

Historical determinants of policing



MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA

THE differences of Police structure and styles of operation come into clearer focus when seen in largely different socio-political context. One such context that is interestingly instructive relates to colonial policing.

The antithesis of civil policing, as epitomised by the 'London Bobby', was the Royal Irish Constabulary. The latter became a model for a very different style of policing throughout the British Empire. This force was characterised by the intake of officers who were housed in barracks segregated from the local population and patrolled in armed quasi-military columns. It was a style of policing that would culminate in a police force out of control. In fact, the force rapidly turned into an armed gendarmerie.

The common policing problems that colonial police shared arose from their task in imposing an alien authority upon rebellious native populations. Since those native populations did not comprise citizens, the colonial police were free to impose their authority without trepidation.

Experience shows that police structures are determined by political settlements and the practices thus built. Police structure, in developing societies, particularly, is affected by the perceived threats to the political order. The greater such threats, the more centralised is the

police system. In fact, the challenges to the political legitimacy of government in such societies act as the most dominant facilitators of police centralisation.

Historically speaking, in France, Spain and Italy reactionaries (usually monarchists and clerics) and secular liberals struggled over political citizenship for most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with many violent changes of regime. States such as Germany, Austria and Japan evolved in the direction of incorporating limited citizenship rights within authoritarian regimes. In Japan and Germany although democratic regimes were imposed, elements of the previous political culture remained. In fact, the different political traditions continue to influence the structure of policing in continental Europe.

The political turmoil of, and following the French revolution, did not usher in a more civil style of policing. On the contrary, the consequences of the revolution were to activate subsequent regimes to create a police apparatus which would ensure protection from the revolutionaries. The French police system still bears the hallmarks of its centralised, militaristic and authoritarian origins.

In Spain and Italy, there have been ventures to shake off an oppressive past in the police systems but still the police there remain tainted by their association with Fascist regimes. Policing in Germany continues to be unequivocally regarded as the arm of the executive. In a divisive society where

STRAIGHT LINE

In the sub-continent, we are having, what one may describe as near colonial policing of divided societies. The police in transitional societies like ours often appear as disconcerting spectacles of hapless meat in the sandwich, squeezed by the intransigence of two opposing groups and compelled to use force to implement whatever decisions they take.

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able tenacity of policing structures should not be a surprising spectacle. Even when colonial and other oppressive regimes are overthrown, those structures of policing tend to remain. In Zimbabwe the colonial policing system was retained virtually unaltered after the post-colonial regime. Closer at home and elsewhere in the subcontinent things are not very encouragingly different.

Policing in the United States by contrast was and remains an intensely local affair in which every tier of government lays claim to its own police force. In USA professional policing was first introduced in the real seats of political and economic power New York and Boston.

The fragmentation of policing in America reflects traditional skepticism towards central government. Police establishments there have grown along with growth in central government but in ways that reflect traditional concerns at the concentration of political power. In USA, at the federal level, there is a plethora of police agencies.

In Netherlands there is an interesting pattern of local fragmentation, reflective of traditional power relationship. This relationship is marked by the notion of 'polarisation', in which conflicts between deeply divided social groups were avoided by each living largely separate lives under a liberal state umbrella.

In the sub-continent, we are having, what one may describe as near colonial policing of divided societies. In a divisive society where

divisions appear as fundamental, real policing can be affected by the following deviations:

- There will be instances of selective enforcement of the law in favour of the dominant group.
- One would witness visibly disturbing discriminatory practices that would limit the exercise of the rights of the numerically smaller groups.
- There will be political partisanship in upholding and enforcing the distribution of political power by allowing unequal rights to political protest; the use of coercive measures to inhibit the forces of political change and opposition; and direct police involvement in the political process.
- Visible lack of autonomy from the political system.
- An absence of effective mechanism of public accountability.
- Relatively unrestrained use of

force.

- A dual role arising from responsibilities for ordinary crime and internal security.
- Polarisation of attitudes towards the police and their conduct.
- Harmful diffusion of policing functions by the ruling political group with so-called volunteer groups and other compatible agencies being drawn into a policing role.

The police in transitional societies like ours often appear as disconcerting spectacles of hapless meat in the sandwich, squeezed by the intransigence of two opposing groups and compelled to use force to implement whatever decisions they take.

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Open-pit coal mining : Bangladesh perspective

DR. AFTAB ALAM KHAN

A open pit coal mine may contribute four, five, even ten times more than an underground coal mine in energy production. This is an example sighted from Germany. However, the controversy lies with different scenario which is often overlooked while advocating for open pit mining in Bangladesh. The first line of comparison between the two should be drawn based on the principal condition with the same level and standard. If the level and standard between the two are different then the comparisons made are not likely to sustain.

Bangladesh and Germany are two countries with marked differences from cultural, socio-economic, physiographic, geomorphic, hydrogeologic, and overall geologic points of view. The North Rhine Westfalia (NRW) coal mine areas in Germany do not possess any catchment area like Tista fan in Bangladesh. Neither, it possesses such thick groundwater bearing formation like Dupuitia in Bangladesh directly overlying the coal beds. Sand, clay and gravel layer overlying the coal bearing

formation in NWR converges towards a valley not even 10 km wide and eventually is directed along the valley gradient towards Netherlands occupying very negligible land in NWR, Germany. The NE-SW geological cross section of NWR coal mine area clearly exhibits its subsurface geological condition which is markedly different from Bangladesh coal field region. The coal field regions in Bangladesh are characterised by more porous and permeable, thick groundwater bearing layer directly overlying coal bearing formation and diverge radially along multiple river valley systems occupying around 50 percent of the valley covered region.

In addition, around 30 percent and more area of the Tista fan will be affected by massive groundwater depletion.

Both surface and subsurface gradients in the North Rhine Westfalia (NRW) coal zone are directed to only narrow linear zone along Rhine river valley; while, both the surface and subsurface gradients of Bangladesh coal field areas are directed radially along Sib-Barnai, Atrai and Little Jamuna river valley systems. It is reported that the NRW mining area is pumping out 550 million cubic meters of groundwater annually where open

pit mining is likely to start and very interestingly this mining area is not characterised by or linked to any such region like Tista fan and thick Dupuitia formation. Hence, it is apprehended that if an open pit mine is started in Bangladesh that would require dewatering many folds higher than that of NWR open pit mine area.

Boropukuria underground coal mine is pumping out around 15 million cubic meter of water annually from a water bearing formation at around 300m depth which is markedly sealed at the top by an impermeable shale/clay layer separating overlying highly porous and permeable Tista fan sediments and Dupuitia formation. Thus, the present dewatering at Boropukuria underground mine is being managed for the water discharged only from the coal bearing formation. It further states that "excavators used at the mining facilities have devastated an area equal to 182,000 soccer fields, wiping at least 244 villages and neighbourhoods off the map".

More interestingly it states that "Central German Brown Coal Mining Company (Mibrag) has been owned by US investors -- Washington Group International and NRG Energy -- since 1994. There's no shortage of money, and the firm is used to dealing with public resistance: The Company has been trying to access the coal beneath the town of Heuersdorf in Saxony since 1994. The citizens protested, but then the so-called "Heuersdorf Law" was passed by Saxony's state parliament, stating that the village -- which is 709 years old -- has to be vacated by 2008. The dead buried in the cemetery will be moved to new graves and the church will be rebuilt elsewhere".

1,200Mm³/y of groundwater without affecting neighbouring communities' water supplies". However, it did not mention actually how much of water is being managed by dewatering and from flooding in actual field development.

The writeup has projected the positive sides of an open-pit coal mining in NRW, Germany but it has perhaps overlooked the article published in Natural Resources on March 21, 2007 by Steffen Winter (<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany>) where it was written "Germany has little oil or natural gas, but it does have large reserves of another resource: lignite. However its extraction through open cast mining is highly controversial -- and can lead to the disappearance of entire villages". It further states that "excavators used at the mining facilities have devastated an area equal to 182,000 soccer fields, wiping at least 244 villages and neighbourhoods off the map".

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Germany is a net energy

importer, with its total energy consumption exceeding its production by a very large margin. Germany presently ranks as the world's 5th greatest energy consumer, accounting for about 3.4 percent of the world's annual energy consumption. Germany has consumed approximately 4 million gigawatt-hour electricity in the year 2003 against only one third of its own production in comparison to Bangladesh's approximately 50 thousand megawatt-hour of electricity only. A comparison on other components is listed on the table. With such differences, how could an example of benefit out of an open pit mining be brought to justify the same for Bangladesh?

It is undoubtedly true that Bangladesh is heading towards a major energy crisis in the days to come. But the reserve of coal supposed to be recovered even by open pit mining will contribute only a pond if not a drop in an ocean. Hence, it is very sincerely recommended that we must explore multiple options undertaking massive search for oil, gas and coal, wind energy in the coastal belt, small scale hydroelectricity in the hilly terrains, solar energy, coal extraction by underground mining only from the known deposits, and if possible, import of gas from Shwe Gas Field on the Arakan coast in Myanmar to get rid of apprehended crisis.

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TABLE

	Area sq. km	Population 2006-2007 estimate	Population density per sq. km	Water covered area in percent	GDP per capita	Coal reserve	Likely affected area from open pit mining in percent
Bangladesh	144,000	150,448,339	1045	7	\$2,200	1.0 billion tons	24%
Germany	357,021	82,314,900	230	2	\$35,072	7.5 billion tons	9%
Rajshahi Division	34,513	30,000,000	870				40% - (30% fan region & 50% valley region)
North Rhine Westfalia	34,043	18,075,000	530				Less than 10%

reducing industrial tariff too much. Negotiators from the US and the EU said, their Indian and Brazilian counterparts offered nothing new to unblock trade talks that have dragged on for almost six years. The developing world blamed the 'intransigence' of the US and the EU for the failure. Brazil and India said, the US and the EU were demanding too high a price for cutting their trade-distorting farming subsidies signalling their unwillingness to cut farm aid and import duties on agriculture commodities. Brazil recently said it would accept a tariff ceiling of a minimum of 30 percent.

Meanwhile, the Group of 14 EU member states reluctant to reduce protection for their farmers, led by France with strong Polish support, met last month and reaffirmed their opposition to big cuts in agricultural tariffs. Experts feel that in the absence of any headway in multilateral trade regime, the web of bilateral or regional free trade agreements will further expand. If it is continued the future will be dictated by technology and demographics than tariff.

Global trade talks have col-

lapsed after hopes were revived about the Doha Round at the 6th WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong in late 2005 following several meetings on various WTO groupings. Countries have missed deadline after deadline in their renewed two-year pursuit for a new WTO accord to rekindle hopes of a global trade deal. A trade-off is to be emerged between practicability and ambition. But time is running out to conclude a deal before the US presidential election campaign next year further muddies the already turbid waters.

At this backdrop, Chief negotiators at Geneva put forward compromise proposals to the 150 WTO members in July last in two crucial and hard-fought areas agriculture and industrial goods, in an attempt to break the deadlock. They asked trading nations to mull over the proposals during a summer break and to return to Geneva in September for extensive negotiations to seal an agreement.

The new proposals advocate

involve cuts in US agricultural support to below \$16.2 billion a year, compared with a ceiling of \$19 billion allowed now. On Non-Agricultural Market Access issue, it is proposed reductions in industrial tariffs charged by 27 developing nations to less than 23 percent. The proposals are aimed at ending of deadlock in the Doha Development Round of trade liberalisation negotiations, launched at the Qatar capital in 2001 and brokering a compromise among the 150 WTO members.

It is estimated that the US farm support programme will pay out \$12 billion this year compared with \$20 billion the previous year. The current US offer to reduce subsidies implies a ceiling of about \$19 billion, though, because of restrictions in different categories, only about \$17 billion of that is likely to be usable. On the other hand, WTO's new proposal allows the US to provide \$16.2 billion a year. So in mathematical terms, it is workable. But the US is equally concerned about the EU's tariff reduction proposal for agriculture products. At the post-Hong Kong talks, the EU

hinted to reduce tariffs by 51 percent. But the US and developing stalwarts wanted the EU to take on a 64 percent cut in farm tariffs to pave the way to opening their agriculture market.

The WTO headquarters hope that the proposal will form the backbone of further talks over the coming weeks to broker a compromise that must be approved unanimously by the 150 WTO members -- preferably before the talks are hampered by fallout from the 2008 US Presidential election campaign.

But both the US and the EU voiced caution about the new proposals. The US has mixed feelings about new proposals to drive ahead shutting WTO talks. It said, 'a lot of work has been done in the export competition and domestic support, in contrast with market access ... a significant portion on market access is just lacking.' Brazil said, 'this is not a text of convergence. It is a text that will lead to further negotiations.' India said, 'the new formula proposed for a deal on agriculture and industry tariffs is a good basis for negotiations to resume.'

Let us have a look at the impact

of globalisation on poor communities. Out of 50 LDCs, 35 are in Africa, 10 in Asia, 5 in Oceania, and one in the Caribbean. Most LDCs including Bangladesh have opened up their economies due to the pressure of Bretton Woods institutions.

Even if they are attracting foreign investments, most LDCs are not climbing the economic and technological ladder due to brain drain rendering foreign aid largely ineffective. This is sad reality for the LDCs although UNDP explored domestic factors such as illiteracy, lack of infrastructure as causes for aid ineffectiveness.

While globalisation has over the last 30 years expanded trade, increased economic output, and created unparalleled wealth in global terms, the LDCs have failed to reap its benefits. Rather they are further marginalised. The population below poverty-line is increasing everyday. At the mid-way to achieve Millennium Development Goals, it is now certain that most of the LDCs will remain far away from the targets by 2015. The picture is even worse in trade. The share of LDCs in world exports fall from 3 percent in the 1950s to 0.7 percent

in 2000s while their share in agricultural exports dropped from 3.3 percent in the 1970s to 1.5 percent in the 1990s. If the force of globalisation continues on the path of the last 30 years, it will completely sweep away the LDCs.

With the reduction of subsidy to the farmers and support to farm exporters, the global market of farm produce will be increased further. Soaring commodity prices already gasped the poor dwellers. The proposed farm deal will ensure the last nail in the coffin of 1,080 million poverty stricken people across the globe, 82 percent of whom are staying in 50 LDCs. In the Hong Kong Ministerial the WTO members pledged to provide LDCs support under 'Aid for Trade' programme and price support to offset the high import prices for food items.

These issues were also included in the package of Doha Round. In writing, it is a matter of hope for LDCs but the practicability is frustrating as the WTO members not yet realised the commitments they made at the time of founding the WTO in 1995 including allowing duty-free and quota-free access of

all LDCs' products to the developing and developed countries' markets.

A coalition of more than 200 groups ranging from the Africa Trade Network to Action Aid International a few months ago urged the US Democratic lawmakers to withdraw their support for world trade talks, which they say could deepen global poverty. They argued that a Doha deal would not live up to its promises to boost poor economies and combat poverty through trade. But LDCs do not have the strength to remain isolated sticking to the said argument as globalisation of trade and investment is the order of the day. So LDCs should pursue their own strategy at the ensuing talks in Geneva to realise world's commitments so far made in the six ministerial before entering into an agreement on Doha Development Round. Only then Bangladesh and other LDCs could reap the benefits of globalisation and trade liberalisation.