



Police are part of the community.

Police reform specifics

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N.B.K. TRIPURA

IN the foregoing years, police reform in Bangladesh received considerable attention by the media. Many articles were written on issues like legal reforms, gender mainstreaming, capacity building, public perception etc. News bulletins have covered the opening of service delivery centres, inauguration of "Open Days" victim support centre and introduction of community policing in police stations. Ongoing reform initiatives of Bangladesh police are, therefore, very much in the public eye.

The basic principles of modern policing, formulated by Sir Robert Peel in 1829, are still applicable today; the basic mission of police is to prevent crime and disorder, the ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon the public approval of police actions, police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police are only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent upon every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.

Management practices and operational strategies may have changed but these principles remain and emphasise the interaction and dependencies between the police and the public. One of the challenges for the police and police leadership in particular is to ensure that it is capable of dealing with modern day challenges while still preserving these fundamental

policing tenets.

Often, the complaint is that the police response is reactive and bureaucratic, focusing on procedures and efficiency rather than on innovation or strategic planning. In many cases, police are often criticised for resisting change and being insular, not readily accepting outsiders. The police leadership needs to ensure not only that they lead by example in taking up the reforms but also that they motivate the police rank and file to implement and to sustain the change. Only then will reforms be truly sustainable.

The three main driving forces behind modern police reform, as recognised globally are:

- Community policing,
- Technological progress, and
- Professionalism and accountability.

These three areas together form a solid foundation for supporting a new policing style, capable of reaching all levels of police structure, from senior officers and managers to frontline officers who are the daily face of police to the community.

The concept of community policing has its roots in the concept of public policing as proposed by Peel. It is both a philosophy and a strategy for the police and community to identify new ways of addressing the issues of crime, disorder and safety. As a strategy, it is based on policing by consent without coercion, with police seen as part of the community working together in partnership to identify community needs and adjusting policing priorities to address them.

This important strategy recognises police officers as more than just crime busters,

responding to calls for assistance after the crime has occurred. The underlying principles of community policing include meaningful community engagement and better utilisation of police officers within the community. The latter is very critical for, if the community is distrustful of the police, it will not consider the police as its partner.

The field of technology is experiencing accelerated change. The number of technological advancements related to policing is vast, ranging from computers and communications to genetics and sportspiration. This progress provides many opportunities for improvement in crime control, prevention and investigation. For example, computer systems provide effective information tools and DNA analysis provides a virtually foolproof method of identifying offenders.

However, it is necessary to develop planning and conceptualise how these new technologies are best used to support police. The potential for unlawful invasion of privacy and misuse of access to confidential and sensitive data is very significant. Many police organisations go to extreme lengths to ensure that police officers, who by the very nature of their job have access to sensitive information, do so only for a legitimate purpose.

Dealing with criminal exploitation of technology is a particular challenge. With the advent of internet, the world has become a much smaller place, removing borders and allowing individuals to become transnational criminals. Combating this new version of crime, cyber crime, will require national, regional and international collaboration. Also, the question of the affordability of new technologies, their availability and sustainability is of particular importance to Bangladesh police and associated reforms; these new technologies are not cheap, not always available for export and require a lot of effort to maintain.

The recognition of police as a professional and accountable institution is essential towards the implementation of an ideal policing model. Training reform needs to facilitate organisational shift towards a consultative, community-oriented, professional police

service, proactively focused on crime prevention. The scope of training has to deal with, among others, the themes of leadership and management, crime prevention and awareness, forensic, investigation and investigation management, trafficking in human beings, criminal intelligence and domestic violence and sexual assault.

By its very nature, professionalism also requires adherence to a code of ethics and standards of conduct, a public service orientation, existence of common goals and principles and an organisation that promotes high standards and the interests of the profession. The achievement of these common characteristics through the reform process develops greater public confidence in police, improves the morale of police officers and allows them to fulfill their role as true community partners. It also makes them more accountable and empowers them to be more responsive.

The process of police reform is complex and subject to overcoming many obstacles of political, financial, historical and personal nature. A number of police commissions were constituted in Bangladesh in the past to reform the police; however, hardly any recommendations were put into action and no substantive changes in the public perception of the police were achieved.

With new initiatives such as drafting of the new police ordinance, police training reform, development of community policing approach, publication of gender guidelines and addressing of the gender balance within the organisation, the main challenge now is to ensure that these and other reforms that will emerge are taken seriously by all, implemented and sustained. Only then can Bangladesh police be transformed into a modern police service, worthy of a democratic society, accountable and responsive to community needs that function according to the law and regulations, and respect the human rights of the people and protect their rights.

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Most bizarre visa questions

TODAY, we will help you with your visa applications to the UK and the US and elsewhere.

Children from around the world applying to go to school in Britain are now asked on a form if they have ever "committed genocide." (Not a joke.)

What should you reply?

Impress the immigration officers. Write this: "Yes, my hobbies are reading, stamp collecting and wiping out neighbouring nations."

The same visa form asks the child if he or she has "committed war crimes."

Kids, use this as an opportunity to show humility, responding: "Yes, but only minor ones, unlike great Western leaders such as Mr. Blair and Mr. Bush, whom I admire so much for their ruthlessness."

On an application for a US visa, Chaminda Da Silva was asked: "Do you intend to carry out terrorist activities while in the United States?" He wondered why the question was there: "Would anyone answer 'Yes'?"

The question is there to cover the behinds of immigration officers, Cham. If a terrorist blows up Washington, they can wave the form and say: "Don't blame us. We specifically asked if he was going to do that and he said no. We got it right here."

Lift Lurker, a shy reader whom I shall call Otis in the printed version of these columns, kindly offered to revise the US government's visa application forms to make them better at identifying bad guys.

- 1) Do you intend to carry out terrorist activities while in the US? Yes/No/Maybe.
- 2) Which country is The Great Satan? [Fill in name]
- 3) Have you said final goodbye to your family? Yes/No/Maybe.
- 4) Rate your agreement to this sentence: Death to USA. Disagree/Agree/Agree Strongly. Thanks, Otis, that should flush them out nicely.

Mahjuja Taznin said the US authorities also ask: "Are you going to engage in pimping or prostitution?"

My suggested response: "Only if you ask really nicely."

Sej said the Australian Arrivals Card now has the question: "Are you carrying pornography?"

Kanyu Wong, also known as Dancer Arroyo, encountered similar questions in Singapore and Japan.

How to reply?

But readers agreed the US authorities have the best questions.

Here are some more real questions from the US entry form prepared by the homeland security department, along with suggested replies.

- Q: "Have you ever been convicted for an offence involving moral turpitude?"
A: "Please repeat the question in English."
A: "Are you involved in espionage?"
A: "Yes, I have been a spy my whole life, but will have to give it up now that you have brilliantly outed me."
Q: "Between 1933 and 1945 were you involved in persecutions associated with Nazi Germany or its allies?"
A: "Yes, and by the way, it is my 140th birthday today."
Q: "Are you seeking to engage in immoral activities?"
A: "Sorry, you're not my type."
Q: Do you have a mental disorder?"
A: "Yes, everything I say is the opposite of the truth, including this statement."

For more tips on getting your visas quicker, visit our columnist at: www.vittachi.com.

How serious is the Chinese challenge?

If and when China reduces its export dependence on the US market relative to US dependence on the Chinese market, the balance of economic and financial power will shift dramatically in Beijing's favour.

MARKUS JAEGER

THE Chinese economy has been growing at 10% annually since the beginning of economic reform in the late 1970s. If current trends hold, China will overtake the US in terms of economic size by 2025. In PPP terms, China will be world's largest economy by 2020.

Economic analysts are divided about China's road to economic preeminence. Some foresee dangerous speed bumps while others argue that interdependence can only smooth the ride.

Despite China's dramatic economic rise and increasing financial weight, Sino-US economic-financial relationship can be best described as one of "asymmetric interdependence" -- where Beijing finds itself in a position of "asymmetric vulnerability" -- heavily skewed in Washington's favour.

Several factors and developments could undercut China's trajectory.

Some analysts anticipate rising geostrategic competition between China and the US. Historically, rising powers make use of their increasing influence, argues Aaron Friedberg, and increasing dependence on imported commodities could lead China to mitigate supply risks by seeking "regional preponderance,"

thus increasing strategic competition between Beijing and Washington.

From there, it's a small step to construct a scenario where geostrategic competition leads to economic conflict weighing on Chinese economic development, as predicted by international relations realists such as John Mearsheimer. Other scholars are more optimistic about the possibility of a peaceful "power shift."

David Shambaugh, Robert Sutter and Bates Gill interpret much of Beijing's international behaviour as evidence that China is becoming a "responsible stakeholder" in an international system that, by and large, offers it benefits through an open trading system.

Some analysts anticipate political instability.

The lack of post-Mao charismatic leadership and the declining strength of ideology have weakened the foundations of China's political system, according to Harvard's Roderick MacFarquhar. Increasing social activism could undermine Communist Party rule and regime stability. Again, from this analysis, it's only a small step to come up with a scenario where political volatility and uncertainty weigh on economic growth.

Andrew Nathan is more optimistic, arguing that the Chinese government has

repeatedly proven its ability to respond to newly-emerging social and economic demands. Localised social unrest does occur, but given the combination of regime responsiveness and political control, he maintains that "a spark isn't going to start a prairie fire in China."

Demographics ensure that demands for political reform will remain manageable as "the middle class won't demand democracy when it is afraid of an even more numerous class of peasants and migrant workers, and therefore sees the authoritarian regime as a bastion of order against chaos."

Lack of further reforms might undercut future growth. Pei Minxin, senior associate at Carnegie Endowment, suggests that partial economic reform has led to the emergence of a "mixed" state-centered system that perpetuates the privileges of the ruling elite. This system allows the elite to "tap efficiency gains from limited reforms to sustain the unconstructed core of the old command economy -- the economic foundation of its political supremacy."

He calls this a "trapped transition," where the ruling groups have little incentive to pursue further reform. Absent economic reform, however, economic growth is bound to decline. A variation of this argument has been put forward by Woo Wing Thy, professor of economics at UC Davis, who suggests the challenge lies in sustaining economic growth while at the same addressing rising social inequality and accommodating increasing middle-class demands for political reform.

Optimists, like Barry Naughton, point

out that the government has repeatedly proven its ability to successfully deal with various economic challenges and that growth remains largely driven by large-scale economic and demographic forces that are relatively independent of government policy.

Naturally, other concerns range from environmental sustainability and viability of the current investment-heavy, export-led growth strategy to political event risk. According to the "bears," all of these might create potentially non-negligible risks capable of undermining, or at least significantly slowing down, China's rise.

Nonetheless, short of a complete -- and very unlikely -- breakdown, a reasonable downside scenario is likely to mean 5% to 7% annual growth, rather than full-blown economic stagnation. China is unlikely to be thrown off-course in the way the Soviet and Japanese economies were.

Structurally, China's medium-term growth potential is, after all, significant. Unlike Japan in the 1980s, China is located far from the technological frontier, and its development model is based on a relatively high degree of economic openness, and unlike the Soviet Union, China is better suited to generate total factor productivity by importing foreign technology. Therefore, China will more likely than not continue to register at least 8% annual growth over the next decade.

China's increasing economic size will provide Beijing with growing political, economic and financial influence. While China's rise has greatly increased its

power, this has thus far translated into limited bilateral influence vis-à-vis the US. China's most important economic-financial lever of influence regarding the US is the threat to sell off its estimated \$1.4 trillion in US treasury and agency debt.

Such a move would be costly for Beijing, however, economically and financially, China would shoot itself in the proverbial foot. First, the value of its holdings would decline, and higher US interest rates would weigh on the US growth outlook, hurting Chinese exports. Furthermore, unless it's willing to accept renminbi appreciation, China would have to find other dollar assets to invest in, as rapid renminbi appreciation is hardly in China's interest in terms of exports and dollar-denominated US debt holdings.

However, if China does re-invest in dollar-denominated assets, this would presumably help ease financing conditions in other segments of the US financial system, potentially offsetting negative effect of higher rates in the treasury market on the economy.

Second, if Beijing were to dump large chunks of US debt, it might disrupt financial markets in the short run. The medium-term impact would likely be manageable, as other official foreign buyers with close security ties to the US, including Japan and Gulf nations, would step in, albeit at higher interest rates.

Last but not least, any politically motivated fire sale of US debt would trigger a severe political backlash -- and not just from the US -- as well as undermine China's standing as a reliable financial

investor and economic partner.

Financially, economically and politically, Beijing would pay a high price for significantly raising US borrowing costs and it would end up paying a higher price than Washington -- simply reflecting the fact that China is much more dependent on the US than vice versa. The US has access to a more diversified investor base, with which it maintains close political relations. The US market is substantially more important to China in terms of both exports and imports than vice versa -- and the Chinese export sector is relatively more employment intensive.

China's holdings of US debt do not lend themselves as a coercive instrument and are perhaps better regarded as a limited deterrent. Rising cross-border asset holdings and trade have increased interdependence, raising the costs of economic conflict for both China and the US. Nonetheless, the potential costs of a conflict due to China's trade dependence are substantially higher for Beijing than for Washington.

However, if and when China reduces its export dependence on the US market relative to US dependence on the Chinese market, and if and when it adopts a substantially more flexible exchange rate regime, the balance of economic and financial power will shift dramatically in Beijing's favour. Until then, Beijing has a far greater interest in preventing a wider economic-financial Sino-US conflict than Washington does.

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