

Love is the missing link in war on terror

I believe in the power of love. Love for others alone can make us respect human life and fight the forces of terrorism, fanaticism and communalism. Love alone can create a communion with life. We must love and live and let live. An "eye for an eye" is making the world blind. Unless we live in peace and harmony with nature and with others, this reckless drive of the human race towards self-destruction cannot be stopped.

SHOBHA SHUKLA

THE recent declaration by the United Nations to commemorate October 2 (birthday of Mahatma Gandhi) as "International day of non-violence" is simply a reassertion of the need for a violence free society. The year 2007 is the centenary year of the Satyagrah Movement

launched by the Apostle of Peace.

Nothing much seems to have changed on this front. The world today has become a cauldron of hate and strife. As our aspirations scale new economic heights and our possessions multiply, our tolerance and sensitivity levels get reduced.

Whether it is the cruelty of the military junta in Myanmar, the

suppression of democracy in Pakistan, the threat of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the continued hostilities between Palestine and Israel, the dangerous rise of Hindu fundamentalism in India, or a world wide scare of terrorism/violation of human rights, we are in the grip of an acute fear psychosis. This constant fear and distrust of our fellow beings is nurturing

hatred, leading to violence.

Human beings, the so-called superior creation of God, are destroying each other (and nature too) with a ruthlessness which is scary. We are bullying and killing each other in the name of religion and/or racial or social superiority. This is strange, indeed, as love and peace are common to all religions, and not one of them is based on the premise of hate and violence.

In Christianity, Jesus comes to reveal God's love for humankind. The very word Islam means "a religion of peace." Almost all Hindu prayers end with the words Om Shanti (let there be peace). One of the main preachings of Buddhism is "they do not follow dharma (righteousness) who resort to violence to achieve their purpose." Yet our primordial urge to rule over the minds, bodies, and thoughts of others has made religion a potent tool in our insatiable quest of power.

The power hungry politicians and fundamentalists are using religion to provoke group mentality, leading not only to loss of character but also of rational thinking. The communal violence in the Indian state of Gujarat saw the elite middle class looting shops and houses of a particular community. This was reciprocated in good measure later on in Mumbai and elsewhere.

This grouping together in the name of religion (a religion about which we might be knowing very little, actually), throwing all sanity to the winds, makes a mockery of our sense and sensibility.

We stubbornly refuse to learn

from past mistakes. A survivor of a concentration camp in Germany said: "I have seen gas chambers built by engineers, children poisoned by physicians and nurses, men and women shot dead by college graduates. This has made me a little wary of our education, which is producing learned monsters and skilled psychopaths."

Yet, this is exactly what is still happening. Most terrorist outfits are manned by highly qualified people. Many of our scientists and others think it is beneficial for India to have the atom bomb, to protect ourselves from Pakistan. While discussing this issue with my students, I pointed out to them that if we ever used this weapon against our neighbour then we would also be wiped out.

They said that it should be there just to scare them, there is no need to use it. This is the general perception all around. So we are ready to spend millions to manufacture deadly weapons simply to put fear in our neighbours, as if "those who desire peace must prepare for war."

But peace can never be a balance of terror. It can be realised only if there is a shift from the present culture of power to a culture of love.

Non-violence is the need of the hour. And this can stem only from love and compassion for our fellow beings.

Hate has alienated nations and provoked war and cruelty. By forsaking the path of Ahimsa (non-violence) we are punishing others as well as ourselves. Karma



(action) needs always to be combined with Dharma.

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In this endeavour, we need to be more tolerant of unfamiliar neighbours, more wary of the violence of popular media, and more aware that manufacture/trade of deadly weapons has no place in a world of peace. Our blue planet, (as seen from outer space) is the only home we have to care for and share in. Let us protect it with love and tolerance.

Love that caresses but not smothers. Love that gives a breathing space to all. Love that realises that my freedom ends

where you begins. Love that lets no one remain unwanted, unloved and uncared for -- for that is a much greater hunger than of a person who has nothing to eat. Love that wipes out the inhuman acts of "road rage," "violence for fun" and "honour killings" from our society.

There is no way to love, for love is the only way to a non-violent and peaceful world.

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The role of reform for growth

It is encouraging to see that the caretaker regime considerably treasures the beliefs stated, and designs reform accordingly. Much has changed and more will soon. Even within this short time-span, many of their steps, such as moving towards market economy, expanding trade with neighbouring countries, and privatisation of the losing public concerns, reflect modern beliefs for growth of the economy.

BIRU PAKSHA PAUL

THE two emerging giants of the world, China and India, readily inspire Bangladesh to target double-digit growth in the near future. The takeoff, however, is not automatic. Robust reform towards market economy paved the way to phenomenal growth for both the giants. Reform in Bangladesh has been slow and lackadaisical. We need to first outline the basic beliefs, which will deliver the right direction and speed to the reform program.

The word, "reform," has recently been much abused in our country. Credit goes to the politicians who are engaged in power-lobbying and factional disputes. Reform has been perceived as either "losing control" or "gaining control" in the party. The mean-

ing of reform has thereby been distorted. However, this is not how an economist should see reform. To economic policymakers, reform is a planned transformation of a system in the economy aimed at achieving better efficiency, higher productivity, or greater welfare.

Reform is not simply a change without objectives. Rather, it is action that starts with strong beliefs, and ends with desired outcomes. For example, we should undertake land reform only if we believe that share-tenancy is less productive. Empirical evidence will help us shape that mindset. Here, we present the basic beliefs required for outlining the reform agenda in Bangladesh.

Before describing the beliefs, we need to clarify why they are more important in the present context of Bangladesh. Reform is

a long journey, where belief stays in the mind to constantly motivate the policymaker and people. And that makes belief a precursor to reform. Reform without belief is like groping for a candle in a dark room. Belief is the lighthouse to reform. Bangladesh has been poised for high growth in recent years. The actions of the caretaker government have reinforced the optimism about reform for growth in the country. The timeframe, however, is short, and the government has to be prompt and selective in setting the agenda.

The basic findings of growth literature will help configure the agenda and prioritise the steps. Importantly, beliefs give the proper motivation to the people who suffer the pain of reform. People accept the changes once they believe that the changes will be beneficial in the long run. This

leaves little room for the politicians to fish in troubled waters. Finally, unlike religious tenets, economic beliefs evolve over time. And that requires updating ourselves with the latest findings and beliefs thereon.

Economic views come from evidence, rather than solely from faith. Empirical studies on growth of developing nations suggest at least three macroeconomic beliefs, which are relevant to the Bangladesh economy.

First, markets can ensure better efficiency and higher growth. The experience of China suggests that market economy is no longer an option. China, being communist by name but capitalist in spirit, engineered the highest growth-rate by embracing unwavering reform towards market economy. India began to abandon socialist planning, and moved to deregulation, since the early 1980s. Rodrik and Subramanian further assert that India moved from a pro-business strategy to pro-market reform in the early 1990s. Thus, belief took precedence over reform in all instances. It took India and China a long time to believe in markets, but they did not retreat once they

embraced the concept. Better allocation of resources and competitive pricing through the fair play of demand and supply define the strength of markets, which we need to believe in for having success in reform.

Second, the government should act like a referee, not like a player, in the market. The ruler must ensure an environment of business where small entrepreneurs can thrive. Third, trade makes everyone better off. It enhances regional harmony as well as global integration. Interestingly, Nehru did not believe in trade, and strangled India's trade sector. On the contrary, Manmohan Singh believed in gains from trade, and thereby ventured liberalisation. Thus, belief ushers in fresh reform. Globalisation is a reality which must be accepted as a challenge. In addition, this is an opportunity to spur growth for countries like Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, and Cambodia.

Now the question arises of how far we have updated ourselves with these macroeconomic tenets, which must come in concert with a number of institutional

beliefs. For instance, lawlessness impedes growth by jeopardising the legal environment of business. The middle African countries bear tragic testimony to that. Justice and corruption cannot coexist. We have to choose one. No country in the world has ever developed with a sluggish judiciary. Shleifer and others showed that the French colonies lagged behind the British colonies mainly because of the slower judiciary. Speedier enforcement of law and order is the crucial area where the regime should concentrate on.

Next, studies prove that education is the director of development. Science, technology, and business must dominate education curricula to make a country advance faster. Lucas, Romer, and Mankiw show how education and brainpower can revitalise the growth of the developed world, which would otherwise have come to an end. India is reaping the benefits of global information technology simply by modernising its curricula and banning political activism on campus.

We generally expect that a democratic government will focus on modern beliefs and

outline a reform program accordingly. Unfortunately, it has always been questionable whether politicians in power are really sincere in their beliefs. They are noted for making opportunistic compromises for their own short-term interests at the greater cost of the society. For example, the need for a private seaport in order to expedite export and import has well been understood. However, all the previous regimes found it lucrative to indulge the counter-productive clamourings of union leaders, and thus, damaged growth potentials.

In an empirical study on the regional disparity of India's industrial growth, Besley and Burgess found trade unionism a vital cause for the industrial backwardness of West Bengal. Kydland and Prescott, two Nobel laureates in economics, have been insistent on the consistency of policymakers, which we have hardly discovered in Bangladesh in the past.

It is encouraging to see that the caretaker regime considerably treasures the beliefs stated, and designs reform accordingly. Much has changed and more will soon. Even within this short time-span,

many of their steps, such as moving "towards" market economy, expanding trade with neighbouring countries, and privatisation of the losing public concerns, reflect modern beliefs for growth of the economy.

Other steps, such as enhancing accountability in public services, cracking down on corruption and fanatics, speeding up the ports, streamlining universities, and finally, making the judiciary independent, greatly demonstrate the regime's intellectual preparedness for progress. The question is whether this government can accomplish the rest within its short stay. This is a valid concern. But changing the outlook and initiation of some short-term vital reforms, which the present regime can smoothly accomplish by 2008, is definitely of paramount importance for spurring growth in the economy. The time has come to fine-tune our beliefs and organise the reform agenda. It is better late than never.

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Pakistan's new army chief

Right now an improvement in the public's opinion of a Musharraf-less army is the least of the president's worries. He desperately needs to restore stability to the country's jihadi-dominated areas. More than 100 pro-Islamabad tribal elders have been assassinated in the past year or so, and there are almost daily beheadings of one or two tribals accused of being government spies and collaborators.

RON MOREAU AND ZAHID HUSSAIN

PERVEZ Musharraf could hardly be flattered to think why some people were so eager for him to win Pakistan's October 6 presidential vote. It's because he'll have to step down as armed forces chief before he's sworn in -- as he promised just before the Supreme Court decided last week to let him run again.

The general must know how desperately Pakistan's military needs a full-time commander, especially after he's spent months too busy fighting for his political life to give the job his proper attention.

So Musharraf has chosen a successor at last: Lt. Gen. Ashfaq Pervez Kiyani, the former director general of the military's powerful spy agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Although Kiyani has always kept a low public profile, people who have worked closely with him speak highly of his abilities -- more highly in some cases than his boss might like. "Kiyani is not only a strong commander," says a Western military official in Islamabad, asking not to be named on such a delicate topic. "He's the most competent candidate by far."

Musharraf's successor as military chief will need all the skill he can muster -- and on several fronts at once. The Pentagon

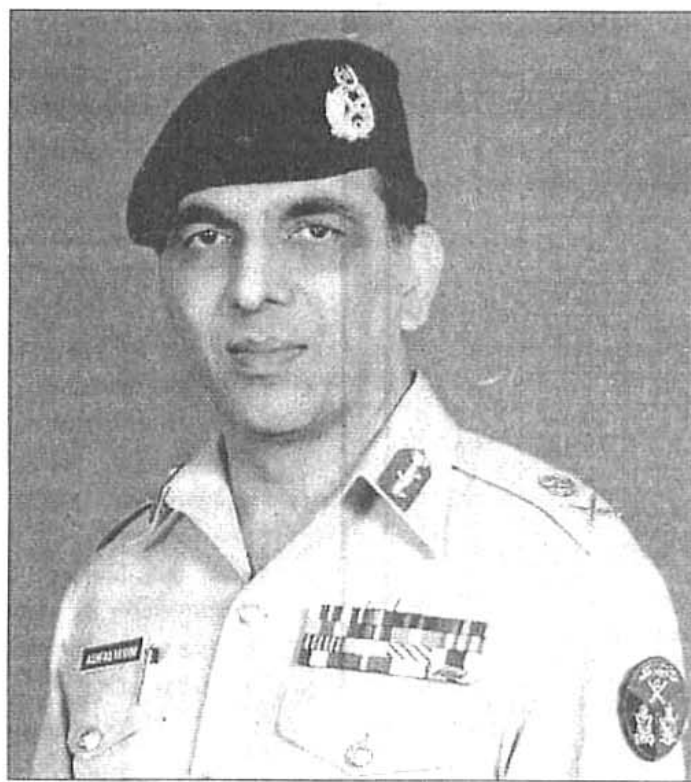
wants him to turn much of Pakistan's military into a counter-insurgency force, trained and equipped to combat al-Qaeda and its extremist supporters along the Afghan border. As a civilian head of state, Musharraf will need a strong, capable top officer who can revive the fighting spirit of a badly demoralised army.

In the past two months, suicide bombers have relentlessly attacked army convoys, camps, mess halls, and mosques. The extremists have killed more than 200 Pakistani soldiers, and tribal militants have captured more than 250 others as hostages. "The army has had its butt kicked in the tribal area," says the Western military official. "But I'm optimis-

tic that if Musharraf's choice is Kiyani, he can start to turn the army around."

Those who know Kiyani say he's a smart, tough, talented commander -- and pro-Western, in the bargain. The son of an army NCO, he climbed rapidly through military ranks. In 2003, when members of the armed forces were implicated in two assassination attempts against Musharraf, the president put Kiyani in charge of the investigation -- and applauded the way he got the country's rival intelligence services working together for a change.

"When Kiyani got tough, the problems of coordination disappeared and the agencies started working like a well-oiled machine," Musharraf recalls in his memoir, "In the Line of Fire." Within months Kiyani had unraveled the two plots and arrested most of the participants. He was rewarded in 2004 with a promotion to chief of ISI, and the next



year his agency scored big with the arrest of Abu Faraj al-Libbi, the senior al-Qaeda lieutenant

who masterminded the attempts on Musharraf's life. A former US intelligence official who dealt

personally with Kiyani says the ISI "took a lot of bad guys down" under his leadership. Kiyani has earned his boss's confidence, even serving as Musharraf's personal envoy in recent talks with exiled opposition leader Benazir Bhutto.

Kiyani is a chain smoker with a tendency to mumble, but he speaks to Musharraf in a way few other senior officers would dare. Western military officials say he told the president he would accept nothing less than the top job in the army -- and Musharraf dreads giving up that post, knowing it is the source of much of his authority. For months the president, who himself seized power in a bloodless military coup nearly eight years ago, has resisted public demands that he step down as army chief.

His refusal has seriously raised public hostility toward the armed forces; if Kiyani succeeds in restoring its reputation, he is likely to get the credit, not

Musharraf. "The army has ruled the country for more than half of our 60 years of independence, so psychologically people are geared to the army chief as being the political center of gravity," says retired Lt. Gen. Talat Masood. "Musharraf's power will be reduced considerably as people gravitate more to the new army chief than the president."

Right now an improvement in the public's opinion of a Musharraf-less army is the least of the president's worries. He desperately needs to restore stability to the country's jihadi-dominated areas. More than 100 pro-Islamabad tribal elders have been assassinated in the past year or so, and there are almost daily beheadings of one or two tribals accused of being government spies and collaborators. If you can't protect your friends, you lose. An old military man like Musharraf should know that.

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