

Rising tide of popular demands

People's will should prevail

VOICES of change continue to be heard in diverse regions of the Middle East. After a truly remarkable bout of change in Tunisia and Egypt, it is by now absolutely clear that Arabs across the region have spontaneously risen in defence of a democracy they have never had over the last many decades. In Bahrain, in Libya, in Jordan, in Yemen, a tidal wave of popular revolt aimed at a liberalization of society through an overthrow of their entrenched ruling classes surges on, cheering votaries of democracy across the world.

The enormity of the transformation that has occurred among the mindsets of people in the countries where the demands for change are being raised testifies to their long-suppressed yearning for a transition to a new order. Unfortunately, rather than yielding to the demands or accepting the new realities that have come up, some regimes appear to be ready to fight a war of attrition against their own people. Individuals have died in Bahrain. Similar is the situation in Libya, where Muammar Gaddafi has been trying to demonstrate his hold on his country by organizing demonstrations in his favour. The royal houses of Jordan and Morocco, having promised change over the years but not really doing anything about it, are now scrambling to reassure citizens about bringing in reforms. It may well be too late in the day, for after Tunisia and Egypt, the mood is clearly one of nothing less than a change in leadership across the spectrum.

We in Bangladesh, having repeatedly gone through the experience of struggling for democratic change --- and succeeding in our efforts --- would certainly like to see the aspirations of the people of the Middle East crowned with success. Let no effort be made by the ruling classes to go against the tide. The struggle in Libya, Jordan, Bahrain, Yemen and Morocco are for an assertion of people's dignity. It is the will of the people that must triumph.

The expected has happened

Bangladesh should hit winning streak

WE would like to dwell a little on country Bangladesh and team Bangladesh to make our first point. The country Bangladesh came through with éclat and flying colours for the magnificent opening of the World Cup. Then followed the preparations for the opening encounter between India and Bangladesh which impeccably marked the beginning of the World Cup Cricket, 2011. On the match day, traffic and entry into the stadium were managed well with due diligence as inside of the stadium wore a colourful, impressive look.

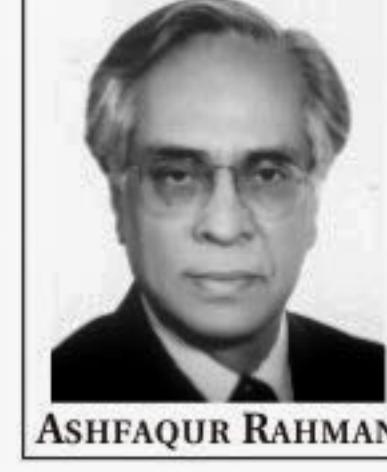
As for team Bangladesh, we would keep speculating whether on winning the toss we should have gone for fielding first. The options must have been discussed for the umpteenth time but when came the chips down we went against our own cricket history. Empirically, many a captain faced disastrous consequences for opting to field first. If we had batted first given our batting strength we could have amassed 260 at least and India would have been put to a difficult test coming second. Thus the decision to field first is questionable.

But this is not to take away any of the credit for a massive total of 370/4 from the Indian side. Sehwag and Kohli scored centuries with their entertaining and splendid batting. Bangladesh's bowling except for occasional sparks in the spin department was rather dismal. The deficit in pace bowling proved glaring. Ground fielding was on the whole good.

What was expected has happened, although we had built our hopes on our victory in the last World Cup against India. But just as Bangladesh has become an improved side so has Indian team emerged at the top of the world pecking order.

What the cricket-loving Bangladeshis would like to see happen now is that she does not lose against any of the modest sides, rather fall on a winning streak. Then consolidate from there on.

India's seat in the world stage



ASHFAQUR RAHMAN

LAST week a funny thing happened in the United Nations Security Council. The Indian Foreign Minister S.M. Krishna in

his first appearance before the Council since his country began a two-year stint in January, read the wrong speech.

For three minutes, he read the official statement of the Portuguese Foreign Minister, Mr. Luis Amado before he was stopped by his UN Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri and asked to read the Indian statement. "OK," quizzed Krishna "I have to start all over again?"

Without pausing or indicating that he made a gaffe, the Indian Foreign Minister began again. This time the speech started with a familiar line from Gandhi, calling "Poverty is the worst form of violence."

Back home the Indian opposition politicians called for Krishna to step down. They claimed his gaffe brought "shame" to India. According to them, India is now poised to shine in the world. Instead it is turning out to be a non-serious participant, unfit to sit with other world powers in the 15 member UN Security Council.

How far indeed is India serious as a major interlocutor in the world stage?

Bangladesh Prime Minister in her first official visit to India this time round has pledged support for India's permanent seat in this powerful body. So has President Obama of US when he recently visited New Delhi. This support will only come if there are reforms of the UN as a whole and of the Security Council in particular with possible expansion of the present permanent membership of the body.

However, India's claim to a perma-

gent seat in the reformed United Nations Security Council is based on solid grounds.

India is now the second most populous nation in the world. She is also the largest democracy. India is also a nuclear power with one of the world's largest standing arms. Today she is also the fourth largest economy on the basis of purchasing power parity after US, China and Japan. Her annual rate of economic growth is an unenviable 9%.

In spite of having such important credentials, she also suffers from a serious drawback.

India has since her Independence 63 years ago has been a violator of

to speak up for the persecuted, the victimised and marginalised people around the world when called upon to do so as a permanent member of the Security Council.

Her voice will not be listened to, as she will be asked to listen first to her own aggrieved. India will not be able to speak from any moral high ground.

So why did US agree to support India's claim to a permanent seat in the Security Council?

According to leaked cables posted on the WikiLeaks, Hillary Clinton, US Secretary of State is reported to have called India, "a self appointed front runner." Many in the diplomatic corridors round the world resonate

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human rights. In Kashmir, in her north eastern states as well now in north and central India, she is faced with armed insurrections which challenge these strong credentials.

According to many international monitoring agencies, India has committed violations while combating these uprisings. There she has to account for deaths, disappearances, widows, orphans as well as home demolitions and arrests.

Unless India addresses these international concerns and brings her population round to support her legitimate causes in a non-violent manner, she carries this anathema into posterity. She would not be able

to this sentiment and say that US support given by President Obama is "just a friendly gesture."

In Bangladesh's case, we can also echo US sentiment and say it as "just a neighbourly gesture?"

Speaking pragmatically, the present line up of the five permanent members in the Security Council i.e. US, China, Russia, Britain and France do not reflect the changed geo-political situation in the world. US, China and Russia do bring in great power status to the world body and with veto yielding powers form an exclusive club.

France however is not so relevant now in the international sphere. Its elite military unit is still called "for-

ward legion" with foreigners playing international role on her behalf.

Britain was brought to the Security Council at a time when she wielded both military and diplomatic power. Today her main role is to vote in line with US. Both have lost international clout.

Hence there are ample reasons to consider changes in the composition of the permanent membership, perhaps easing out both France and Britain and bringing in the European Union as one unit representing the European continent.

About 40 countries around the world oppose UN reforms. The rest are ready to discuss the subject provided cogent reasons and acceptable formulas are proffered. The coming UN General Assembly meeting beginning this September could again lead certain countries to initiate discussion on these reforms.

In the meantime India as a possible candidate for the permanent seat has to show the world that she is making efforts to change her profile. She has also to start behaving like a big power, generous and benign to her neighbours, considerate and wise when dealing with other nations, near and far. She lacks a track record which she has now to build up quickly.

However as close neighbours we wish her well in her pursuit of a permanent seat with full veto powers, if the Security Council is finally expanded.

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CORRECTION

Under the "Pleasure is all Mine" column which appeared on Friday, February 18, the Final of the World Cup will take place on April 2, not April 4 as mentioned.

"Credibility" of the nuke posture

SADIA TASLEEM

CREDIBLE Minimum Deterrence is a highly loaded term, often used to suggest a state's intentions with regard to its nuclear posture. Combined, the three words, 'Credible,' 'Minimum' and 'Deterrence' present a complex paradox. Credibility, for instance, is an essential prerequisite for deterrence. Why then use the word 'credible' as a prefix to Deterrence or Minimum Deterrence?

Yet, another challenge arises from the apparently convoluted nature of messages that "credible" and "minimum" convey. While "minimum" suggests "the least required to deter the adversary," adding "credible" to it blurs the whole idea. Since credibility largely depends upon the adversary's perception of our capabilities and intentions, there is always the possibility of incorrectly assessing our credibility in the adversary's calculations.

Caution in such circumstances may necessitate preparation for the worst possible scenario, thus raising the "minimum" bar. As a result what would appear credible might not be "minimum."

Why do then states opt to use terms that send across obscure signals? What shapes their particular choice of terms? And what do they actually mean by these terms? These are important questions to be addressed while we strive to untangle the complexities of a common lexicon. This article attempts to explain possible causes behind the idea of prefixing both "minimum" and "credible" to deterrence. (Identifying the right causes for a state might also help us clearly define what a state means by minimum and credible).

Why "minimum"?

- To set a ceiling out of sheer sense of moral responsibility;
- A genuine commitment to keep the arsenal low (either because it is cost-effective or because a state cannot afford anything more than that);
- Imitation/Emulation;
- Satisfying the international com-

munity and pacifying their concern regarding proliferation.

Why "credible"?

- Psychological comfort;
- Adds ambiguity;
- Provides leverage to move towards arms build-up;
- Imitation.

CMD as Pakistani nuclear policy: Tracing its history and identifying the causes

While deterrence has been an integral part of Pakistan's nuclear policy since its inception, "minimum" and "credible" entered Pakistan's nuclear lexicon a little later. These two terms were endorsed in February 1999 in the then prepared (publicly unannounced) Nuclear Doctrine of Pakistan. (Interview with Brigadier (Retd.) Naeem Salik, 28 January 2011).

The initial enthusiasm for mini-

mum deterrence was essentially

attribute too much to the rather less thought out choice of terms. It is less because these terms are used as disguises or are intentionally misleading, more because hardly any attention has been paid to the idea of developing nuclear jargon.

There is no evidence that suggests open sessions of discussions and deliberations purely dealing with the question of a lexicon. Few would, for instance, have an answer to why we opted for the word "credible" or why President Musharraf's idea of "defensive" deterrence did not receive a huge following.

Pakistani Perspective of CMD

It has been reiterated time and again that Pakistan's nuclear weapons are meant to deter security threats posed by India. It is clear that threats to the very survival of the state would invoke the need to use nuclear weapons. Ambiguity nonetheless remains on what exactly would be the nature

of "other" threats that could compel Pakistan to use nuclear weapons. Red lines, defined by General Kidwai in one of his interviews, have been quoted and misquoted repeatedly.

These lines leave many more confused than clear. It seems that there is a conscious effort to maintain existing ambiguity. Policy-makers in Pakistan feel convinced that this ambiguity serves deterrence well. Therefore, at this point in time, it is hard to move further on this question.

Next is the issue of prefixes. "Minimum" Deterrence in Pakistan is largely seen as a dynamic concept. The then Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar, while speaking at a seminar in November 1999 at ISSI, Islamabad, elaborated, "Minimum cannot be quantified in static numbers. The Indian build up would necessitate review and reassessment [...] but we shall not engage in any nuclear competition or arms race."

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THIS DAY IN HISTORY

February 20

1935

Caroline Mikkelsen becomes the first woman to set foot in Antarctica.

1962

Mercury program: While aboard Friendship 7, John Glenn becomes the first American to orbit the earth, making three orbits in 4 hours, 55 minutes. At age 40, he travels about 81,000 miles (more than 130,000km) as he circled the globe three times at more than 17,000 mph (27,000kph).

1983

Hundreds die in Assam poll violence. They are reported to have died in Assam as fierce fighting rages in the run-up to Indian elections.

1986

The Soviets launch space station Mir: The Soviets open a new phase in space exploration with the launch of the world's biggest space station, Mir.

Birth

1901

Muhammad Naguib, President of Egypt.

Death

1976

René Cassin, French judge, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.