentham and Bastiat had not yet completed the work of removing trade barriers and government meddling with business when the counterfeit theology of the divine state began to take effect. Efforts to improve the conditions of wage earners and small farmers by government decree made it necessary to loosen more and more the ties that connected each country's domestic economy with those of other countries. Economic nationalism, the necessary complement of domestic interventionism, hurts the interests of foreign peoples and thus creates international conflict. It suggests the idea of amending this unsatisfactory state of affairs by war. Why should a powerful nation tolerate the challenge of a few powerful nations? Is it not insolence for small Laputania to injure the citizens of big Ruritania by customs, migration barriers, foreign exchange control, quantitative trade limits,

and expropriation of Ruritanian investments in Laputania? Would it not be easy for the army of Ruritania to crush Laputania's contemptible forces?

Such was the ideology of the German, Italian, and Japanese warmongers. It must be admitted that they were consistent from the point of view of the new "unorthodox" teachings. Interventionism produces economic nationalism, and economic nationalism produces bellicosity.

From the day when Italy, in 1911, fell on Turkey, fighting was continual. There was almost always shooting somewhere in the world. The peace treaties ended were merely armistice agreements. Besides they had to do only with armies of the great powers. Some of the smaller nations were always at war. In addition there were no less destructive civil wars and revolutions.

How far we are today from the rules of international law developed in the age of limited warfare! Modern war is merciless, it does not spare pregnant women or infants; it is indiscriminate killing and destroying. It does not respect the rights of neutrals. Millions are killed, enslaved, or expelled from the dwelling places in which their ancestors lived for centuries. Nobody can foretell what will happen in the next.

This has little to do with the atomic bomb. The root of the evil is not to build more weapons. It is the spirit of conquest. It is probable that scientists will discover some methods of defence against the atomic bomb. But this will not alter, it will merely prolong for a short time the complete destruction of civilization.

Modern civilization is a product of the philosophy of laissez-faire. It cannot be preserved under the ideology of government omnipotence. Statolatry owes much to the doctrines of Hegel. However, one may pass over many of Hegel's inexcusable faults, for Hegel also coined the phrase "the futility of victory" (die Ohnmacht des Sieges) [1]. To defeat the aggressors is not enough to make peace durable. The main purpose is to discard the ideology that generates war. [p. 833]

Reference: [1] Cf. Hegel *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte* ed Lasson (Leipzig, 1920), IV, 930-931.

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The India-Pakistan peace process: Looking beyond Musharraf

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THE India Pakistan peace talks are seen as an important process which was long over due to unshackle the two countries trapped in their congenial mutual fixations. But the process should not be seen as a conclusive one as there have been instances in the past where a dramatic crest was achieved and then relations plummeted to an equally remarkable trough. The Lahore visit of Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1999 which was followed by the Kargil war being the most recent. Owing to such a cyclical nature of ties, it is suspected that the current thaw will be followed by another freeze and this time around the object of doubt remains President Musharraf.

A series of articles in the press and elsewhere hypothesize this proposition: is President Musharraf trustworthy? In the study of international relations, it would be fallacious to read so much into the predilections of a decision-maker. A leader works within the space offered by the external and internal environments and not strictly by his whims and fancies. Along with this he is also expected to calculate the cost and benefits of the trajectory along which he turns foreign policy.

President Musharraf should be less an object of study than the environment, external and domestic, that have pushed Pakistan towards the peace process. In the external environment, the war on terrorism would be the most decisive and important pointer to the changed international landscape in tolerating terrorism of the kind Pakistan fuelled for a decade. For any leader in Pakistan, to persist with a similar course of action, especially in the post-9/11 scenario, would have been acting against

the reading in the grain. It would also be important to note that since the end of the Soviet-Afghan war, most countries responsible for financing and arming the mujahideen, the United States, People's Republic of China and Saudi Arabia, even before 9/11 had ended all relations with the Taliban. It was only Pakistan which still needed their

was a result of the Islamic fundamentalism fomented in Pakistan and that most arms and ammunition recovered bore Chinese marks and were the ones which had been exported to Pakistan during and after the Afghan conflict.

Secondly, the Indian state's experience with the Pakistani-

on part of the Indian state, but for that period of over ten months, it had the Pakistan Army on its toes and the international community's pressure which resulted in two promises, to end the terror network made by Musharraf on 12 January 2002 and then again in May 2002.

The other important change

Technology engine and the international media discussing India as the next big power after China, Pakistan is envious of the Indian success story. And all this, despite the bleeding neck in Kashmir.

In the domestic environment, Pakistan is dealing with the ugly head of a rising trend towards extremism. The mullah-military alliance that gained ascendancy during the struggle against the Soviets made Pakistan the centre of Islamic jihad and this resulted in rising sectarianism as well as the proliferation of arms and ammunition, which were financed with the narcotics trade from the Northwest provinces and from Afghanistan. This rising tide of Islamization, if nothing, has produced greater cleavages in Pakistani society and intensified their own internal conflicts.

It would be pertinent to mention President Musharraf's efforts at institutionalising the role of the armed forces in the formal power hierarchy. This could be an extremely important development. With the Pakistani army at the center of action in the nation hopefully the bogey of the Indian threat may be dispensed with. This is based on the assumption that in the past, to stay central to Pakistani polity the army harped on the Indian threat. But now with incipient institutionalisation of the role of the military, this high cost option will be given up. In conclusion, it can be said that while there are obvious limits to the role that environment can play; it would be fallacious to locate the success or failure of the India Pakistan peace process entirely in Musharraf.

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services to fight the proxy war in Kashmir. And the Pakistani tolerance of Islamic fundamentalism well beyond the Afghan conflict was a source of embarrassment to the US and China, especially when these two states became targets. It was in the late 1990's that the Chinese realized that the trouble in the Sinkiang province

fomented and equipped terror problem has taught the political establishment a number of lessons. 'Operation Parakaram' for whatever it was worth was reflective of the Indian state's fatigue with tolerating any obvious Pakistani support. 'Parakaram' may be described as a failure and a lack of resolve

that Pakistan is conscious of is the new international profile of India. To mark it after the nuclear tests in 1998 may seem a folly, but the engagement between the United States and India was the most comprehensive after the Strobe Talbott-Jaswant Singh talks. With the economy in high gear, driven by the Information