

# Peace and security in the 21st century: Possible responses

BARRISTER HARUN UR RASHID

ALTHOUGH it is true to say that eruption of armed conflict among world's major powers is unlikely, serious differences persist on the emergence of the new world order of the 21st century.

The armed conflict is less likely largely because of three factors: (a) the degree of interdependence among nations has increased not only in trade and investment but also in the area of global communication, (b) economic well-being of people has been the dominant theme in the politics of all major nations and (c) war is simply not a rational way of advancing national objective as has been experienced by the continuing Iraqi war.

The differences among major powers as often manifested at the meetings of the UN Security Council on global and regional issues (Kosovo and Iran's nuclear programme) has created a much more fluid situation for many small and middle size states. Under the current environment, there is now more room for powerful states to manoeuvre and some are bound to do so.

Some of the emerging economic powers (China and India) have yet to acquire military profiles commensurate with their wealth and the process of adjustment certainly has ample potential to generate tensions.

Should tensions escalate into conflict, the unhappy reality is that proliferation of more sophisticated conventional weapons and of the capacity to develop weapons of mass destruction (chemical, biological and nuclear weapons) makes any prospect of major regional conflict an alarming one for the world as a whole.

Another factor of concern has

emerged in developing countries. It is the resurgence of ethno-nationalism, often taking a violent form. Some ethnic groups have been prepared to pursue their claims for self-determination within the framework of existing statehood but many others have made clear that they will be satisfied by nothing less than their nations becoming states. The proliferating availability of weaponry of every degree of sophistication has provided a new edge to these concerns.

Overall, while there may not be armed conflicts among major powers, a wide array of security problems has become all too apparent across the globe. Many of them pose security threats to all states.

## New definition of security problems

Security problems do not arise from only external factors. It is now generally accepted that security is multi-dimensional in character: that in addition to military threats, the state's security can be threatened by internal problems. For example the Soviet Union did not collapse due to external invasion but because of internal chaos released by the doctrines of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (reform) introduced by Gorbachev in 1985.

In South Asia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Maldives suffer from security problems because of lack of domestic cohesion and harmony.

States, acting to protect their security as they see it, may in the process cause or accentuate security problems for international community.

## Failed or Fragile States

Since the end of the Cold War, failed or fragile states have arguably become the single most important problem for international order.

It has been seen in many of such failed or fragile states extremist elements exist and promote their distorted version of ideology through terrorism. These states often are sources of many of the world's most serious problems, from poverty to drugs to AIDS.

Failed or fragile states are those that suffer from poor governance and its capabilities are weak. Often their legitimacy of governments is questioned. Instability is largely caused by lack of democracy, and pluralism or meaningful popular political participation.

Lack of state capacity in countries has come to haunt the developed world much more directly. State collapse or weakness stretching from the Balkans through Caucasus, the Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia, had created major humanitarian crisis.

Failed or fragile states undermine sovereignty because the problems that such states generate for themselves and for others vastly increase the likelihood that some powerful states will be tempted to intervene in their affairs against their wishes to forcibly fix the problem.

## Emerging threats

'Emerging threats' may be described as developments, either within countries or between countries, which do not in themselves yet involve a dispute, armed conflict but may be seen as having the potential to become so.

Such developments within countries may include, for example, the accumulation of large arsenals of sophisticated conven-

tional weapons, the acquisition of capacity to build weapons of mass destruction, unrestrained population growth combined with environmental degradation, emerging food shortages, an increasing pattern of human rights abuses, bad governance, and the increasingly strident voices of grievances and aspirations of people.

Internal conflicts are made more complex and lethal by modern technology, communications and money transfers. It is also complicated in particular by the proliferation of cheap, highly destructive small arms. Populations are vulnerable to manipulation, exploitation and abuse by unscrupulous extremist elements.

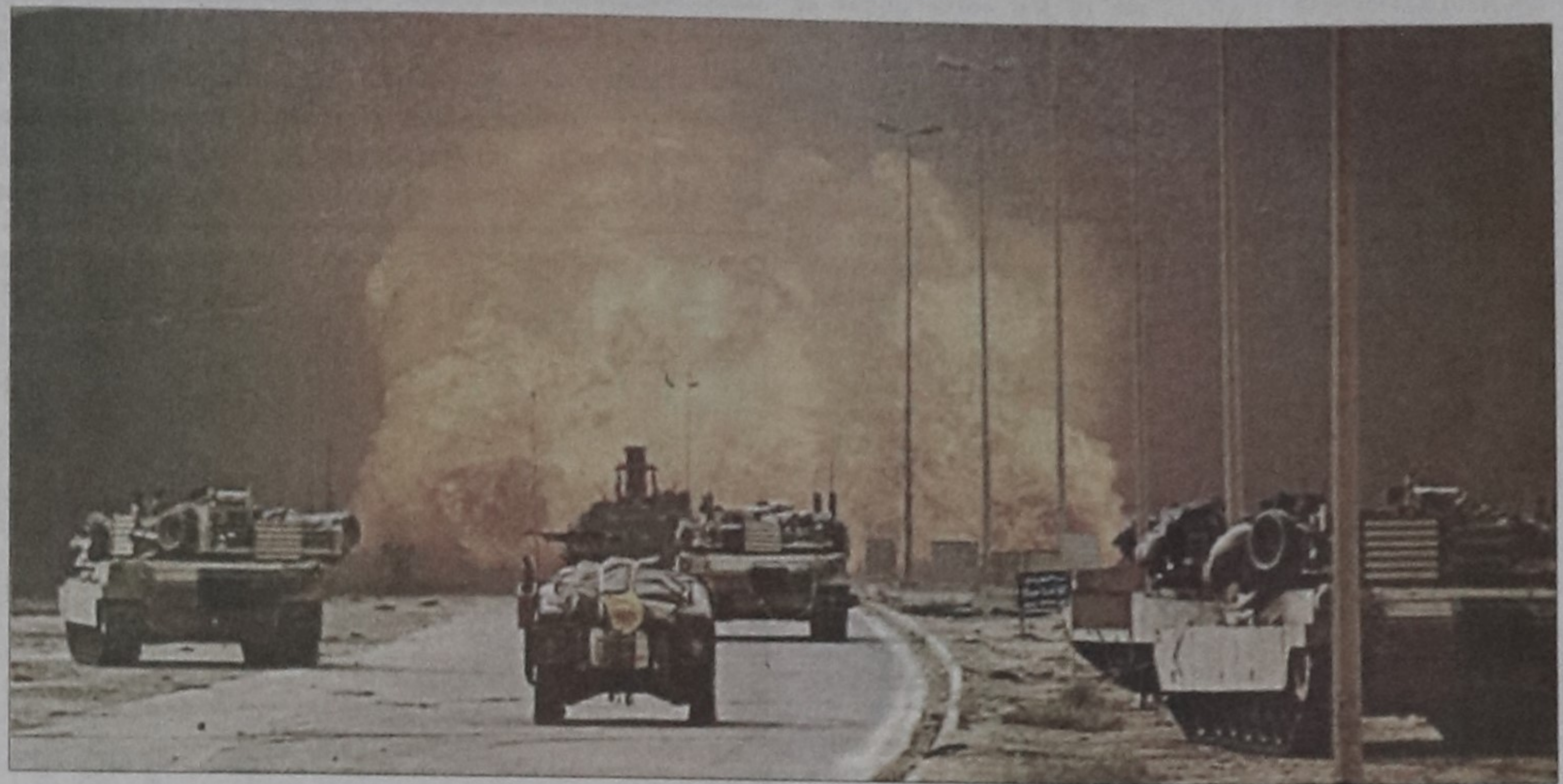
## Security crisis for international community

Often tensions or unrest affect international community. When a region is destabilized, whole world is affected directly or indirectly. And thus a security crisis arises.

The security crisis is meant to convey that the problem, directly or potentially threatens international peace and security. The absence of clear and agreed definitions in this area is a reflection of a reality that there is much continuing disagreement as to whether there are any 'internal' situations that call for international action.

There is also the larger question of the changing nature of threats in the modern world, the threats from non-state actors who are responsible for mass terror across the world.

The reality is when international institutions such as the UN cannot cope with today's real threat, powerful states will try to do themselves, either unilaterally or in company with like-minded allies. Some powerful states justify that if



the existing framework of laws and rules is defective, pre-emptive or preventive strike is justified.

## Possible responses

Many security experts suggest that there are four distinct categories of possible responses to international security threats. They are as follows:

- Peace building
- Peace maintenance
- Peace restoration
- Peace enforcement

## Peace building strategies

Peace building is a set of strategies which aim to ensure disputes, armed conflicts and other major crisis do not arise in the first place or if they do arise they do not subsequently recur. Peace building

has two dimensions: Pre-conflict and post-conflict peace building. The former refers to economic, social and political measures which can help states deal with emerging threats. Post-conflict peace building is about action taken after a crisis or a conflict in order to help ensure there is no recurrence of the problem.

## Peace maintenance strategies

Peace maintenance strategies are those designed to resolve or contain emerging threats and prevent them from escalating into armed conflict. These strategies include (a) preventive diplomacy, (b) preventive deployment of security forces.

## Peace restoration strategies

Peace restoration strategies are those applicable after it crossed the threshold of armed hostilities. Two basic kinds of response are addressed here peace making and peacekeeping.

Peace making efforts will usually be aimed at the immediate goals of cessation of hostilities. Peace keeping presumes cooperation between parties and is aimed to keep peace.

## Peace enforcement strategies

Peace enforcement strategies include sanctions and use of force in accordance with the UN Charter. The strategies are those described

in the Chapter VII of the UN Charter and fall into two broad categories: non-military enforcement measures (sanctions) or military enforcement measures.

## Conclusion

One of the central themes that appear to emerge is the need for much greater attention to be paid by the international community to anticipating and preventing crises or disputes rather than reacting after the event. Furthermore the response should be graduated with softer options exhausted before harder ones are applied. Finally the responses should ideally be timely, effective, affordable and consistent.

Former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN, Geneva.

# The Palestinian dimension: Prediction for escalation

KHALED KHALEFEH

ALTHOUGH there has been an increase in Israeli threats of invading Gaza, it appears as though Israel will not invade and occupy Gaza. Rather, it will continue with its current policy attacking targets daily, both facilities and persons from the air. At the same time, Israel will continue the policy of containing Hamas, militarily, politically and economically by continuing the severe civilian and economic closure and siege of the Gaza Strip.

Despite this containment policy, Lt. General Gabi Ashkenazi declared one month ago in HaArtz interview (5 December 2007) that the IDF doctrine is to control Gaza by intelligence and logistics. However, Defense Minister Ehud Barak and his deputy, Maj. General Matan Vilnai, pretended that there is an inevitability of a future attack and occupation of Gaza. MK Efraim Sneh went further by claiming that Israel's government has to not only end the firing of the El Qassam rockets on Sderot, but also must terminate the Hamas regime in Gaza.

Ehud Olmert said on the 23rd of December 2007, that Israel's aim is to force Hamas to comply with the Quartet's requirement of recognizing Israel. Olmert rejected any possibility of creating a Hudna (cease fire) with the Hamas.

It is not certain whether Israel is interested in escalating the conflict with Hamas or not. However, according to Barak, the Ministry of Defense, the Army and the Shabak support the daily attacks against Palestinians in Gaza by planes, helicopters and unmanned aircraft as a better option than a grand, large scale and comprehensive incursion to try to topple the Hamas regime. This arrangement of not attacking, according to the Israeli perspective, is based on different factors:

1. The silence of the international system concerning the daily Israeli attacks, which cause 4-6 fatalities each day.
2. Any grand Israeli military incursion into Gaza would lead to a lot of Israeli casualties in heavily populated areas.
3. In 2005, Israel decided to withdraw. It was called "the disengagement doctrine." It does not seem probable that in 2008 Israel would return to Gaza in order to repeat history.
4. The Second Lebanon War taught Israel and the IDF the limits of force in fighting against guerrilla combatants in populated areas.
5. It is quite logical that although you can start a war you do not necessarily know how to stop it. This is what happened to Olmert in Lebanon in 2006, and this is what might happen to Barak in Gaza if he tries to occupy it.

It seems from the last incursions that some special Israeli units are trying to penetrate the northern part of Gaza without any success. The Israeli military establishment has learned the lessons of occupying populated areas, especially such an

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area as Gaza, which is highly mobilized as a result of the latest Israeli steps of closure, incursions and daily aerial bombardments in civilian areas. In that sense, I can definitely argue that because of these strategic and logistic factors, Israel will not conduct a large scale but rather a daily attack and limited military offensive and collective punishment against the whole civilian population in order to topple the elected Hamas regime.

The casualties that the IDF would suffer if they attack Gaza also are a factor that will prevent Israeli decision makers from taking the risk of trying to occupy Gaza.

As a result of all the logical and serious claims that Barak and Olmert make in order to dispel the idea that they are not irresponsible in taking actions and risks, they will not invade Gaza but will continue targeted killing against Palestinian leaders of Hamas in Gaza. This scenario will be dangerous and very risky for the region, similar to Pakistan after the assassination of Benazir Bhutto by General Pervez Musharraf, as most of the sources indicate.

It is not clear whether the Israeli

leadership might take such actions or learn from the lessons of assassinating Rantisi and Sheikh Ahmed Yasin, which created more extremism. It is also uncertain whether they have learned from the US after it targeted Saddam Hussein.

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The Israeli government cannot achieve any of its strategic aims in Gaza, neither stopping the El Qassam rockets nor decreasing the Hamas influence using any means. Without any real options, the government is trying to threaten conducting a grand invasion, controlling the Philadelphi Strip, or pushing Egypt to do something positive for Israeli strategic interests. The Israeli military doctrine will escalate after the Bush visit with further targeted

killings and assassinations, an element that will help increase the tension and violence.

Consequently, we can assume that Israel has a confused policy toward Gaza. Its policy is more to contain and to squeeze Hamas in order to keep it in check and under control.

We can say that the Israeli policy on the West Bank is even more confused, although it is being conducted under the American umbrella, in a dialogue with the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian security forces. We have seen daily incursions into Nablus, Jenin and Bethlehem; however there is no real or substantial dialogue with the Palestinian security forces. The daily Israeli conduct in the West Bank, the arrests, incursions, targeted killings and illegal outposts portray both Abu Mazen and Salam Fayad as irrelevant leaders, and consequently, the Palestinian security forces as collaborators with the Israeli IDF. Currently, the two Palestinian leaders are perceived as Israeli and American puppets who cannot manipulate their own people's

situation. Israel today is strengthening this perception by presenting Abu Mazen as a president who rejects the release of Marwan Barghouty from prison. It is quite certain that Israel will not release Barghouty in any case, unless as part of a prisoner's deal.

Abu Mazen and Fayad were forced into the corner and became even weaker when Israel attacked the Gaza Strip on a daily basis. Abu Mazen has no influence on Israel to stop these attacks. What is more, the US supports these attacks and understands only the problematic Olmert coalition.

The Bush visit will not in any way improve the logistic situation on the ground. Israel will try to divert Bush with regional issues.

Olmert is incapable of conducting any policy and might resign after the Vinograd Commission releases its final findings. As a result, policy regarding the West Bank will continue to be the same. The situation may even deteriorate in the near future because there is no vision and no real policy.

The author is a journalist and member of The Arab Council for Foreign Relations.

# India's emerging strategic security paradigm and Sri Lanka policy -- Part-I

R HARIHARAN

THE Sri Lanka government has formally ended its ceasefire agreement signed in 2002 with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). It only regularises an existing state of war that had been going on since December 2005. It is a sad development because it shuts the door on the peace process sponsored by the Tokyo Donors Conference. While the four co-chairs of the Tokyo Conference the EU, Japan, Norway and the US, can walk out of the peace process, India, as a close strategic neighbour of Sri Lanka, cannot afford to ignore the development. It will also face the fall out of yet another round of full-scale war in Sri Lanka in some ways, because India-Sri Lanka relations have become closer than ever before.

The hesitation of the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in accepting the invitation of Sri Lanka to visit Sri Lanka on the occasion of the 60th Independence anniversary on February 4, 2008 would indicate that he understood the gravity of the developing situation.

Sri Lanka's close physical proximity, cultural, religious and linguistic affinity with India has imparted a unique status to the relations between the two countries. Tamil minorities' struggle for their rights in Sri Lanka had been a major source of friction between the two countries, till the two countries signed the India-Sri Lanka Agreement in 1987. After India's bid to help the country resolve the issue through physical intervention between 1987 and 1990 failed, this issue enjoys a low priority in Indian foreign policy. However, it continues to draw the sympathy of the government and population of India, particularly in the state of Tamil Nadu. In the last ten years or so, India-Sri Lanka relations which had gone cold in 1990 have thawed. Both countries have assiduously built them with a convergence of strategic and economic interests.

Still at the popular level there is a lot of misunderstanding and mutual suspicion on both sides of the Palk Straits over each other's intentions and objectives in fostering the relations. Based upon the extent of India's involvement, its Sri Lanka policy can be considered in three stages: pre 1983 phase, active intervention phase 1983-90, and post intervention phase 1991-to date. The first two phases of this relation have been widely discussed, and debated. But, there is a lack of objective analysis of the relationship in the post-1991 phase mainly due to the continuing Tamil quest for equal rights and as a corollary the LTTE insurgency.

## Learning from active intervention 1983-90

Sri Lanka government has a long history of political confrontation with Tamils clamouring for equal rights since 1956. The situation

progressively degenerated with the state increasingly depending upon the use of force to handle the Tamil agitators. As Tamils politicians lost their credibility support for a new breed of militants increased among the population. The LTTE came into limelight in July 1983 when it carried out an ambush in which 13 soldiers of Sri Lanka army were killed. In retaliation violent mobs carried out a pogrom against Tamils.

The 'Black July pogrom' and its aftermath marked a watershed in India's Sri Lanka policy. From 1983 to 87 the objective of India's engagement with Sri Lanka was two fold. India wanted to help Sri Lanka government and the Tamils to evolve a workable solution to the Tamil problem. At the same time, India wanted to prevent Sri Lanka from becoming the cockpit of super power domination of the region intruding in India's sphere of influence. Initially, when Tamils were suffering at the hands of Sri Lanka security forces, India provided refuge for the militants. They were also helped with financial and arms support.

Though India's efforts at enabling the two sides to evolve a solution at Thimphu talks failed, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's keenness saw the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement in 1987. The Indian Peace Keeping Force troops sent to Sri Lanka to assist the implementation of the 1987 agreement got involved in prolonged insurgency war with the LTTE which went back on its support to the agreement. India pulled out the troops in 1990 after the Sri Lanka President Premadasa and the LTTE leader Prabhakaran got together to show India out of the country. The Indo-Sri Lanka relations took a nosedive as a result. In 1991 the LTTE carried out the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in a fit of vengeance. It also masterminded the massacre of Sri Lankan Tamil leaders taking refuge in India. That ended the little credibility the LTTE managed to retain among the public.

From this bitter experience India appears to have learnt one clear strategic lesson: India's strategic involvement in Sri Lanka should be on a firm foundation based upon long-term engagement with the country than on the basis of reactive intervention. Probably it also learnt the limits of external intervention in dealing with the vexing issue of Tamil rights: for achieving a durable solution the Sri Lanka government and the Tamils themselves will have to work out.

## Strategic shifts 1987-2007

During the last two decades, India's strategic priorities in Indian Ocean Region, and as a corollary Sri Lanka, have changed. This is in keeping with a number of changes in the global economic scene and strategic power balance. Unlike the 80s, national security now means more than physical security. It has been enlarged to include economic security, free trade and commerce, energy

security, and lastly upgrade the social security of the population.

In keeping with this, India's foreign policy perceptions, conditioned earlier by the cold war considerations, have also changed. In the present world dominated by the U.S. as the sole super power, building better India - U.S. relations has become number one priority. This is an important component of India's strategic linkages to safeguard its interests globally. The proposed Indo-US nuclear initiative is part of this change in outlook. The US sees India as not only a valuable and stable democratic power in this region but also as a rapidly growing market and source knowledge power. The US also sees India as an important ally in its global war on terrorism because its multicultural and multi-religious society bridges the Islamic world and the rest of Asia. At the same time, India would like to maintain its close traditional ties with Russia, which continues to be an important strategic partner of India.

India's Look East policy evolved since 1990s aims at building closer ties with the ASEAN group of nations to expand India's commercial reach. It has signed a Free Trade Agreement with Thailand as a part of this policy. It is trying to build close trading relations with Myanmar and use it as a gateway to open up the troubled India's northeast for trade with ASEAN. India is developing infrastructure to develop physical links with the region.

India had been holding talks with Pakistan to revamp its relations. Similarly, India and China have been trying to synergise their areas of convergence for mutual benefit. Though many see India as a counterpoise to check the assertion of Chinese power in this region, India would like to develop a friendly rather than confrontational relation with China.

Indian armed forces are undergoing modernisation to make them mobile, with greater fire power. India's missile development programmes are well on way to make it a missile power with intermediate range missiles as its component. Globally there had been increasing recognition of India's defence capability.

The sea-lanes of Indian Ocean have become vital for India's expanding global trade. They carry fossil fuels so vital for India's ever increasing energy needs. India sees Sri Lanka as a sentinel of its security astride the Indian Ocean. Indian navy's development as a blue water navy is on the cards to protect its maritime and economic interests. India's shift in relationship with Sri Lanka has to be understood in this broad strategic context, than in the background of its historical baggage of cold war period.

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