

## Saving the wild tiger

Today, there are no more than about 3,500 of these majestic big cats left. All of our best efforts -- and there are some tiger conservation initiatives such as India's Project Tiger of the 1970s -- merely made the downward slope a bit less slippery rather than stem the tigers' downfall.

JOHN SEIDENSTICKER and KESHAV VARMA

**T**HIS week in Kathmandu, conservationists are meeting to draw a line in the sand to stop the wild tigers' steady slide toward extinction. The objective is to deploy every possible weapon to put down the assault on tigers and the ecological values they represent in the forests of Asia.

For too long, conservationists have been able to pit little more than their passion for nature against the immense power of economic self-interest that drives nature-destroying development and sustains illegal markets for vanishing species. The time to bring in the big guns is long overdue.

Despite more than 30 years of conservation initiatives in the 13 Asian tiger range countries and around the world, tiger numbers have continued to decline. There were about 35,000 tigers living in Asian forests in the 1960s -- so few that the tiger was declared endangered and programs were begun to protect them and their habitats. Today, there are no more than about 3,500 of these majestic big cats left. All of our best efforts -- and there are some tiger conservation initiatives such as India's Project Tiger of the 1970s --

merely made the downward slope a bit less slippery rather than stem the tigers' downfall.

Massive infrastructure development throughout Asia has paved over much of the tigers' habitat and threatens to take it all, with spending on infrastructure in Asia expected to exceed \$500 billion a year. At the same time, growing economic prosperity in Asia, and especially in China, has fueled a multi-billion dollar illegal trade in wildlife with tigers treated as commodities to be traded for enormous profit, not ecological assets to be sustained.

The government of Nepal is hosting a Global Tiger Workshop in Kathmandu, attended by

wildlife biologists, conservation practitioners, representatives of the governments of the tiger range countries and international organisations, and some new players who have joined to change the game. The recently formed Global Tiger Initiative, designed to facilitate and promote cooperative, game changing actions on behalf of wild tigers is an alliance of governments, civil society, and the private sector. The World Bank too, led by President Robert Zoellick himself, has put the full weight of its experience, expertise, and international presence

behind the enterprise.

The challenge for these experts will be to bring to the table global and local knowledge, experience, information, technology, and best practices to develop new strategies to save tigers through devising a robust, incentive-driven conservation agenda that makes landscapes with tigers more valuable than those without them.

Understanding that resisting development is not a viable strategy, the gathering of experts will seek to develop a blueprint for infrastructure development that is "green" and tiger-friendly. Experts will need to determine how best to tackle the illegal trade that has poachers killing at least one tiger every day. There is an urgent need for enhanced law enforcement and, most important, a strategy to reduce the demand for tiger parts and products, including the newly fashionable and repugnant practice of serving dinner guests tiger meat to signal status.

Global experts will also need to define a new model for habitat management that is effective and efficient in restoring and then maintaining tiger numbers in protected areas and the landscape corridors between them. Local NGOs and communities will need to be empowered to serve as agents of change. And new ways will need to be found to generate funds to finance tiger conservation, which at present is woefully underfunded compared to the magnitude of the challenge at hand.

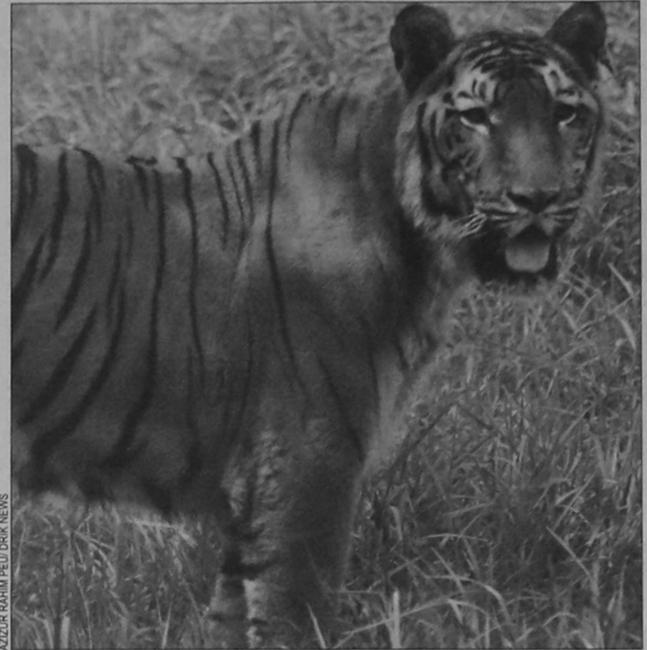
The GTI, on its part, can be an important instrument to change the way the world values tigers and the biodiversity they represent. Wildlife conservation can no longer be treated as a fringe concern we can't afford. It must be valued for what

it really means to us. If ignored, the future will be bleak for the billions of people whose lives and livelihoods depend on the ecological services, from carbon sequestration to watershed protection, of the forests that remain under the tiger's umbrella.

Hopefully, the shift is taking place. All of the nations in which tigers live, from India in the west and Russia in the east, are meeting in Kathmandu -- an unprecedented expression of regional unity that reflects the emergence of political commitment to save Asia's tigers. Nepalese Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal's support, and ministerial representation from countries such as Thailand, is evidence of the momentum that is building to get serious about wildlife conservation and biodiversity protection. With a multi-lateral framework and regional protocol for cooperation among the tiger range countries, a trans-boundary "war on poaching" can help stop the bleeding.

The meeting in Kathmandu aims to be a useful stepping-stone to next year's Year of the Tiger Global Tiger Summit, where governments and national and international organisations will formalise policy changes and commit to new investment in science and technology to reinvent the conservation and development paradigm. We must seize this moment at Kathmandu. There is symbolic importance in the Year of the Tiger, yet the year ahead must be more than a symbolic effort. It must be remembered as the year we took steps to save and sustain the tiger.

Although several global meets in the past have not had the desired impact, Kathmandu offers an excellent opportunity to bring to the table "game-



Tiger, tiger, in dire plight!

changing" ideas in wildlife enforcement mechanisms, community livelihood incentives, innovative park management and capacity-building programs, demand reduction, "green infrastructure," and new financial mechanisms. As 2010 and the Year of the Tiger approaches, these ideas and innovations could represent a new front in the battle to save the

wild tiger. To paraphrase conservationist Margery Stoneman Douglas, if we win, we get to keep the planet.

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## Pakistan must remember the lessons of history

All through Pakistan's unfortunate history appears the familiar pattern of the lack of vision to engage politically, build consensus and trust, and sincerely foster nationhood. Pakistan made the fatal mistake of ignoring strategies for civil engagement in 1971 and lost half the country, and then repeated the error and almost lost Baluchistan just a few years later.

MOHAMMAD TUFAEL CHOWDHURY

**I**N recent times few countries have deployed their national army against their own civilians. Since being founded in 1947, Pakistan has done it three times. Less than forty years ago, in 1971, Pakistan sent in the army to deal with an uprising in its own territory, in East Pakistan. The strategy met with dire consequences, leading to civil war, the break-up of the country and hundreds of thousands of civilian casualties. Barely four years later, Pakistan's leaders turned to the army again, this time to control an insurgency in the tribal province of Baluchistan. The struggle lasted five years, failed to deliver a politically sustainable solution and left thousands dead.

These messy chapters in this country's brief but colourful history had the common problem that the government addressed political challenges through military strategy and without sufficient civil engagement. Today, as the government deploys the armed forces in the troubled region of South Waziristan, it is

important that Pakistan doesn't forget the hard-earned lessons of its history.

In 1971, the theatre of action was East Pakistan, the eastern wing of the country, that proceeded to fight for its independence and become Bangladesh. In 1970, the Awami League (AL), a political party principally representing Bengali interests, emerged victorious in Pakistan's first-ever national elections. The party gained enough seats to gain an overwhelming parliamentary majority and form the next national government. The election victory came on the back of decades of policies which had disempowered Bengalis economically and socially, and left them a bitter people looked down upon by many West Pakistani administrators and officers.

Not willing to transfer power to the Bengalis, Pakistan's leader General Yahya Khan planned a military response in the event of civil unrest in Bengal. Suspicions grew as the AL made demands for greater provincial autonomy, and, rather than allowing Mujib to form a government, Yahya prevaricated and prepared to implement a military



The tongue is friendlier than the gun.

solution.

There was a build-up of forces in the eastern wing, and, as tensions boiled over, Pakistan's leaders unleashed a brutal military campaign. This started with an attack on its own civilians on the streets of Dhaka in March 1971, and over nine months led to hundreds of thousands of casualties. The result was the break-up of the country with the creation of Bangladesh and the ultimate humiliation of surrender at the hands of the Indian Army, which had intervened to end the civil war.

Yahya Khan was duly replaced by

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, whose Pakistan People's Party, in the same 1970 elections, had won most of the seats in West Pakistan. Bhutto resorted to military strategy in 1974 when faced with insurgence in the province of Baluchistan. Neighbouring Iran, and rife with tribal unrest, Baluchistan had many long-standing political problems. It was Pakistan's least developed province, whose extremes of poverty contrasted painfully with its richness in gas reserves.

Bhutto's approach of seeking a military solution followed his predecessor's,

not learning from his mistakes. In fact, the recent loss of Bangladesh heightened Bhutto's resolve to use strong-arm tactics, threatening that without this approach it was possible that Pakistan could lose territory again to a secessionist movement. And, with the Pakistan army still smarting from the Bengal defeat, Bhutto also knew the generals would not overstep their remit.

In 1973 Bhutto dissolved Baluchistan's provincial government, jailed many of its leaders, and within a year some 70,000 Pakistan army troops were in battle with some 50,000 insurgents. The army reportedly used brutal methods and equipment, as they had done in Bengal. The struggle continued until after Bhutto himself was deposed, and ended when his ouster (and executor) General Ziaul Haq made a deal with the Baluchis. To date, over thirty years later, unrest continues in Baluchistan.

The challenges in South Waziristan are as deep-seated as the ones in Bengal and Baluchistan. Barren and undeveloped, Waziristan is an unforgiving mountain territory. Ever since the nineteenth century, when the British faced off to the Russians as they played the Great Game across Central Asia, Waziristan has never been properly integrated, remaining outside the scope of national government and administration. It has remained autonomous, managed indirectly at best through political agents who liaise with tribal elders in resolving criminal, civil and revenue disputes.

The long-standing tribal enmity between the Wazir and Mehsud tribes

has in recent times been compounded with the mix of Afghan politics, late and post Cold War geopolitics and the development of Islamic fundamentalism and extremism in North West Pakistan. There are huge complexities to deal with here, and as the current offensive unfolds the government needs to recall that military strategy alone will not be sufficient for a lasting victory. Success can only be sustained if military action to deal with radical elements is supplemented by efforts to properly engage the people of Waziristan, and to find acceptable ways to implement peace, development and progress delivered through infrastructure, health and education.

All through Pakistan's unfortunate history appears the familiar pattern of the lack of vision to engage politically, build consensus and trust, and sincerely foster nationhood. Pakistan made the fatal mistake of ignoring strategies for civil engagement in 1971 and lost half the country, and then repeated the error and almost lost Baluchistan just a few years later.

Domino theories were discredited with the futility of US involvement in Vietnam in the 1960s, but it is tempting to think that if South Waziristan is lost once the military effort is over, that more of the country will be put at risk. It is time for Pakistan's leaders to brace themselves for not the military but the huge political task ahead, and they can start by remembering the lessons of history.

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## Responding to terrorism

The most effective response to the terrorism problem requires a two-front strategy that has short-term and long-term components; dealing with the terrorists and dealing with the fundamentals that produce and encourage terrorism.

MD. MOZZAMMEL HAQUE

**T**ERRORISM can be defined in different ways. It could be "the surprise threat or use of seemingly random violence against innocents for political ends by a non-state actor." International terrorism, on the other hand, implies acts of terrorism that include international consequences where terrorists go abroad to strike their targets.

The definition of terrorist is specific but there is no exact definition of terrorism. The phrase "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" exemplifies the subjectivity that lies with defining certain groups as terrorists. In the same way that technology is enabling the terrorists, the developed world is turning to technology as a defence against destructive individuals and groups.

In the short term, at least, the future for terrorism is good. For a number of reasons, the developed world should be keeping an eye over its shoulder in the coming years.

We are living in a time when the rich are getting richer faster than any time before, when extraordinary population increases are producing multitudes of poor people who have access to television and are aware of how people in the developed world live.

This rapidly growing technology is an amplifier of the economic and theological differences that people feel, and these perspectives are likely to only become more acute in the coming decade as the have/have-not divide broadens. We know that drugs, crime and terrorism can be linked, as they are in Afghanistan, or that money laundering can provide the resources for criminal

and terrorist networks. Bribery in Russia has helped terrorists to succeed in their attacks.

It appears that this environment will become even more volatile in the near future as weapons of mass destruction become available to those groups that want to use them. The war against terrorism can never be won in Pakistan because this war is against the drug abuse population of Pakistan. But in Sri Lanka, the war was with the group of certain people who come from India.

The most effective response to the terrorism problem requires a two-front strategy that has short-term and long-term components; dealing with the terrorists and dealing with the fundamentals that produce and encourage terrorism.

Most governmental efforts are focused on the short-term problem and not the long-term one, so it is reasonable to assume that if the fundamentals that encourage terrorism are not addressed in a significant way the problem will grow.

Poverty is clearly a huge problem for the planet. However, I don't think that we know yet whether poverty directly causes terrorism. Few terrorists seem to

be poor; on the contrary, they seem to be well-educated and upper class. Indeed, if poverty spawns terrorism, there should be a lot more terrorism in the world.

Terrorism is a form of crime, so it would be useful to look at the links between poverty and crime. Surprisingly, research shows that poverty itself doesn't seem to cause crime. However, there is evidence of direct causality between increase in inequality in a society and increase in crime. Poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders.

Numerous studies have shown that the best long-term approach to some of the most intractable problems the world faces is to increase education in lesser-developed countries, particularly of girls. When they become mothers, educated girls raise their families differently, they value education, and they have different values and goals. They also have fewer children. It is a very fundamental way to change whole systems.

Young males are the prime victims of terrorism. It is possibly because they



Where lies their motivation?

accept anything easily and are motivated by others.

To find the proper solution, we need counselling for the young generation by the teachers, elite persons of the society, and parents. If we do succeed, peace will certainly come. Our prime minister has to

motivate the young generation, and take the action against drugs and the criminals who brainwash the young generation through drugs to take part in terrorism.

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