

## Bangladesh - on the bend of crisis

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BANGLADESH does not need Senator Kennedy to remind that it is in the trouble zone. Senator Kennedy has a unique place in Bangladesh for his unflinching support when the Nixon-Kissinger administration turned away their faces during our War of Liberation. The aging Kennedy probably does not wish to see the freedom of the people that he fought for in 71 get wasted in his lifetime. Out of sheer exasperation he joined hands with other cross-party luminaries to chastise Bangladesh through a Republican administration that he is distancing from on many issues. Even President Bush cannot afford to ignore the veteran head of the powerful Kennedy clan. Unfortunately many like him are in distress seeing the undoing of values in Bangladesh. If a Bangladeshi has not yet lost his life or limb but feels bad about things going on, he may be accused of being a foreign agent. Such is the culture that is worrying the few friends Bangladesh is still left with in the international arena.

Many international observers are comparing Bangladesh with failed states. The grading of 110 out of

possible 117 by Global Competitive-ness Report, worse still, continuously bottoming in corruption is indeed disappointing. Hasty departure of Dr. Wolfowitz, the president of the World Bank, from Dhaka during his recent visit has given a bad taste. Dr. Christine Wallich, the World Bank country manager in Dhaka has been harping on more than she should over law and order, political violence and official corruption. Her soft but firm voice perhaps goes inaudible in the noisy climate of Bangladesh. So the World Bank boss came to give just one last jolt, in case we decide to wake up before they start taking punitive measures. It will be naïve to suggest protocol to the World Bank president. He was not angry; it was not arrogance but a cool delivery.

Diplomats, individually and in chorus, have been ignoring the practiced norms to remind Dhaka 'dos and don'ts' of international concerns. Some times they give a feeling that they are practicing politics not international diplomacy within the ambit of Vienna Convention. Politics has been forced out of the courtyards of sovereign monarchs to satisfy the commoners; diplomacy in Bangladesh is also pondering over the needs and language of the people as we can

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witness in the activities of 'Tuesday Convention' (so called Tuesday Group). Many diplomats in Dhaka talk more audibly and plainly. In the shrunken world fundamental values like right to life and property, press freedom and opinion are spreading legitimacy in regional and global perspective. Some feel that the Vienna Convention of diplomacy needs rephrasing. The diplomats of this powerful group can pull more strings countrywide may be in a quietly coordinated way, than making inter-

national parade that will be embarrassing for the government.

Embarrassment is least helpful for good governance. The government also needs encouragement to convert the crisis into opportunity. Please don't make it too obvious.

Spillover of chaos in a state is difficult to quarantine from the immediate neighbourhood and negotiable distances of the global village. People of a troubled state have no boundary. Afghans did not need passports to reach Pakistan when the Red Army

invaded and later when failed as a state due to the fighting among the warlords following Soviet withdrawal. More than a quarter century has passed; Afghanistan still could not ensure a passport or boundary. This is continuously hurting peace and security of neighbouring countries. Even without enthusiasm Pakistan could have been sucked into the Afghan tragedy. Ten million refugees that fled Bangladesh during War of Liberation was itself a problem for Indian involvement in the crisis.

The weaknesses of international law are that in many cases the end of proactive or pre-emptive policy is justifying the means for those who are in a position to practice it. Notoriety of Machiavellian philosophy along with the Darwin's law of the jungle is still doggedly persisting in the civilisational cloak of 21st century.

The adolescent international legal system has not yet developed a capacity for impartial judgments. Instances of impotency of the UN and Security Council are far more than their accom-

plishments. Diplomatic norms, sovereign political boundary, Security Council's lack of mandate could not save Saddam and his Iraq. Only Saddam could have saved the situation if wise enough not to impose decade long disastrous war on Iran that downed his oil-rich country into bankruptcy that allured him to invade Kuwait to refill his empty coffers with the arrogance of a hostage taker. That was the end of 'Third Reich' under Saddam. Today, Iraq is triangular tragedy among Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds even without counting occupation forces; it hardly exists as a whole except the free riders on American Humvees. A predator may not be a foreigner. It can be from within a mismanaged system.

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After what Ahab chief Ghalib has said and Mufti Hannan, a convicted fugitive of Kotalipara bombing is now saying regarding some Jamaat MPs and the former home minister, politics in Bangladesh reached a very dangerous trend. If the government with majority in the parliament is unable or afraid to act against the offenders the sovereign parliament becomes an orphanage.

And that will be the undoing of democracy in Bangladesh.

The author is a free lancer.

## India and Pakistan missile race

BARRISTER HARUN UR RASHID

IT is a known fact that Pakistan assesses its security situation against India's position. India, in turn, defines its security position in the light of China's military force.

India's increasing military power and its "hegemonic" designs have always been a dominant theme running like a "golden thread" through Pakistan's foreign policy polemics.

The strength of Pakistan's determination to keep pace with India's military power was signaled as early as 1965, when its Foreign Minister (later Prime Minister), Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, told the National Assembly of Pakistan that "If India builds the bomb, we will eat grass and leaves, go hungry. But we will get one of our own, we have no alternative."

### Missile capabilities of India & Pakistan

Since India and Pakistan are armed with nuclear weapons, both countries are conducting tests on delivery missiles. The missile capabilities demon-

strate not only as defence strategy but also as symbol of power and prestige.

In response to developments of India's missiles under India's Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP), Pakistan has been trying to match as far as possible India.

The launch of India's *Prithvi* in 1988 gave impetus to Pakistan's missile programme. In early 1989, it tested two short-range missile systems - *Haf-VI* and *Haf-VII*.

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Both India and Pakistan are capable of striking each other's territory with missiles, including all of Bangladesh, parts of China and Myanmar.

India has been engaged in developing short and long range missile (Sagarika and Surya), together with short and medium range surface-to-air missile (Trishul and Akash). They are also at development stage of short-range cruise missile (Brahmos). India is also trying to develop beyond visual range air-to-air missile (Astra).

### Pakistan tests its cruise

### Briefly the programmes of the two countries in missile development as gathered from media and journals are as follows:

**India**  
Agni-I - Medium range Ballistic Missile  
Agni-II - International Range Ballistic Missile  
Agni-III - International Ballistic Missile  
Prithvi - Short range Ballistic Missile

**Pakistan**  
Haf Series (I to VI) Ballistic Missiles  
Long and short range, named variously as Abdali, Ghauri, Ghaznavi and Shaheen

### missile

Pakistan recently conducted test of *Babur* cruise missiles (also known as *Haf-VII*) with a range of 500 km. that

can be fitted with either a conventional or nuclear warhead. Pakistan has made public the first test launch of new *Babur* cruise missile which was successfully flight-tested on 11 August last.

The *Babur* is described as a high-speed, low-level terrain-following missile. Film footage of the test launch shows the missile was fired from a transporter erector launcher (TEL), by a solid rocket booster, fitted to the missile's tail section. This is a major milestone in Pakistan's nuclear programme.

It is noted that in 2002, Pakistan announced development of a turbo-jet powered aerial target called the *Nishan-Mk2T* that military analysts viewed as a forerunner of developing a cruise missile. The *Babur* missile is reported to have been launched from the Baluchistan coast and a US intelligence official believes that additional tests are expected to be conducted using the same area.

Pakistani scientist Samar Mubarak Mund, who heads the National Engi-

neering and Scientific Commission, that led the *Babur* programme, told the Pakistani newspaper The News that production of the missile would begin by September.

It is believed that the *Babur* is developed for land and submarine-launched applications. It is specifically suited to the country's French-designed *Agosta* 90B-class attack submarines. The *Babur*'s vertical launch mode points to a possible ship-board configuration, which would be the first step for such a missile.

Military analysts consider that the *Babur* missile appears to share several basic similarities with the US Tomahawk land attack cruise missile (BGM-109), with the two being approximately the same size and shape and having a similar wing and engine intake design.

### How did Pakistan develop it and why?

It is believed that the programme began around 1998 from the acquisition of knowledge from Tomahawk missiles recovered in Pakistan. Some

of the Tomahawk missiles could not reach intended targets in Afghanistan in August 1998 against Taliban terrorist camps. Pakistan recovered two missiles and that provided Pakistani scientists to learn "reverse engineering" from Tomahawk missiles.

China in November 1992 reportedly transferred 24 M-11 missiles to Pakistan. Some believe that additional assistance might have come from Chinese scientists. Chinese assistance will be important in the key areas of miniaturised jet engines and guidance systems. Any lessons from Tomahawk missiles are probably passed on to Chinese scientists.

It has been reported that Pakistan has been working with Ukrainian engineers, for a number of years, on several aspects of advanced missile capability. Another source is believed to be South Africa.

It is reported that Pakistan is negotiating with China and France to acquire two or three new submarines and Islamabad hopes to manufacture its first submarine-launched ballistic

missile by 2006.

### India's defence strategy against nuclear attack

India plans to acquire Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) System from Israel and Russia as part of its efforts to neutralise missile capabilities of Pakistan. By neutralising Pakistan's nuclear strike, India is able to engage in a conventional war without fear of retaliation from Pakistan. Given the large imbalance of conventional forces between India and Pakistan, the outcome of such a conflict is not really in doubt (India's armed forces of about 1.26 million as against Pakistan's (620,000).

The plan of acquisition of TMD is not comfortable to Pakistan because it upsets the balance of power between India and Pakistan.

### Conclusion

Many of India's military analysts believe that no other Asian country has ever backed and armed another Asian country as China has backed and armed Pakistan in such a consistent manner over such a long period of

time. So they suspect that there is a key strategic objective that Pakistan and Myanmar fulfill in China's strategy in South Asia and in the Indian Ocean.

With the changing pattern of alliances in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the visit of Chinese Prime Minister in April to India has provided another dimension of its strategic alliance in cooperation with India to contain the unilateralism of the US, being the sole superpower.

Unlike India, where it is difficult to disentangle the issues of national security from national prestige, Pakistan's main consideration appears to be strategic. Pakistan insisted while conducting its nuclear tests in 1998 that the issue was one of "security, and not status", although national pride and honour propelled Pakistan to conduct nuclear tests. Pakistan is worried that India and the US have entered into a new strategic relationship where nuclear technology would be passed on to India from the US to enable it to be a "global power".

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## Bali bombing: A product of socio-political conditions

BILLY 'T' AHMED

THE latest terrorist attack in the tourist areas of the Indonesian Island of Bali has killed at least 22 people and injured another 118. The suicide bombings came nearly three years after the October 2002 attacks in Bali's Kuta Beach that killed 202 people.

Bali proudly boasts of a reputation as one of the most stunning and varied tourist locations in Asia, attracting roughly one million tourists every year from all corners of the globe. The main religion in Bali is Agama Hindu Dharma, which arrived in the 11<sup>th</sup> century by Sumatra and Java. Bali's population sits at 3 million, most of whom live within tight village communities based on large extended families. Bali - a mainly Hindu island popular with Western tourists in the world largest Muslim country Indonesia - represents a soft and tempting target for Islamist extremists linked to al-Qaeda.

The main tourist area is Kuta, which is near to the airport. Though it used to be a tiny, sleepy village, its tourism is a result of its famed white-sand beaches, the surf, and stunning sunsets. Kuta is now the home of many bustling resorts, with hundreds of hotels, bars, seaside restaurants serving fresh seafood, sensual nightclub and shops-a treat for Western tourists.

Police say there were three blasts, which happened almost simultaneously just before 2000 local (1200GMT) on Saturday. The Police chief said the bombs appeared to be made of TNT and metal slugs. The blasts ripped three restaurants - two in the Jimbaran beach resort, the third in Kuta 30km (19 miles) away. Some security observers say the finger of suspicion is already pointing towards the extremist regional group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) which was blamed for the 2002 bombings. Police believe radical group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) was behind the bombings Jimbaran and Kuta.

So far, no one has claimed responsibility for the attack. But all the signs point to Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), -the

Islamic extremist group responsible for the 2002 Bali bombing JI is also likely to have carried out bombing the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta in 2003 and the attack on the Australian embassy last year.

Thus, after the 2002 bombings, Jakarta, under pressure from Washington and Canberra, warranted police powers parallel to those of the Suharto dictatorship, including lengthy detention without trial. The October 1, bombings however provide President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono an expedient smokescreen cloak for blocking protests over his administration's decision to hike up fuel prices last Friday by 87.5 per cent for petrol and 105 per cent for diesel.

The decision has walloped the poorest stratum of the population hit by a 187 per cent increase for kerosene commonly used for cooking. Small protests took place in 15 cities across the country over the weekend.

The Bali terrorist attack spotlights Islamic fundamentalist outfits such as the JI who are outrightly indifferent to the concerns and needs of ordinary working people. Such groups claim to speak for the tyrannised but represent dissident elements of the bourgeoisie, who seek through the demand for an Islamic state a new accommodation with the major imperialist powers.

Those believed to have planned the latest bombings, Azahari Husin and Noordin Mohammed Top, come from well-off Malaysian families. Azahari was one of a number of Indonesians and Malaysians, who in the 1980s and early 1990s, went to Afghanistan as part of the CIA-sponsored 'holy war' against the Soviet-backed regime in Kabul. Like al Qaeda, the backbone of JI is composed of Afghan veterans who became disillusioned with their US backers, especially in the wake of the first Gulf War.

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terrorist. Fingers, instead of pointing at JI, should point to US and its allies who trained these two suspected terrorists. The US should take the responsibility for sowing the seed of terrorism. The world was a better

place, but with frequent terrorist attacks round the globe, life has become baneful.

Terrorism is a plague, and there is no vaccine for it, unless the US and its cronies stop meddling in other coun-

tries internal affair. Take the instance of Iraq and Afghanistan. The mighty power and it allies continue killing innocent people, throwing them out of their stead, on the pretext of them being either terrorists or assisting

them. And the terrorist retaliates in which innocent people are the casualty including the US and its allies.

Azahari Husi and Noordin Mohammed are on the most wanted list since the attacks of 12

October 2002. The latest bombings will be plucked upon by the US and its allies to justify the "war on terrorism" that is, the war on Iraq and Afghanistan. The Australian government, in particular, is already shackling the attack to forge closer ties with the Yudhoyono regime in Jakarta. Canberra has sent 28 Australian Federal police officers to Bali to work with their Indonesian counterparts.

The various responses in Canberra highlight the political agendas behind the "war on terrorism". Attorney General Philip Ruddock immediately declared that an attack in Australia was "highly probable". Last September, Prime Minister John Howard and state Labor premiers agreed to a draft of draconian new police powers, including extended interrogation without charge and "control orders" or house arrest. Ruddock and his state fellow-mates will undoubtedly use the Bali bombings to scurry the drawing up and execution of the new legislation.

Beseeking to maneuver the Howard government from the right, federal Labour opposition leader Kim Beazley seized on the occasion to demand tougher action and to declare that Canberra was not doing enough to "fight terrorism" in the region. He called for a regional intelligence network, saying Australia was "not getting on top" of the threats. In spite of President Howard calling on President Yudhoyono regime to ban JI, Labor foreign affairs spokesman Kevin Rudd stuck to his gun that the matter is taken up with Jakarta "immediately".

Like previous attacks, however, the latest bombings have underscored the fact that the "war on terrorism" is not aimed at protecting Australians or anyone else from terrorist attack. Canberra failed to upgrade travel alerts for Indonesia despite warnings by President Yudhoyono of an increased threat throughout the country. Yudhoyono's statement appears to be related to the arrest of 17 people in June and the seizure of electrical bomb circuits and documents with references to possible attacks.

End September, Washington reissued two travel alerts in three days, warning of the danger of terrorist attack as well as protests over fuel price hikes. Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer declared, however, that the Saturday night bombings came as "a complete surprise".

In a bid to ward attention from his government's role in making Australians a JI target, Prime Minister Howard insisted that Indonesia was the prime focus of the bombings. "This is an attack on democratic Indonesia," he declared. "It is clear also of course that terrorists target Westerners, including Australians, but we should not diminish the significance of democratic Indonesia as a target." Firstly, the parable of "democratic Indonesia" is to cover up the country's deepening economic and social crisis. Canberra, along with Washington and other major powers, feels that successive Indonesian governments' economic restructuring measures have deepened the gulf between rich and poor.

Secondly, Howard's comments are schematic of Canberra's tenebrous role in fueling anger in Indonesia and elsewhere by its unambiguous support for the illegal US-led invasion of Iraq. There is no doubt that US crimes in Iraq, aided and abetted by the Australian government, are a major factor in providing a fresh layer of young misguided JI recruits willing to lay down their lives to "defend Muslims".

These terrorist attacks, however, are the product of definite social and political conditions which the Howard government, along with the Bush administration, has helped to create. The discontent and frustration engendered by turmoil following the 1997-98 Asian economic crisis has been compounded since 2001 by anger over US-led aggression in Afghanistan and Iraq. The result is a succession of tragedies, of which the bombings in Bali on October 1 are just the latest.

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