

Hegemonic brinkmanship and security torn asunder



WORLD-PEACE SOCIETY

MOHAMMAD MAHFUZUL ISLAM

THE whole world is sick with security fever. The etiology of the ailment has multi-faceted strings of comprehension. Ever since human beings started their roller-coaster of existence on this planet they have been concerned with it for their proliferation, perpetuation and further extension of lives. At first this war was against the inhospitable nature, when this was tamed a bit and rudimentary specialization emerged and competition for the available resources intensified along with the accompanying increase in population, the questioning of security was redirected against human beings. Mutual collaboration of homo sapiens got circumscribed within a narrower field of amiability. In course of time one human group was subjected to abject condition by another i.e. the blacks by the whites usurping their rights of humane existence. The system of literal slavery gave Aristotle, Plato and other philosophers the security and comfort of leading a rarefied life and pontificating on anything including the slaves on whose

blood they were celebrating their knowledge and argumentation. The security of the privileged class was guaranteed snatching the rights of the people who were treated as mere chattels. The feudal system of attached slavery of the peasants to land was deposed through the inauguration of reign of terror during French revolution. Guillotine worked as the judge of restoring security for the exploited millions. Dickens' 'A tale of two cities' recounts the mass-frenzy partially with powerful imagery of description and profound analysis of plot. It is always the so-called powerful interest-groups who exploit the teeming millions and devise and design the security system to safeguard their accumulated wealth through policing mechanism.

During the colonial period the economic dire-straits of the colonizers coerced them to look for alternative sources of material security and thus they were wandering long distances (made possible by the innovation of large vessels) to settle down in resource-rich geographical zones and deplete them completely by systematic plundering in

the name of spurious civilizing mission. Long histories of pillaging by the European colonizers reduced the colonies of different parts of the world into debris of hunger and malnutrition. It's no wonder the cognitive paralysis kick-started by the colonizers is still going strong. After the subdued demise of the colonial exploitation the so-called democratic regime through the globalization process is expanding the scope of profit-maximization and legalized plundering. Now people resort to small arms to safeguard their security and its augmented metastasis is a matter of grave concern. Poverty (both economic and cognitive) of the denied segment is utilized by the moneyvoracious capitalists. Industrialization and the commodification of human beings curtail the quality of time by inhuman drudgery and give birth to loneliness particularly in the West making people the best companion of their shadows. Hegemony and its discontents act like rampant wildfire throughout the world.

In every country nationalism is considered a vital component of proper human conduct so that security of the national-

ties is preserved. But it evades our attention that jingoistic nationalism is a major threat to security if we look at the broader spectrum of the world. The holier than thou attitude provides only a piece of the security pie not the entire portion, for it has the intrinsic mechanism of endangering the security of others and here lies the system of incorrigible suspicion. It is suspicion that being born of jingoism jeopardizes the harmonious co-existence. Jingoistic nationalism is to be blamed for injecting life to suspicion which in turn contaminate humane zeal and inaugurate schism between people, thereby leading towards the extermination of security. In the name of reinstating security the arms and drug industry (to name a few) is buttressed which benefit the neo-liberal investors. Security is trampled in this money-churning spree, which ensures the security of the money-monger capitalists. Michael Moore's 'capitalism: a love story' depicts how people's security is marred and they are turned into paupers through the rapacious actions of the businessmen. We find thousands of instances of jingoistic scourge from the historical dossier. The holocaust perpetrated by Adolf Hitler, the onslaught of Japanese Imperial Army in Nanking, the incurable wound of Hiroshima-Nagasaki episode, American masochism in Vietnam war, Gulag, invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, civil war in El Salvador with the complicity of CIA are some famous examples. Even Gulag is the proof of extreme megalomania emanating from imposed nationalism. People questioning the Stalin regime was considered not being instilled the doctrines of nationalism properly as a result they were hurled into the camp. The genocides perpetrated in different parts as a direct involvement of applied jingoism are instances of parochial security. It is imperative for us to fathom the simple dictum that no security can be attained without respecting the humane space creating gregarious proximity.

Perpetuation of human space hinges on the mutual observances of creative rules of peaceful proliferation. The idea of human rights is inextricably linked with security. Exhibition of reverence to the rights of others is the first step towards the attainment of primary security and for the security and peace to last long moneyvoracious outlook of the capitalist converters has to be dispensed with.

Although this calls for hard graft to get rid of personalized enterprise founded on avarice, this is the only alternative towards the promised land of peace and restored security. War propagated as the reinstatement of security is just a pretext for the expansion of arms industry. It was in the wake of Vietnam War that an underground destabilizing group called 'Weather Underground' launched sporadic attacks in USA to make people bear the slightest brunt of Vietnam War as their slogan was "bring war home". In Vietnam people were being killed like birds and in the USA the residents did not have the slightest idea of what it was like to be in Vietnam amidst the pincer attacks of their country on the innocent Vietnamese. The Mai Lai Massacre committed by the American superpower was another addition to the repercussions of imperialist jingoism. Israel sitting under the cloak of American megalomania has been justifying the seizure of Palestinian security as the open sesame to the rehabilitation of religio-jingoistic Zionism.

History tells us when the line of popular security was infringed firebrands like Spartacus, Che Guevara, Zapata, Lorca, Gandhi, Surja Sen, Khudi Ram, Ullash Kar Dutta (to name a few) worked for the restoration of security of the majority. Bertrand Russell along with Jean Paul Sartre formed Russell Tribunal that expostulated and arraigned America for its criminal offence in Vietnam. Peasant revolt led by Wat Tyler in England is the affirmation of security scheme, implying that where there is a deliberate attempt to foil the deserved security, popular consensus is there to fight for it. These retrievers of human security questioned the authority structure of the society. Every humanist movement is an accentuation of absent security. Resistance is reassurance against self-absorbed security of extortionist class. Manufactured security of the West i.e. seen and defined from their point of view bypasses the notions and understandings of the people encountering the problem of security. It is imposed on the people's perceptions and lives to reap the benefits of opportunist rhetoric, such as institution of democracy in Afghanistan or decimation of WMD in Iraq. Taliban's fall from American grace is the glowing instance of manufactured security proclaimed by USA. Capitalists quite naturally working in jingoistic vein form one single nation based on their

collaboration of capitalist pursuit and give birth to security as a new industry. Political Islam patronized by petrodollar reclaims the process of security with a canvassed divine flavour. There is no conflict between security sought by the practitioners of political Islam and the capitalist advocates as they cater to the interest of the minority trampling the lives of the fragmented majority. The activists of political Islam using the banner of religion are a major threat to unhindered mobility of human beings that is the fulcrum of security. Moreover, religious alienation caused by mutual suspicion hijacks the space of security. Aparna Sen's filmographic account 'Mr and Mrs Iyer' elucidates the role of suspicion in engendering insecurity for the religious minority groups i.e. the Muslims in India.

Nuclear weaponry and its further enrichment in a competitive ambience is a major obstacle to the attainment of human security. An unquenchable desire to rule the whole world is the root cause of the obliteration of security. The peripatetic locus of power underlines the fact that the world is no one's stove; therefore tug of war with human lives with a view to dominating the universe is like cutting the branch of a tree sitting on it. So, all these excesses of different imperialism is suicidal ventures which in the long run usher in misery and disharmony of humane space- an indispensable part of our march towards a livable world. Hegemonic oppression in its local format (religio-political mode) constricts the mobility of groups having isolated identity through the use of corroded tolerance. The treatment of the Ahmediyas and the ethnic communities of Bangladesh by the intolerant bloc of privileged section are examples of such negating provision. Erich Maria Remarque in his "All quiet on the western Front" (later made into a film) confirms the futility of war and shows that the robotic involvements of the antagonistic parties work as a revelation for them that war is fought never between two or more blocs of people rather between adamant authorities of so-called security. John Lennon who vehemently opposed Vietnam War is singing for us 'all we are saying is give peace a chance'. Let's give peace a chance.

The writer teaches anthropology at Independent University, Bangladesh.

INDIA'S PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO JAPAN

5th Annual summit under strategic and global partnership arrangement



REUTERS

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (L) shakes hands with Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan in Tokyo October 25, 2010. Japan and India pledged closer strategic ties between Asia's second and third biggest economies in talks.

BARRISTER HARUN UR RASHID

INDIAN Prime Minister Manmohan Singh paid a three-day visit to Japan from October 24th, 2010 to exchange views with Japanese leaders. It is important to note that the visit took place at a time of high diplomatic tensions between Japan and China.

India is the only country with which Japan has an institutional arrangement of annual summit-level visits under the India-Japan Strategic & Global Partnership. This was the 5th Annual Summit between the Prime Ministers of India and Japan since 2006.

Japan's Prime Minister Naoto Kan stressed the warm ties linking two of Asia's biggest democracies and said that "through this meeting, we were able to confirm and be confident about progress in the strategic global partnership between Japan and India".

Both Prime Ministers discussed ways to expand, enhance and strengthen bilateral ties including trade and investment.

At present, India only accounts for about 1% percent of Japan's global trade, whereas more than 20% percent of Japanese imports head to China.

"We signed a joint statement confirming the conclusion of negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between Japan and India," said Kan after a meeting with Singh.

The Economic Partnership Agreement will cut tariffs on the flow of goods in both directions and promote bilateral investment. The deal will slash tariffs on 94% percent of two-way trade in the 10 years after implementation.

The deal will help Japanese auto giants such as Suzuki who have opened plants in India by lifting tariffs on parts, while also easing access to the market in fast-growing Japan for Indian generic drugs.

On another key agreement sought by New Delhi -- civilian nuclear cooperation -- the leaders however only said they welcomed the start of talks. Japan and India launched negotiations in June on a pact that would allow Tokyo to export its cutting-edge nuclear technology to the energy-hungry South Asian nation, a hotly contested market for atomic plants.

Analysts say Japan -- the only country to have suffered atomic bombings and a key voice in global denuclearisation efforts -- is worried by

the fact that nuclear-armed India has not been a party to the 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The Delhi-Mumbai industrial corridor, which was officially in December 2009, could prove to be a big leg-up for Indian manufacturing. This industrial corridor will have several supporting infrastructure projects such as power facilities, rail connectivity to ports en route and would also cover development of ports on the west coast of India.

Along this corridor, several industrial estates, Special Economic Zones and clusters with high quality infrastructure are proposed to be developed to attract more investments, including from Japan. The two countries are targeting some "early bird" ventures that will take off soon.

Over the years, the Indo-Japanese relationship has grown in diverse fields. However, it is in the fields of trade, business and infrastructure that have been focussed. Both sides aim to raise the trade figure to \$20 billion by this year.

Furthermore, partnering in developing infrastructure and tying up with industry in a variety of fields, such as automobiles, has prompted the

Japan-India Business Leaders Forum to describe economic relations between India and Japan as among the richest in potential both in Asia as well as in the world.

As reported in the Japanese media, from 2006 to 2010, 27 projects have brought to India Japanese FDI of around \$5.5 billion. Japanese joint ventures in India are also contributing to India's exports to third countries; for example, Maruti Suzuki exporting its cars to various parts of the globe.

These trends indicate that a qualitative shift in the strategies being followed by Japanese companies, which have started considering India as a future export hub for their products.

If the same trends continue, they are likely to facilitate export from India in the future.

The number of Japanese business establishments operating in India has also increased. It is estimated that there are more than 500 Japanese business establishments in India.

The fact that India continues to be high on the radar of the Japanese business community was brought out again as late as December 15 2009 when the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) released the results of its latest survey on business operations of Japanese-affiliated firms in 17 countries/regions including India.

China appears to be Japan's main concern both in strategic and economic areas. In August, China has leapfrogged Japan as the world's second biggest economy. Its current growth rate is about 9.1% percent.

Japan is also raised the issue of military expenditures of China without transparency and voiced concerns about China's military muscle. Furthermore China has been assertive in claiming the islands in the South China Sea. Washington has weighed in saying it considers the peaceful resolution of disputes in the South China Sea in its national interest and stressing the importance of "freedom of navigation" in the area.

At a time of diplomatic tension between Japan and China on the claim of disputed island in the East China Sea, Japanese Prime Minister Kan seems to have turned his attention to India for economic and strategic reasons.

This visit signifies that both India and Japan have come to the conclusion that Asia cannot mean China alone.

The author is a former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN, Geneva.



Iraq secret files detail shadow war between US, Iran

WASHINGTON: Secret US files released on Friday show Iran waging a shadow war with US troops in Iraq, with a firefright erupting on the border and Tehran allegedly using militias to kill and kidnap American soldiers.

The military intelligence reports on Iran's role, released by WikiLeaks and posted by The New York Times and the Guardian, provide details of a dangerous contest for influence in Iraq between Washington and Tehran.

But US allegations of Iran arming and training Shiite militants in Iraq are nothing new, and American officials and military commanders have long accused Tehran of trying to sow violence to undermine US influence and weaken its allies in Baghdad.

One field report describes a tense border incident on September 7, 2006, when an Iranian soldier aimed a rocket-propelled grenade launcher at a US unit patrolling near the border with Iraqi troops.

US troops shot and killed the Iranian with a .50 caliber machine gun, the report said. The US unit was in the area "in order to identify key infiltration routes into Iraq" used by Iran to funnel weapons into Iraq, the document said.

The American unit had instructions to stay one kilometer from the Iranian border at all times, due to "special sensitivities around the border due to UN sanctions and Iranian concern that US was attempting to mount an invasion," it said.

The documents describe Iran arming and training Iraqi hit squads to carry out attacks on coalition troops and Iraqi government officials, with the elite Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps suspected of playing a crucial role, the newspapers reported, citing the files.

Attacks backed by Iran persisted after President Barack Obama took office in January 2009, with no sign that the new leader's more conciliatory tone led to any change in Tehran's support for the militias, the New York Times wrote, quoting the documents.

The documents describe accounts from detainees, the diary of a captured militant and the discovery of numerous weapons caches as proof of Iran's designs.

According to one document, the Iranians plotted to attack the Green Zone in Baghdad -- where key Iraqi government buildings and Western embassies were located -- using rockets and an armored vehicle loaded with chemical gas, the Guardian reported.

Another report alleges plans to use Iranian-supplied rockets with "neuroparalytic" agents designed to incapacitate their victims, the Guardian wrote.

An account from November 2005 describes Iraqi border police in Basra finding "bombing-making equipment" that included "explosively formed projectiles," a lethal roadside explosive that US officials say is supplied by Iran.

www.defencetalk.com

Japan considers extra submarines in defence review

CHINA'S increasing maritime activities in waters off Japan may prompt Tokyo to procure additional diesel-electric attack submarines or extend the life of existing platforms.

The moves are being considered as part of the Japanese Ministry of Defence's (MoD's) continuing review of its National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG), which is scheduled to be completed towards the end of this year.

A spokeswoman from the MoD told Jane's on 21 October: "Whether the number of submarines will be increased or not will be considered as part of the deliberations [over the NDPG]. The revision of the submarine force by life extension could be considered as one of the options."

The MoD spokeswoman did not confirm or deny reports by Japanese news agency Kyodo that the MoD plans to increase the size of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force's (JMSDF's) fleet of submarines from 16 to 22. Citing MoD officials, the news agency said that the NDPG review had determined that a bigger submarine fleet was necessary to reinforce vigilance in nearby waters.

www.janes.com