

Shah's murder: A part of bigger game plan?



WM correspondent

January 28, 1998 Mirza Dilshad Beg, a sitting parliamentarian, was gunned down in a covert operation by an Indian agency for his 'furtive links with the rival Pakistani Intelligence' in Siphah, Kathmandu.

October 2, 2009 Majid Marikar, who

was accused by Indian media as a racketeer of fake Indian currency was killed in Nepalgunj.

December 25, 2009 Parbej Chanda alias Soukat Ahamad, whom the Uttar Pradesh government featured in its most wanted list, faced a brutal assassination in Butwal.

Indian media channels had been accusing him of carrying out anti-Indian activities.

January 1, 2010 Yunus Ansari, regarded as an anti-Indian by Indian establishment, is locked up in prison facing the charge of running fake currency racket in connivance with Pakistani Intelligence Agency.

February 7, 2010 Jamim Shah, managing director of Space Time Network, was fatally killed in Lazimpat, Kathmandu amid heavy security presence.

New Delhi had been constantly blaming Shah for working against Indian interests.

Obviously, the above list of assassinations indicates at the Indian hysteria about the Pakistani Intelligence.

Moreover, the latest gruesome murder of Shah has come at a time when Nepal is refusing to sign extradition treaty with India pointing out the need for a broader political consensus vis-a-vis the extradition issue.

India has long been shouting that

Nepali soil is being used by the Pakistan Intelligence Agency against its security.

It may be pertinent to note that New Delhi had also discarded the attempts of Nepali police administration to extradite Karan Singh, who was responsible for the murder of Beg, from Indian jail.

Underworld don Chhola Rajan was secretly transferred to India from Thailand when he received shots from the gang of his rival Dawood Ibrahim on September 14, 2000.

This fact clearly demonstrates that Rajan (Dawood's once linchpin in India) has nexus with the Indian intelligence agency.

The Indian establishment have already started to show bullish behaviour with Nepali leaders for their inability to 'control anti-Indian activities'

in Nepal.

The southern neighbour recently issued implicit threat that it would unilaterally deploy air-marshals in Indian airlines flying to and from Kathmandu if Nepal did not agree for the same.

It is also known that India was pressurizing Nepal to take action against Yunus Ansair and Shah time and again.

The Indian media has often ventured into hurling accusations that Shah helped instigate the anti-India riot (Ritik Roshan Scandal) that broke out some six years back in Kathmandu.

It was the Indian pressure that barred Shah from acquiring an operating license for his television channel from Nepal government.

Shah was also grilled when an Indian airlines was hijacked way back

in 1999 and also when Mirza was killed.

The Indian media are now indulging in carrying out reports that the murder of Shah would minimize the threat to Indian security interests.

Such being the case, it is natural to suspect the involvement of the southern neighbour's spy mechanism behind the Shah's murder.

Shah's senior brother Mukim Shah has said that putting blame on Chhote Rajan for the incident is a subterfuge to stifle the identification of real culprits.

The lackadaisical attitude on the part of police to trace the culprits has also raised suspicion if it was a part of bigger plot.

At the same time, the broad daylight murder of Shah in a place with high security alert highlights the gross inefficiency and unreliability of the country's security mechanism.

China continues to assist Nepal



WM correspondent

China has handed over the nature conservation and research center built with its financial assistance worth Rs 350 million to Nepal.

The center, spread over the area of 35 ropanies, also boasts of well-designed auditorium and training halls.

Meanwhile, Nepal and China have inked an agreement to enhance cooperation in preventing and combating transnational crimes.

During the visit of Home Minister

Bhim Rawal to China this week, the two sides reached the deal on to consolidate Nepali security agencies.

China has generously pledged assistance of Rs. 20 million for the purpose.

As per the agreement, China will donate various vehicles and equipments to Nepali police.

The northern neighbour also expressed its keenness to help construct an Armed Police Force Training Center in Nepal.

In response, Nepal reaffirmed its support to the One-China policy and committed that Nepali soil would not be allowed to be used in anti-China activities.

Earlier, China had increased China's annual assistance to Nepal to 150 million Yuan from existing 100 million Yuan.

China has long been extending generous support to help expedite the socio-economic development of its tiny neighbour.

Capital flight at its height

WM Correspondent

The country's law has barred unauthorized transfer of foreign exchange.

But, a significant portion of the capital from the country is being siphoned off in the name of importing goods from Tibet. So far, it has been confirmed that a total of US\$ 58 million has ended up in seven various banks in Hong Kong including HSBC, Agriculture Bank of China, Bank of China, Bank of India, China Merchant Bank, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, Shenzhen Development Bank, Bank of Ningbo and Hang Seng Bank Limited.

The foreign exchange has landed in these renowned banks that are highly sensitive to possible money laundering from another country.

That's why investigators suspect the involvement of high-placed officials in the flight of huge money to different foreign banks.

Two tiny enterprises registered just seven months ago namely New Dahal Business Enterprises and

New Tina Enterprises, which were found to be responsible behind the capital flight, may be just a middle ground in the case.

The soaring capital flight has only contributed to exacerbate the already alarming balance of payment deficit that stood at Rs. 19 billion during the first five months of the current fiscal year.

The latest capital flight scam is one of the biggest foreign exchange misappropriations in the history of financial history of the country.

The capital flight had much to do with the loopholes of the provision of credit import facility even though the same has now been scrapped by Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB).

As per this facility, the importers would have to deposit the cash equivalent to 10 percent of import value of goods before importing and the bank would make payment to the exporting party after the proof of goods entry is produced to the banks.

It is yet to be confirmed as to how much foreign exchange the

country lost when the reserve of foreign exchange is decreasing.

About one and a half month back, it was found that capital flight was taking place in the name of the getting insurance coverage in Indian insurance companies.

However, the exact reason behind the flow of huge capital from the country is still shrouded in mystery.

Many business honchos of the country are found to have invested in stock market, realty as well as industrial sector of foreign countries.

So far, there has not been a single investigation to detect the amount of capital invested in foreign lands.

Since the investment climate of the country is worsening at an escalating pace, the ceaseless augmentation in the capital flight is pretty plausible.

Power outages, labour problem, volatile politics and other infrastructure related bottlenecks have deterred local investors to pour their bucks into the domestic market.

I, on the behalf of **Nepal-China Society**, want to extend my warm greetings to all the Chinese people on the joyful occasion of **Lunar New Year (Spring Festival)**.

I also express my best wishes for more happier, prosperous and peaceful future of China.

Let the dawn of Lunar New Year take the cordial bilateral relations between Nepal and China in every front to newer and greater heights through active political, economical, cultural and social exchanges.



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Editorial

Avert ethnic chauvinism

That unleashing the social and economic productivities of the marginalized groups for the equitable advancement of the country should be the prime tenet of state restructuring goes without saying. The slogans of 'ethnic autonomy' for tribal communities and about introduction of federal kind of government including formation of different liberation fronts are there to prove that certain political parties have lost their sense of direction. If necessary wisdom is not exercised in dealing with it prudently the whole nation will be engulfed in a cycle of death and destruction in the name of communal, ethnic and linguistic frenzy.

In case the ethnic, linguistic, regional and caste differences are allowed to develop, national integration would suffer heavily and different people would start to struggle for their separate sovereign states in the name of establishing their own identity. The factor of political geography engages our attention when we find that the rebellious tribes very much thrive on the support of the alien.

One may discern the point that political culture has certain components having their place in the world of sociology, and they are values, beliefs and emotional attitudes of the people towards fellow countrymen. We should not come to a sudden conclusion without knowing the component of emotional attitudes and the tone and temper of the people. This hinges on the fact of people's attitude and belief towards the several inter-related factors: historical, geographical and socio-economic. More especially, small and vulnerable countries like Nepal should take measures to strengthen rather than weaken feeling of national unity, cohesiveness and integration.

Nepal is a country which has a very long history of communal harmony where all castes, religions and languages have throughout survived and flourished in an exemplary state of tolerance and co-existence. Many languages, dialects, religious faiths have contributed towards building up a one, unified and integrated Nepali society. Against such an encouraging background, it is not all in the overall interest of the nation to indulge in activities, which, in any way, hurt the sentiments and sensitivities. It is because of this tradition that never in its history this country witnessed any communal disturbance.

However, of late, efforts appear to have been going on to arouse feelings of communal hatred in the society. What is also appalling is that a systematic programme is underway in our country too to disintegrate the national union on the basis of regional, linguistic and ethnic considerations. History is testimony to the fact that a large number of Nepalese belonging to ethnic tribal sectors have made unusually unique sacrifices for upholding the cause of national unity and territorial integrity.

The purpose here is to pinpoint the reality that these divisive trends are undermining the very cause of national unity.

Nepal cannot afford to tinker with its multiplicities and diversity which lie latent as explosive underneath its heterogeneous society.

However, the concept paper on State Restructuring, recently submitted to the Constituent Assembly (CA), has stirred up fears vis-a-vis the radical changes to the Nepali state and society that the provisions in the concept paper will bring.

The first anxiety is that granting ethnic and regional groups agrahikar (extraordinary rights) where they are dominant will wreck havoc with the rights of other groups residing in the same area. In all probability, this would lead to a kind of dictatorship of one ethnic/regional group over others.

In a highly heterogeneous society like Nepal, various measures of affirmative action and the recognition of group rights can pave the path towards unleashing the social and productive capacities of the people.

The concept paper incorporates a controversial provision that states "priority" should be given to the dominant community in each federal province when it comes to the selection of "the chief leadership level" for the first two terms of office.

This provision gives ample space to fear that other minority groups in the provinces will lose even what little chance they have for political representation and will have to follow the dictate of the dominant group.

The provision that the "chief leadership" of the federal states will have to come from its dominant community has to be scrutinized in the light of methods that will be adopted to elect the entire provincial legislature and executive.

Political parties are yet to reach to common conclusion on this matter.

It is mandatory to devise a system of representation for the legislature and other state organs so that minorities will have enough power to ensure that the dominant group will not have any chance to develop chauvinistic tendency even in a situation where the latter will be granted some special rights.

Another major fear regarding the demarcation of Nepal into federal states concerns the economic and geographic viability of the provinces as currently envisaged.

Even though the issue of recognition of identity has got enough attention, the question whether the provinces would be economically and administratively feasible is still in limbo. In order to resolve this complex issue, the formation of a State Restructuring Commission constituted of technical experts is desirable.

Nepal trying to march in step

By Dhurba Adhikary

Nothing illustrates the deep divide that Nepal must cross to achieve lasting peace than the two armies that stand ready to stare at each other down the barrels of their guns.

In what could be considered an unfortunate calendar clash, this year the national Nepal Army's annual day falls on February 12, while the Maoists it fought for a decade commemorate the 1996 launch of their "People's War" one day later. While the Maoists' date is fixed at February 13, the Nepal Army's traditional event takes place on the day the festival of Shivaratri is observed.

Known as the Royal Nepal Army before dropping the regal moniker in 2006 when the monarchy was deposed, the national Nepal Army consists of about 96,000 men and women and is funded by the government. The Maoist ranks of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) number nearly 20,000 combatants who live in camps monitored by the United Nations.

From the UN's standpoint, Nepal's ongoing peace process is still fragile. Efforts to forge a new republican constitution by a May 28 deadline are fraught with uncertainties and the mutual mistrust between the political party of the former Maoist rebels and the democratic parties makes people nervous. The lurking fear is that a constitutional crisis could lead the country into an indefinite phase of anarchy.

Nevertheless, all parties appear to be doing their best to meet the deadline for a constitution embodying a federal system, and most resolutely oppose leaving any space for the possible revival of the monarchy, even as a ceremonial institution.

Among the major challenges at hand before the end of May is the issue of the integration and rehabilitation of the former Maoist combatants.

The camps for former guerrillas must be dismantled before the UN's mandate for its special mission in Nepal expires on May 15. Suspicious of Maoist intentions, and claiming that the former rebels' party, the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist),

gained votes through intimidation in the 2008 elections, non-Maoist parties want them shut down immediately. The UN monitors are neither equipped nor mandated to stop PLA combatants with weapons in hand from leaving camps scattered around the country.

While the top Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal, better known as Prachanda, and his comrades have made public commitments to abide by peace accords, differences of opinion persist about what constitutes integration of the Maoist forces and how it can be accomplished.

The Maoist demand is for amalgamation (en masse) of its forces with the Nepal Army, forming a new national army for which a fresh structure and hierarchy would have to be adopted. The Maoists insist that since their men and women conducted armed insurgency for over a decade until the 2006 peace deal, they would neither need any training nor be required to meet the criteria applied to new recruits.

However, the Maoist leaders have also shown some flexibility by offering to allow some of their PLA soldiers to be absorbed into three other security agencies - the Nepal Police, the Armed Force and the National Investigation Department. The forces of reconciliation with former foes also led them to remove about 4,000 "disqualified" combatants from the camps, including minors and those not verified by the UN at the time of entry.

Reactions to the Maoist proposals vary widely, from outright rejection to partial acceptance for integration into various security agencies. Interim Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, who governs through a loose coalition of 22 parties, seems to favor placing about 5,000 combatants in army and police units, provided they meet the prescribed physical and educational standards.

Jhalanath Khanal, president of the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), the moderate-left party to which the prime minister belongs, endorses this. Although she is in the same party, Defense Minister Bidya Bhandari says

she is opposed to allowing politically indoctrinated Maoist combatants into a military which she says has to remain professional as well as apolitical.

Her position was initially articulated by controversial former army chief General Rukmangud Katawal, whom Prachanda, as prime minister, wanted to sack last May but couldn't as the president intervened. Chhatra Man Singh Gurung, the successor to Katawal, says he will carry out government decisions based on consensus.

The Nepal Army is not against the idea of letting in Maoists as individual recruits if they meet prescribed standards. But, within it, some of Gurung's ambitious colleagues are said to vehemently oppose accommodating PLA combatants in any shape or form. In this lies the potential for the entire peace process to stumble.

The Maoists contend that the process of writing a constitution and resolving the combatants' issue should move ahead simultaneously so that mutual suspicion is erased.

"We, the Maoists, are worried because we suspect other political parties are looking for a pretext to stop the constitution from being issued at the stipulated time," Maoist leader Janardan Sharma told Asia Times Online. "And they, on the other hand, seem to be thinking that we want to keep the issue of combatants alive until the next election, whenever it is conducted."

Geja Wagle, a security analyst associated with a group studying the question of integration and rehabilitation, says that while the Maoist idea is sensible, the promulgation of the constitution with Maoist combatants still in the camps would fail to create the grounds for sustainable political stability.

Both the democratic and Maoist parties are working overtime to make the Special Committee, tasked with integrating the two forces sort out the actual number of combatants to be integrated and set the criteria for

eventual integration.

Even as a political party, the Maoists have not formally renounced violence. Their cadres, the Young Communist Group, continue to dominate the news media countrywide for launching armed attacks on groups for supporting rival political parties. And their agenda for radical reforms is seen by many as hindering preparations of the first draft of the new statute. Politicians in other parties claim the Maoists have forgotten that a clear commitment to engage in competitive politics accompanied their acceptance of the peace process.

In a report released last month, the independent Brussels-based International Crisis Group said the Maoist-led government had relabeled hundreds of criminal acts as "political cases". Impunity for past crimes, the report points out, encourages political violence now. None of the Maoist leaders has disputed this statement.

The Nepal Army has also come under intense criticism. It has been censured for not adhering to universally applied principles as well as human-rights standards. Human-rights organizations, including the UN, have expressed reservations over the government promoting erring officers and retaining the services of those who they said should be put on trial in civilian courts.

Competent UN officials keep telling the media that the Nepal Army's reputation as a troop-contributing country to international peacekeeping efforts could also be tarnished.

If the combatants' issue remains unresolved when the United Nations Mission in Nepal winds up its assignment on May 15, it is unclear whether the Security Council will consider an extension of its mandate or will devise another mechanism for the monitoring job it initiated in early 2007.

In the emerging context, while the UN is likely to direct its regular field office in Nepal to handle immediate challenges in concluding the current phase of monitoring, the international community might be required to return to Nepal should volatility threaten the peace and stability of South Asia.

Will new constitution bring hope for Dalits?

By Ramesh Sunam

It is still unsure whether Nepal's new constitution will be promulgated within the stipulated time. However, issues to be addressed by the new constitution are being debated across political and academic circles. One of the major issues is how to address social exclusion in the new statute. Despite its natural and cultural beauty, the Himalayan country can be viewed as a case for discrimination based on caste, gender, class, religion, culture and geographical location. Of the various forms of discrimination, caste-based discrimination has had broad social and economic implications in Nepalese society. No part of the country is free from caste-based discrimination (untouchability) though degree and nature of discrimination may vary. Although there is controversy on the figure of Dalit population, 20 percent is quoted widely. If this is true, one in every five Nepalese has to face discrimination everyday just being born into a Dalit family. The constitution can't be 'new' if it fails to address the issues of Dalits. Still, there is fear that new constitution might well be like 'old wine in a new bottle'.

Dalits are far behind in vital national statistics. About 80 percent of the Dalit population lives below poverty line. Literacy rate of Dalit stands at 34 percent against the national average of

54 percent. Their life expectancy is 51 years in contrast to the national average of 59 years. Similarly, per capita income of Dalit is about US \$40, which is perhaps the lowest in the world. 23 percent of Dalit are landless and 49 percent have less than 0.1 hectares of land. These figures for Madhesi Dalit and Dalit women are shockingly low. These facts depict the appalling situation of Dalits in Nepal. However, it seems that Dalit wings of political parties and Dalit NGOs have not given enough attention to the fundamental issues of Dalits. The political parties are only concerned either about strengthening the current government or toppling down it, outing the main task of constitution making on the backburner.

A few inspiring initiatives have been taken by Dalit wings of political parties and Dalit NGOs, for instance, formation of united forum of Dalit wings of major political parties and setting common Dalit agenda to be incorporated into the new constitution.

Nonetheless, they have failed to exert adequate pressure on the political parties to insert those agenda in the new constitution. Some reasons account for this. First, it appears that they can't go or not have enough courage to go beyond party politics for Dalit cause. Second, they are not

confident that Dalit populace will support them if they conduct political campaign. In the history of Nepal, the large number of Dalit members (50) has been elected in the constituent assembly. Dalit had hopes that they could put pressure to incorporate Dalit agenda into the new constitution. In contrast, they have not seen any difference between Dalit and non-Dalit CA members. It reflects that only physical presence of Dalit can't guarantee their influence.

In the case of Dalit NGOs, most NGOs by nature can hardly pursue radical thoughts and actions. They more often tend to be vocal of donor's agendas to tap the fund rather than the political agenda. Besides, we have witnessed aggressive pressure on the government by NGO activists, some wings of political parties and others when the government had reduced MBBS quota for Dalit students. It doesn't mean that I am against such campaign, but it can provide benefits just to a handful of Dalit students. Vast majority of Dalit students are deprived of basic education, why we can't run aggressive campaign for free education to Dalit students from basic to university levels. It supports the argument that urban-centric Dalit activists embrace pro-rich Dalit agenda than the one that can be in

the interest of the majority of Dalit. By vision and mission Dalit NGOs and wings of political parties have been formed to ensure Dalit rights, so all Dalits will be blaming them, not the political parties in general. Time is running out, so we don't have alternatives to them at the moment. Hopes of Dalits to live with dignity, as equal citizens, are still pinned on them. If so, what can be the way ahead?

There is no alternative to fresh Dalit movement with new vigour. Learning from Janajati and Madesh movements, united forum of Dalit wings of political parties should lead the movement. And Dalit NGOs should assist them whole-heartedly, keeping aside their political ideologies and donors' code of conduct. Even Dalit NGOs should be ready to postpone implementation of some donor-funded projects because this is not the moment to distribute goats and piglets to poor Dalit families and provide training on savings as a means of livelihoods. The united forum should also mobilise Dalit student organisations, sister organisations of political parties for the cause. These are not blueprints but can be food for thoughts to go ahead in order to pressure the state to ensure Dalit rights. If Dalit fails to use this time prudently they have to regret for several decades to come.

Nepal's diplomatic deficiency: Legend and lessons

By Katak Malla

Foreign policy is known to be the reflection of national interests, the fulfillment of which demands sound strategies and skilled diplomats. Diplomacy is an art, a vocation and a project, influencing others for the fulfillment of one's own national interest. Such art, vocation and project do vary from one State to another, depending on the geo-political situation and the military as well as the economic strength. A few, but important, questions arise concerning Nepal's current diplomatic approach, or lack thereof: Is there any lesson to learn from Nepal's past diplomats? Are there such diplomats in Nepal, who understand the art of diplomacy and service as vocation, rather than just reaching a position? And, above all does the country have such project? If not, a serious discussion on diplomacy must start: the sooner the better.

Nepal's location, size and state of economic development do not prevent her from adopting an independent foreign policy, and claiming the just principle of international law, resisting the big power bullying or opposing foreign interference in internal politics. In doing so, the political house of the country must be kept in order. Currently, some groups in Nepal are whipping up nationalistic feelings

against the foreign involvement in the internal politics, and others are openly becoming aligned with the foreign powers to suppress their domestic opponents. "National consensus" seems to be the key word of Nepal's current political leaders, but who is preventing the political leaders (including the former king), to make a joint declaration opposing foreign interference?

Diplomatic wisdom of a legendary statesman Rishikesh Shaha is worth repeating in the present context: "Foreign policy, however successful, cannot itself deliver the goods to the people, nor can it alone achieve the positive end of nationalism." Thus, the interests of the people must be at the heart of national and international policy. In this, a distinction must be made between the interests of the people, whom governments in Nepal and the neighboring countries claim to represent, and their policies which, more often than not, contradict the people's interests. One of the main reasons for failing to make this distinction is the fundamental failure or lack of democratic systems in the region.

Rishikesh Shaha's courage is also noteworthy for Nepal's career

diplomats as well as policy makers. Shaha stood up against all odds to the then Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev—from the rostrum of the General Assembly—to tell him that "he had no right banging his shoe on his desk and thereby showing disrespect for an organization that belonged first of all to small nations." When I met Shaha for the last time in the late 1990s, he said that he made both friends and adversaries by challenging the Soviet leader, at home and abroad. Shaha was admired in the diplomatic circles. Nonetheless, he was called back from his position—never to return to the diplomatic service—but his diplomatic career continued as a writer, and he remained as one and the only person influencing Nepal's foreign policy during his time.

In addition to the enhancement of Nepal's honour at the UN, Rishikesh Shaha's statesmanship was considered only second to the then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in promoting the cause of the Non-Alignment Movement (which is currently going through a crisis of definition and direction). Time Magazine (24 Oct. 1960) wrote that the most effective work to make "neutrality" respectable "has often

been done by second-echelon diplomats.... Nepal's Rishikesh Shaha....". Shaha may have been somewhat politically controversial, but remains as a legendary statesman of small power diplomacy.

Unlike the powerful States' diplomacy, the small power diplomacy depends upon the adherence to just principles and the use of diplomatic wisdom and courage, more so at times of crisis. Just as in the colonial times, the control of resources and lives of other people remains the objective of powerful States. When needed, powerful States—in the name of diplomacy—often use threats, persuasion, sanctions or force as well as overt and covert internal political operations, ultimately in some cases leading to change (or restoration) of the political regime in weaker States.

Except for a few honourable exceptions, the European diplomacy to Nepal continues to serve as a "carrot" to the "stick" of the US diplomacy. On the other hand, Nepal's diplomacy abroad, primarily seeking foreign aid, is becoming less significant since the donors themselves are residentially present in Kathmandu—not necessarily to address Nepal's needs, but to execute the donor's interest. The internal political interference by foreign diplomats is illegal according to the basic principle of international law. Such diplomacy is being practiced, forming and/or toppling the governments. Now it is time for the foreign diplomats either to abide by the classic norms of diplomacy, keeping themselves aloof from internal matters, or to let Nepal's ambassadors abroad have the same right in the respective host countries. After all, reciprocity is the golden rule of diplomacy, i.e. either the foreign diplomats have to "shut-up" or Nepal's diplomats have to "put-up" their rights.

Neutrality is the strength of small power diplomacy, especially in Nepal's condition. But is Nepal's geographic location so complex or its diplomatic leadership that is stupid, or both? Which of them is the problem or the solution in the relations with the northern and southern neighbors? The country's geo-location serves as a natural defense or détente for its northern and southern neighbors, and has been described with a misleading metaphor: "Yam between the two rocks." Nepal's foreign policy makers (somebody may also wonder if there are any) continue to suffer from the "Yam-syndrome" or the small nation-inferiority complex. This has contributed to the current policy of submission and sense of resignation to the situation, without critically assessing Nepal's strengths and weaknesses.

There can be no match between Nepal and China or between Nepal and India in terms of power configuration, e.g. territory, population and economic and military strength. Nonetheless, the mutual benefit is apparent in the triangular relations. Nearly thirty million people of Nepal are a considerable strength of the nation.

What is lacking in Nepal is diplomatic wisdom and courage. One of the first steps to fill the void would be that the past and present rulers of Nepal, including political party leaders, must make a joint declaration against foreign interference, committing to sort out the internal political differences of diplomacy through genuine national reconciliation. Failure to do so would be considered as the historical betrayal to the nation.

National news :

China, Nepal to boost law enforcement cooperation

A senior official with the Communist Party of China (CPC), Zhou Yongkang, proposed stronger law-enforcement cooperation between China and Nepal,



according to a statement of the Ministry of Public Security Tuesday.

Zhou, a Standing Committee member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, made the remark during a meeting with visiting Minister for Home Affairs Bhim Bahadur Rawal in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing Monday.

China attaches great importance to China-Nepal law-enforcement cooperation and expects the two countries to deepen pragmatic cooperation and safeguard and promote the regional peace and stability, said Zhou, who is also secretary of the Political and Legislative Affairs Committee of the CPC Central Committee.

China appreciates Nepal's firm adherence to the one-China policy and its prevention of anti-China forces from carrying out separatist activities on its territory, Zhou added.

China is willing to further strengthen communication, coordination and cooperation on the Tibet issue with Nepal, he said.

Rawal said Nepal, which brooks no anti-China separatist forces undermining its friendly relations with China, would like to boost law-enforcement cooperation with China and jointly crack down on crimes on their border areas.

China's Public Security Minister Meng Jianzhu also held talks with Rawal Monday after the latter's meeting with Zhou.

Meng said China's Ministry of Public Security is ready to work with the Nepali Ministry of Home Affairs to implement the consensus reached by their state leaders to enhance bilateral exchanges and cooperation.

Based on the principle of considering the overall situation and looking to the future, Meng expects continuous and healthy development in China-Nepal relations.

Rawal echoed Meng sentiments, reiterating Nepal's willingness to further cooperate with China in law-enforcement.

At the invitation of Meng, Rawal is visiting China from Feb. 6-12.

Bhutanese minister extends invitation

Bhutanese Minister for Economic Affairs Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk has extended invitation of Bhutanese Prime Minister Jigme Yoser Thinley to Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal for the 16th Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to be held in Thimpu from April 28 - 29.

Wangchuk handed over the Bhutanese PM's invitation at a meeting with PM Nepal at the latter's residence in Baluwatar.

The up coming SAARC summit is going to be held in Thimpu, Bhutan after Maldives refused to organize the summit citing impacts of global recession. This is the first time Bhutan is hosting a SAARC summit after it was established in 1985.

At the meeting with PM Nepal, Bhutanese minister Wangchuk informed PM Nepal the main agenda of the 16th SAARC Summit would be issues related to the climate change and that Bhutan had expected utmost cooperation from Nepal towards this.

PM Nepal urged Wangchuk to take back the Bhutanese refugees as third-party settlements alone would not solve the problem. PM Nepal also pointed out at the increasing suicidal trend among Bhutanese refugees settled in third countries.

In response, Wangchuk told PM Nepal, he would convey the message to the Bhutanese Prime Minister.

Minister Wangchuk, who is also a former PM of Bhutan, arrived in Kathmandu as a special representative of the Bhutanese Prime Minister, Tuesday.

NC general convention likely to be deferred

The 12th general convention of the Nepali Congress is likely to be postponed due to lack of preparations.

During the meeting of the party's central working committee (CWC) held at the party headquarters in Sanepa Tuesday, most of the CWC members blamed the leadership for lack of homework for the general convention.

Leaders told media persons after the meeting that postponement of the general convention slated for March 10-14 is very likely, as the party is yet to complete the distribution of active memberships.

However, leader Govind Raj Joshi opposed the idea of postponement. "The leadership must be able to give convincing reasons before deciding to postpone the general convention," said he.

Leaders said the next meeting of the CWC will take a decision on this.

Flawed interpretation

Nepal's current regime seems to be interpreting the rules of international law as it pleases, namely adopting double meaning of the principle of political independence and territorial sovereignty. The latest in a series of such a double standard is the regime's response to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's statement, which called for the "formation of a national unity government." Such interpretation primarily comes from leaders who frequently visit India and toe the Indian line of thinking.

Nepali Congress leader Ram Chandra Poudel is leading the protest against the UN secretary general, arguing that "the UN should not direct us to do this and that". But Nepal's political leaders never before were so much concerned about the violation of internal sovereignty as they are with the statement of the UN chief, not even against the ongoing territorial aggression by India in the areas of Kalapani and Susta. It is well known that India has encroached upon and continues to illegally occupy more than 60,000 hectares of Nepali land at 61 different places across the country. Citizens have submitted a petition to the Supreme Court of Nepal, asking protection in the border villages from encroachment by India.

It is unprecedented that the regime has reached a conclusion to denounce the UN secretary general's suggestion for a national unity government. Do these leaders have courage to utter a single word against their Indian political masters? The Indian regime is frequently commanding Nepali leaders: isn't that interference in Nepal's internal matters? (with a specific distinction between the "people" and "government" in mind, I am using the term "regime" because "governments" are duty bound to respect its own people and observe the law and those who fail to follow the rules of non-interference are by definition known as "regimes". This distinction applies whether it is in Nepal or elsewhere, including China).

The day Nepal's ruling junta (the term "junta" signify unelected ministers) condemned Ban Ki-moon's balanced statement on Nepal's politics, the CPN-UML Chairman Jhala Nath Khanal was literally summoned ("invitation" was a diplomatic lie) by the Indian political establishment. The Indian Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Bharatiya Janta Party leader Lal Krishna Advani were politically tutoring Khanal about "consensus and unity among the

major political parties". Why is Nepal's Maoist or non-Maoist party leaders' frequent visit to India for political consultations not considered interference in any way whatsoever?

Here stands an important international law related question: If Ban Ki-moon's statement is contrary to the international legal norms—or if it is a violation of the internal sovereignty of Nepal—why is Indian domination welcomed by Nepal's politicians?

The regime is pretending to be courageous by protesting the UN secretary general's statement but, in the process, it is chewing more than it can swallow. Or, will the regime also dare to oppose India on issues of interference, including territorial integrity of Nepal? Is the UN secretary general just a soft target whom Nepali politicians can condemn?

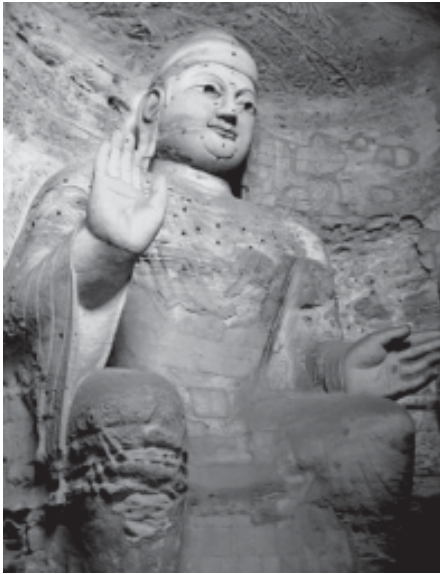
With legitimate presence of the UN Mission in Nepal, Ban Ki-moon's statement is not contrary to the principle of non-interference under the UN Charter. The UN Mission is responsible to the UN Security Council and it is also accountable for the conclusion of the peace process. Nepal's current oligarchy must be aware of the fact that the UN Mission in Nepal is the custodian of the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA), including issues related to army integration and discharge of disqualified rebel combatants.

The UN aims to bring all parties to the government for the conclusion of the peace process. The Indian rulers were against the UN Mission in Nepal from the start, now it is not a coincidence that Nepal's rulers are on the same line with India, opposing the UN activities in Nepal. This is substantiated from the fact that the current rulers also reached a conclusion that "UCPN (Maoists) has violated the CPA." This conclusion comes at a time when some of the leaders are against a national unity government openly demanding the dissolution of the elected Constituent Assembly, favoring an army backed presidential rule.

So long as neighbors maintain their boundaries, Nepal must be sensitive about its territory and interests. India's involvement in the internal politics of Nepal and Nepali leaders' political intimacy with their Indian masters is null and void, according to all international legal norms; it is demeaning to Nepali people's integrity and therefore it must be condemned by the self-respecting citizens of Nepal as well as those Indian and Chinese citizens who believe in mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of each other.

The Effect of Buddhahadra on Chinese Buddhism

Master Shi Huai Shan, Abbot Chinese Monastery in Lumbini



Buddhism, originated from India, was spread into China as early as Han Dynasties (from B.C. to A.D.). It finally settled down under special Chinese social conditions and cultural background after experiencing reiterative and devious changes.

The "special Chinese social conditions and cultural background" here referred to the special environment China had to cater to Buddhism. From the dominant class to common people, there was karma among them to accept Buddhism.

The introduction to Buddhism was of course by men, eminent monks to be specific, including the Chinese monks who went to the Western World to seek the dharma. Thanks to the translation of Buddhist sutra from Sanskrit to Chinese language by these monks, Chinese people were able to know about, study and practice the Holy Scriptures by connecting their status quo with the cultural phenomena. After colliding and interjecting with the native culture, Buddhism with special Chinese characteristics came into being.

Among all the eminent monks carrying forward Buddhism from the Western World to China, there was one from Sakya clan in Kapilavastu of Nepal—Buddhahadra, who left a magnificent page in the history of Chinese Buddhism translation. Today our commemoration of his preaching Buddhism in China 1600 years ago has special meaning. The effect of Buddhahadra on Chinese Buddhism will be as follows:

I. The historical situation during Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties

We need to open the history of Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties to know under what kind of historical circumstances Buddhahadra came to China.

China's Eastern Jin Dynasty and Northern and Southern Dynasties were between 4-6th Centuries.

Huangjin Uprising at the end of Eastern Han Dynasty (25

220 A.D.) severely crippled the ruling of Han Dynasty. In the meantime, despots everywhere expanded their arming in order to suppress the uprising forces. Military groups of various scales appeared nationwide and armed annexations were going on among warlords. Eastern Han Dynasty existed in name only. In the year of 220, Cao Cao set up Wei in Luoyang in place of Han, controlling the whole Central Plains.

Liu Bei established Shu in Chengdu, taking up the southwest region. Sun Quan founded Wu in Jiankang (today's Nanjing), ruling the southeast of Yangtze River. This was called Three Kingdoms period, which also witnessed the split of China's unity since Qin and Han Dynasties.

Again three kingdoms fought with each other. Wei destroyed Shu in 263, Wu in 280, and unified the nation. The title was altered to Jin. Some measures to recover production and develop economy were taken at the beginning of Jin dynasty so that the Yellow River and Yangtze River regions got relatively stabilized, which was a brief period after about one-century turbulence and split since the end of Han Dynasty.

There were constant wars in the next 300 years from the year of 300 to 600. In 316, some force in the northern Shanxi seized the power and replaced Western Jin with Eastern Jin Dynasty, making Jiayue (today's Nanjing) the capital. Then in 420, Song Dynasty replaced Eastern Jin. More alternations followed with Qi, Liang, and Chen, plus the previous Wu and Eastern Jin, all settled their capital in Nanjing. This was Southern Dynasties, or Six Dynasties.

At the same time, in the northern Yellow River region, minority ethnic groups like Hun, Siempi, jie, Qay, qiang established 16 kingdoms one after another. There were some other small kingdoms controlled by Han people. Wars and annexations were going on successively among them and finally Siempi unified to make Tuoba's dynasty, Wei as the title and Pingcheng (today's Datong, Shanxi), historically called Northern Wei. In 493, Wei moved its capital to Luoyang, and further unified the Central Plains. In 534, after 100 years of unification, Northern Wei split into Eastern Wei and Western Wei, the former's capital Ye (today's Linzhang, Hebei) and latter's capital Chang'an (today's Xi'an, Shaanxi). In 550, there was faction inside Eastern Wei. Gao Yu became the emperor and changed the title to Qi, known as Northern Qi. In 557, faction also happened inside Western Wei. Yu Wenju changed the title to Zhou, known as Northern Zhou. In 577, Northern Zhou perished Northern Qi and unified the North. In 581, Northern Zhou's Yang Jian took the power and established Sui Dynasty. In 589, Sui destroyed Chen of Southern Dynasties and put the hundreds years of split between the North and the

South to an end. China was reunified again.

From Cao Cao's Wei to 589's Sui, China considered this 369 years of history Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties. Apart from the frequent wars and disastrous happenings, there was relative stability and prosperity in certain area and limited time. Buddhism was thus being spread in a multi-facet way nationwide. The monks from the Western World either came to China themselves or were invited. Buddhahadra was among them. Buddhism at that time was able to penetrate into different walks of life in the society, collide and cross with traditional Chinese thinking and culture. Buddhist system with special Chinese historical characteristics was formed, influencing, even predominating the ruling ideology of the then big powers.

II. The mainstream of Buddhism during Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties

At the end of Han Dynasty, Confucian orthodox idea was criticized and Taoist metaphysics upheld. Metaphysics was a kind of doctrine with mysterious and abstruse conception, advocating insipidity and inactivity. When it came to Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties, metaphysics was using simple language to discuss ontology and epistemology, and trying to establish new philosophy and values. It was especially attractive to some scholar-bureaucrats who tried to flee the then cruel struggle for power due to its distance from political and realistic life, high degree of abstractness, and strong philosophical nature. Therefore it became dominant ideology in Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties.

Non-Confucianism atmosphere and the rise of metaphysics created right ideological conditions for all-round development of Buddhism.

The following reflected the mainstream of Buddhism preaching:

Firstly, dissatisfied with the limitation of quantity and argumentation of Buddhist Scriptures, Zhu Shixing of Three Kingdoms, the first monk who went to the Western World in 260, got "Prajna pramita sutra" from Yulian, which startled both the government and the public. More monks followed to seek the Law or visit holy places by way of land or sea, which reached a climax during Jin and Song Dynasties. Representatives included Faxian, Zhiyan, Baoyun, Songyun, Huisheng, etc. They brought large number of Buddhist Scriptures back and translated into Chinese. This helped Chinese Buddhism stride to a new phase.

Secondly, many more monks from the Western World swarmed into China and worked together with the government and Chinese monks to translate Sutranta-pitaka, Vinaya-pitaka, and Abhidharma-pitaka. Since Three Kingdoms, there were monk translators such as Tanke Jialou, Tan Di, Tang Sengkai from Wei, and Zhi Qian, Tang Senghui from Wu. From Western Jin to Northern and Southern Dynasties, more cultural monks from the Western World came to China, among whom the most well-known ones were Dharmaraksa, Buddhacinga, Kumārajiva, Samghadeva, Dharmayasas, Punyatarā, Painyatarā, Buddhajiva, Dharmarak, Dharmamitra, Bodhiruci, Ratnamati, Buddhāsanta, Gautamaprajā, amacron-ruci, Buddhahadra, Dharmā-nandi,

Jnanabhadra, Jnanayasas, Gunavarma, Gunabhadra, Bodhibhadra, Sanghavarman, Samghapala, Mandala, Guanarata, etc. They entered China either by Land Silk Road to the north or Sea Silk Road to the south, fearless of hardships, working together with Chinese Buddhist society, and made great contributions to Buddhism preaching, promotion of cultural exchange between China and other countries, and development of Chinese Culture.

Thirdly, Chinese emperors and aristocrats were worshipping Buddha, scholars were studying Buddhism, and native monks and monks from the Western World were forming translation team, research team and practice team. Buddhacinga, Shi Daoan, Kumārajiva, and Huiyuan's team did all three. Dharmaraksa, Dharmarak, Buddhahadra, Gunabhadra, Bodhiruci, and Paramartha were specialized translator team.

Fourthly, from the north to the south, Buddhism study prevailed. Buddhism had great impact on various fields during Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties, which stimulated critical Chinese scholars to be extremely interested in the mysterious and sophisticated Buddhist Scriptures. Buddhists needed to understand Scriptures deeply in order to practice. Therefore lots of Buddhism schools and sects appeared, for instance, Three Theory School, Nirvana School, Abhidharma School, Satyasiddhisāstra School, Dasabhimukhyakhyana School, Mahayana-samgraha School, Vinaya School, Chan School, Six Schools and Seven Sects about Prajñitideāpāramitā, and Huiyuan's White Lotus Society.

From the above it can be concluded Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties not only successfully accepted Buddha from the Western World, but also laid a foundation for the maturity later in Sui and Tang Dynasties.

III. Buddhahadra's activities

The wide spread of Buddhism in China was due to native people's conscious acceptance on the one hand, but on the other hand, the unremitting effort made by the eminent monks from the Western World was more important. The voluntary or invited monks either translated scriptures incisively, or led native scholars to join the study, or annotated Tripitakacarya, or organized teachings, etc. Among so many monks from the Western World, one was a descendant of Sakya family from Kapilavastu of Nepal, Buddha's hometown. His name was Buddhahadra, who made significant contribution to the spread of Buddhism in China.

According to some documents, Buddhahadra, meaning translated as "Juejian" (Chueh-hsien), was a descendant of Amritudana rāja. His parents passed away when he was only three and five years old. He became a monk when 17, and appeared extraordinarily smart when chanting. He could finish one month's assignment within one day. After receiving Upasampanna (fullprecepts), he became more diligent, studying sutras eruditely and great at Dhyana samadhi (deep meditation or concentration) and Sila Vinaya (precepts and rules). Later he went to Jibin (today's Kashmir), followed the famous Dhyayin (Dhyana master) Buddhāsena and met Zhiyan there. Zhiyan invited him to preach Buddhism to China, which was exactly what he wanted. So the two first climbed snow mountains and then

diverted to sea way. It took them three years to arrive at Qingzhou, Donglai County in today's Shandong Province. In 408, they paid a visit to Chang'an to meet Kumārajiva. Buddhahadra was getting along with Kumārajiva at the beginning. They did a lot of academic discussion. But they were different in style, and even in origins of their respective masters. Kumārajiva was specialized in Pariyatti (the teaching of the scriptures), especially Nagarjuna's Mahayana. Because he got trust from Qin's ruler Yao Xing, he and his 2000 disciples went in and out the royal court frequently, which showed too much ostentation. In comparison, Buddhahadra strictly followed the teaching scale of Theravada, and was more focused on practicing the religion. His disciples were hundreds including renowned monks like Zhiyan, Baoyun, Huiyuan. They preferred peace and simplicity to fame and wealth. Kumārajiva imparted Bhavana (the path of meditation) too, but he just briefly introduced the essence of different sects of Theravada, not well organized, while Buddhahadra's Bhavana was inherited from the old generation, coming down in one continuous line and successfully keeping the pureness. (About Buddhahadra's masters, Sengyou had some account in "Collection of the Records of the Translation of the Tripitaka" Volume 12.)

Estrangement happened between them due to these differences. In 411, Buddhahadra had at times exhibited mysterious paranormal powers, which incurred the trouble later on. Kumārajiva's disciples accused Buddhahadra of having committed Musavada and compelled him to leave Chang'an. Most of Buddhahadra's disciples felt threatened and scattered. Only about 40 including Huiyuan remained and accompanied Buddhahadra to go down to Lu Shan Mountain where Huiyuan inhabited. Huiyuan, having heard of and admired Buddhahadra for long, was very excited to meet him. When he got to know the unfair excuse for the expulsion, he wrote to Yao Xing and monks in Chang'an, explained for Buddhahadra and required to cancel the punishment.

Buddhahadra translated 2 volumes of "Dharmatara dhyana sutra" for Huiyuan, which was of great help to Huiyuan's Patipatti (practice). But Buddhahadra's wish was to visit different places to do preaching, so one year later, in the autumn of 412, he left Lu Shan for the west. Getting respect from the Grand Commandant Liu Yu when he arrived in Jingzhou, he followed Liu to Yangdu (today's Nanjing) in the spring of 413. Residing in Tao Chang Monastery (outside Zhong Hua Gate, also called Men Chang Monastery; or Si Kong Monastery, named after the founder Si Kong Xieshi), he was admired by the public and monks there because of his modesty and outstanding cultivation.

He continued to preach Chan in Yangdu. Tao Chang Monastery became a "Chan masters' cave". Before long, Faxian, a noted monk came back from India after 15 years of seeking the Law in the Western World. They started cooperation. From 416 to 418, they translated 6 volumes of Sanskrit scripture "Mahāparinivāna-sūtra", 40 volumes of "Mahāsaṅghika Vinaya", one "Bhikṣupratimokṣa sūtra", one "Bhikṣunipratimokṣa sūtra" and one "Kṣudrakavastu". Buddhahadra thus accumulated a great deal of translating experience. Invited by Meng Yi, the Governor of Wu County, and Chu Shudu, the Right General of

the Imperial Guards in 418, Buddhahadra, together with other one hundred people including Monk Faye and Huiyuan, spent three years translating 50 volumes of "Buddhāvataṁsaka-mahāvaiṣṭyā-sūtra" (revised to 60 volumes, and called Sixty Hua-ye). This Sanskrit Scripture had 36,000 verses. It was Western Jin's Monk Zhifaling who acquired from Yulian. Nobody had translated it until Buddhahadra (Kumārajiva translated "Ten Dwellings" of Hua-ye ven ching. Buddhahadra totally adopted his version and other sections all tried to match it, therefore the style was inevitably influenced by Kumārajiva.). His translation conformed to the original text on the whole. This Scripture left great impact on the subsequent development of the philosophical aspect of Buddhism. The place where the translation was done was commemorated with the name "Huayan Hall". Buddhahadra entered Parinirvana at the age of 71 in the year of 429.

IV. Buddhahadra's effect on Chinese Buddhism

Aside from the above 7 translations, there is one "Anantamukhadharani", one "Tathagatagarbha Sutra", one "Bhadracaryapranidhana", and eight "Buddha-dhyana samadhisagara sutra" existing until today. Besides, there was a lacked version, one volume of "Suddhi sad indriyani pāramitā-sūtra". Buddhahadra works totaled 12 and 130 volumes.

Although Buddhahadra's translation was omnifarious, he was more refined on meditation. According to Huiyuan's "The General Preface to Dhyanasutra", Buddhahadra used to translate Dharmatrata and Buddhāsena's Dhamma. The existing "Dhyanasutra" only introduced Buddhāsena's dhyana. This sutra was divided into five parts based on Five Vipayanā (Asubha-smṛti, Maitre-smṛti, Idamprayayata-pratītyasamutpada-smṛti, Anapana-smṛti, Dhatu-prabheda-smṛti), focusing on Klesas (afflictions) such as Abhidhya (greed), Pratigraha (anger), Moha (ignorance), Tarkika (seeking), Asubha-smṛti and Anapana-smṛti were called the Double Amṛta-dvara and got special attention. From the declining, abiding, rising, and entering of Upaya and Visenamarga to deciding Dharmagupta-vinaya (Four aspects), promoting Vipasyana Dhatu, practicing Catvāri-apramānani (Four immeasurable minds), watching Skandha and Ayatana, reaching clear Pratītyasamutpadayam finally achieving Dhyana Samadhi. This path of meditation, having helped to consolidate the concept of master-disciple inheritance of the practitioners, was more systematic and stressed more on inheriting than the one introduced by An Shi-kao and Kumārajiva. It also laid great impact on the formation of Chan and Tiantai School later in Tang Dynasty.

If it was because China had the right soil for Buddhism to take root that Buddhism was able to be spread into China, i.e. China had special hetu-pratyaya (causes and conditions), then the eminent monks who came to China regardless of innumerable trials and hardships from the Western World and who went to the Western World at the cost of lives were definitely of major hetu-pratyaya to enable Buddhism to take roots, bloom and bear fruits. Among them, Buddhahadra from Buddha's hometown and Faxian from China were two biggest Danapati (benefactor) representatives.

(Translated by Qiao Jing-yi)

Region :

Robert Gates' threat of war

By General Mirza Aslam Beg (Retd.)

Before visiting Pakistan, Robert Gates warned from New Delhi that, should 2007 Mumbai like incident occur again, India would attack Pakistan, meaning thereby that the past Mumbai killings have been solely attributed to Pakistan and if such an incident occurred again, responsibility would be that of Pakistan, and in retaliation, India would be perfectly justified to attack Pakistan. In this situation USA would not be in a position to restrain India. Rather it may support this venture.

The message is fraught with ominous consequences and therefore demands a clear assessment of our ability to respond, if such a threat develops. This assessment therefore, is based on existing ground realities, which determine the military power balance between Pakistan and India. No doubt, the Indian armed forces are numerically superior to Pakistan, but they suffer from some inherent weaknesses and, it will take them a long time to overcome these.

Indian armed forces are in the midst of a transition, - replacement of the obsolete Russian weapons system with high-tech American-Israeli-European weapons. India started this changeover in 2005 after signing the Strategic Partnership Agreement.

Agreement with USA and hopes to complete it by the year 2015. Already it has spent about a hundred billion dollars on the new acquisitions. Their entire military system at present therefore, is weak, because they have the old and absolute weapons and about thirty percent of the recently acquired new systems. They suffer from a predicament, similar to what we suffered in early seventies, because, USA had abandoned Pakistan in 1965 and we had not been able to induct new weapons and equipment from other sources. India exploited this weakness and dismembered Pakistan. Thus, India suffering from such weaknesses,

now, is not in a position to wage a full fledged war against Pakistan.

India faces another serious problem, in that, despite their best efforts of the last forty years, they have failed to manufacture their own tanks, guns, cruise missiles, fighter aircrafts, battleships and submarines as well as we have a stock-pile of war reserves, of over forty days, as compared to just eleven days of war reserves in 1965 and seven days in 1971. Whereas India's war reserves as of today are limited to 15 days only. Thus, Pakistan in this respect also enjoys a clear edge over India.

The third dimensional capability of Pakistan is, in the way of higher military education and superior military and operational strategy, which is the hallmark of our military leadership, and was demonstrated some twenty years back in 1989, during Ex-Zarb-e-Momin. The Offensive Defence concept was practised and over the period, has been actualised as the fundamental doctrine of war. Offensive Defence means that our forces having fixed the enemy, will carry the war into their territory. Compare it with the Cold Start doctrine of India, of fighting a war on two fronts, which is more of a fiction than a realistic military doctrine.

Mr Robert Gates, as well as the Indian military planners, while taking into cognisance the existing military balance between Pakistan and India, must also consider the new

phenomenon of the Asymmetric War, which, during the last thirty years, has established the supremacy of Men and Missiles, over the most modern and technologically superior armed forces of the world, in Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon and Kashmir. The Asymmetric War, in essence is the name of the Islamic Resistance, with its hardcore resting along the Durand Line. It is our strength. Thus, conventional as well as irregular armed forces, together provide the emerging shape of the Fourth Generation of modern warfare, as Joseph S Nye, the former Assistant Secretary of Defence USA and a professor of Harvard University, defines: "The hybrid wars, conventional and irregular forces combatants and civilians become thoroughly intertwined" to win wars and help establish the new order. In case, war is forced on Pakistan, it would be a long and decisive war, where new geo-political realities would emerge, establishing new frontiers of peace in the region.

Nuclear weapons are not the weapons of war because these have never been used as such. United States used it against the Japanese in 1945, which already had lost the war, nor had the capability to retaliate. American power was primarily diplomatic, i.e. to declare to the world that, America was entering the centre stage of world politics, to establish its global primacy and pre-eminence. There are other instances also, where nuclear powers, possessing hundreds and thousands of atomic weapons could not use them, to save themselves from very difficult and embarrassing situations. The Americans lost the war in Vietnam; the Soviets lost their empire in Afghanistan; the Israelis could not cover the shame of defeat at the hands of Hezbollah in 2005; the Americans having suffered defeat in Iraq, now are

facing a worse defeat in Afghanistan, yet they find no recourse to use their nuclear capability. Their NATO partners are equally embarrassed, yet they cannot think of using their nuclear weapons to cover the shame of impending defeat. Similarly, India and Pakistan can fight only conventional wars and win or lose, but they dare not use nuclear weapons against each other, because it would destroy everything, leaving nothing but ashes, one could hope to capture and rebuild. And therefore, our people must not carry the wrong notion that Pakistan is powerful because it has nuclear capability. On the contrary, it is the conventional military capability, which provides security and lends resilience to the nation, as of now, and provides space to the political government, to establish good governance.

Nuclear weapons are also great equalizer, between nuclear capable adversaries. "Between India and Pakistan, perfect deterrence exists" - declared George Fernandes, the former Defence Minister of India, after Pakistan demonstrated its capability in May 1998. And that precisely is the function of the weapons of mass destruction. Pakistan's policy of Minimum Credible Nuclear Deterrence, supported by the Policy of Restraint, together serves the purpose of a stable nuclear deterrence. Nuclear capability also doesn't compensate for the conventional military capability and working on this principle the conventional military capability of Pakistan has been so developed as to make it a real symbol of national power, to defeat all aggression from within and outside.

Such are the ground realities, which determine the capabilities of our armed forces which cannot be wiped off by contrived constructs of our adversaries, nor Pakistan can be scared of going to the brink, if a war was forced on it. J F Dulles has rightly said: "If you are scared to go to the brink you are lost."

Hunting Adivasis in mineral corridor

By Gladson Ddungdung

"Naxalites are our stray brothers and sisters therefore we will address the issues of Naxalism through dialogues". These are the holy words of Jharkhand Chief Minister Sibusoren, who repeatedly told the people even after swearing in as the guard of the state for 3rd time. However, the unbearable pressure from the central government and the corporate houses made him completely helpless. Consequently, he took a turn and attended a special meeting with 'Corporate Home Minister' P. Chidambaram in Delhi on January 27th on the issue of so-called 'Operation Green Hunt'. After his return from Delhi, he started dancing in different tune, saying, operation green hunt will be started if the Maoists do not abjure violence.

Soon after he shown the green signal to the security forces for operation green hunt, the police and security forces started rehearsal in different parts of the state. The first brutal rehearsal was done in Garhwa. The CRPF brutally assaulted to the primitive tribes who were protesting in front of the collector's office in Garhwa. Their only crime was they demanded for 200 days employment in MGNREGA, direct appointment in the government jobs and implementation of the forest rights Act 2006 (which prime objective is to right the historic wrong that's what government told).

The brutality began when the Adivasis entered into the collector's office premises on February 2: the CRPF closed the gate and beat them but mercilessly for 20 minutes. Consequently, 50 Adivasis including women were severely injured and admitted to the hospital. As usual, the Chief Minister Sibusoren ordered for an inquiry to bury the public anger. Ironically, the police filed a case against 13 Adivasi sufferers alleging them for attacking to the security forces and no case was registered against those security forces for beating to the Adivasis mercilessly. However, there is a public outrage on the issue therefore a small gun man might be punished for the inhuman acts of the security forces, and the officers will enjoy impunity as they have been doing for years in the democratic country. Indeed, it was just an indication of the coming 'operation green hunt', where dogs, cats, snakes and scorpions are ready to kill the Adivasis in the forests.

Perhaps, the state has seized the democratic rights of the citizens on the one hand and it did not let the security forces to remain as the human beings on the other. The democratic government(s) repeatedly tells us that the security forces have been made killer animals like Greyhounds, hunter cats like Jaguar, dangerous snakes like cobras, poisonous creature like scorpions and list goes on. These Greyhounds, Jaguars, Cobras, Scorpions and other forces are left to roam freely in the forests with the license to kill the Adivasis, who have been living in the forests for the years before the existence of the Indian state. These dogs, cats, snakes, scorpions and other forces will attack, bite, sting, tear down and kill whoever they find in the forests. Of course, the most sufferers would be the Adivasis. The only census 2011 will tell them about its impact as decline of the Adivasis population.

An eastern Indian state Chhattisgarh is a living example of how the state has been carrying out a hunting of the Adivasis in the name of cleansing the Maoists, where 3 lakh Adivasis of 644 villages deserted their homes to escape from the police atrocity. 50,000 of them are living in the relief camps, 50,000 fled to Andhra Pradesh and thousands of them migrated to the neighbouring states. 5000 Adivasis women were raped, hundreds of Adivasis were killed in fake encounters and hundreds of them were thrown behind the bars alleging them as Maoist supporters. Ironically, when a SPO (Special Police Officer of Salwa Jurum) catches, attacks or kills an Adivasi, he becomes a hero for the state but when the same person rapes an Adivasi woman he does not remain as the SPO and the blame goes to an Adivasi raping his own woman (with the clear intention for shielding the inhuman acts of the police forces backed by the state).

The operation green hunt in going on in the state of Chhattisgarh and the Adivasis are being hunted everyday but our democratic government does not inform its own people about it, where the right to information is a constitutional right of the citizens. Interestingly, P. Chidambaram is not only a 'Corporate Home Minister', who bagged money from 'Enron Corporation' and 'Vedanta' but now he is also a person who believes in misguiding to the people of the land. When the operation green hunt was launched, he coined it as a media's creation. "Show me one government official saying this and I will take action" these were his threatening words. Ironically, on December 4, 2009, Dantewada-based DIG anti-Naxal operations SRP Killuri unmasked Chidambaram by telling to the media, "As of today, Operation Green Hunt is underway in districts like Bijapur and Dantewada." Unfortunately, Chidambaram did not take any action against his officer. Similarly, after attending Chidambaram's meeting, Sibusoren and Naveen Patnaik are tirelessly speaking for the operation green hunt but Chidambaram does not ask them to stop their holy talks on OGH.

Unfortunately, the centre and state governments do not even bother to obey the order of the supreme court, which states to re-establish those 3 lakh Adivasis in their (644) villages as they were in the previous days. Of course, these democratic governments are more interested in establishing the corporate houses in these villages rather than protecting the villagers. Now the Tata, Bhushan steel, Jindal and many others corporate sharks are roaming in these villages with the full security provided by the state. A million dollar question is how the corporate houses are peacefully running their plants in those so-called red corridors where the governments claim of not being able to carry out any development activities?

The fact of the matter is the villages in Chhattisgarh were vacated for the corporate houses in the name of cleansing the Maoists and the operation green hunt will be extended to those states soon, where there are high chances of exploiting the natural resources in the name of development. Since, there have been series of protests against displacement in the mineral corridor therefore the governments are attempting to get land clear for the corporate houses through the 'legislations', 'manipulations' and the 'legal guns'. The state is hunting the Adivasis in the name of hunting the Maoists. The question is does state have right to kill its own people?

Iran's nuclear enrichment move draws concern

Iran's new move to enrich uranium to a higher 20-percent level has aroused the concern of Western countries, with the U.S. threatening to impose "a significant regime of sanctions" with other major countries against the country.

An Iranian nuclear negotiator originally accepted a draft plan proposed by the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency — the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) — in October, agreeing to ship the country's low-enriched uranium to Russia and France for the 20-percent-pure fuel rods for a Tehran reactor producing medical isotopes to treat cancer patients.

However, among the wide disputes and strong opposition in the Iranian parliament, Iran later balked and then rejected the arrangement, announcing that it would produce its own higher-enriched uranium instead.

Iran says more than 850,000 people need the isotopes and radiography materials produced by the Tehran reactor for their illnesses.

Analysts believe President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced the uranium enrichment activities on the eve of the 31st anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, to coordinate the stances of various sides and to protect the internal solidarity of the regime.

Domestic media also think the decision would give more initiative to the Iranian government during its nuclear negotiations with the international community, and help it gain more bargaining chips against Western countries.

Western powers acted strongly against Iran's new move. U.S. President Barack Obama said that Iran remains on the path of nuclear weapons, despite its denial, and the international community is moving "fairly quickly" toward imposing broader sanctions on Iran.

Obama said Iran's refusal to accept an U.N.-brokered nuclear fuel swap deal suggested that Iran is still trying to build nuclear weapons, despite the country's

insistence that the nuclear enrichment is purely for civilian use.

Obama said the door is still open for Iran to come back to the negotiating table, but the U.S. is now mainly focused on sanctions.

Russia believes sanctions against Iran are necessary under certain circumstances, a deputy foreign minister said in an interview published Wednesday.

"We do not think sanctions will work, but we understand that it is impossible to get by without them in certain circumstances," Sergei Ryabkov was quoted as saying by the business daily Kommersant.

However, Ryabkov stressed that Russia still preferred to resolve Iran's nuclear problem through diplomatic means.

"It is disappointing and regrettable that Iran has failed to make use of the numerous flexible and creative proposals that we have put forward together with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United States and France," he said.

The report came a day after Russian security chief Nikolai Patrushev said the Iranian chief to enrich uranium to higher levels raised doubts about the nature of its nuclear program.

Iran has been at the center of an international dispute over its nuclear ambitions. The West has accused Iran of secretly developing nuclear weapons under the guise of a civilian program. Iran has denied the accusation and says its nuclear program is only for peaceful purposes.

U.S. President Barack Obama said Tuesday his administration will develop "a significant regime of sanctions," over the next several weeks targeting Iran.

Iran has been at the center of an international dispute over its nuclear plan. The United States and its Western allies have been accusing Iran of secretly developing nuclear weapons under the guise of a civilian program. Iran has denied the accusation and stressed its

nuclear program is only for peaceful purposes.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy agreed on U.S. proposal of stronger sanctions against Iran on its nuclear enrichment program, the president's office announced Monday night.

Sarkozy agreed with visiting U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates that the time has come for the adoption of stronger sanctions, in the hope that dialogue could be resumed," the Elysee Palace said after the two held a near-one-hour talk.

China on Tuesday called for increased diplomatic efforts and an early agreement for an internationally-backed nuclear fuel proposal for Tehran after Iran started its higher-grade uranium enrichment program.

Iran informed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) about its plan to start its enrichment activities to the purity of 20 percent on Tuesday, provoking fresh warnings by Western countries of new sanctions.

Under the IAEA-brokered deal, Iran would be supplied with nuclear fuel for the medical research reactor in Tehran in exchange for its low-enriched uranium.

Reviewing the recent consultations of the six countries, including the United States, Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany, on Iran nuclear issue, Ma said, "China hopes all relevant parties will step up diplomatic efforts and make progress in dialogue and negotiations."

Iran's decision to enrich uranium to higher levels raises doubts about the purpose of its nuclear program, the Russian security council secretary said on Tuesday.

The Russian Foreign Ministry on Tuesday also criticized Tehran's move, saying Moscow was disappointed with the decision that goes against UN resolutions.

Iran has been at the center of an international dispute over its nuclear plan. The United States and its Western allies have been accusing Iran of secretly developing nuclear weapons under the guise of a

civilian program. Iran has denied the accusation and stressed its nuclear program is only for peaceful purposes.

German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle on Tuesday threatened new sanctions against Iran, saying that Tehran has the right to make peaceful use of nuclear power, but must refrain from any nuclear armament.

He made the statement as Iran announced on Tuesday that it began to produce 20-percent enriched uranium.

On Sunday, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad ordered Iran's Atomic Energy Organization (IAEO) to start work on enriching uranium to a purity of 20 percent. Ahmadinejad also said that Iran is still ready for the exchange of nuclear fuel with world powers.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Tuesday called for "crippling" sanctions on Iran as the Islamic Republic began to produce 20 percent enriched uranium earlier in the day.

For years, Israel, the United States and other countries accused Iran of enriching uranium to make a nuclear bomb, while Iran denied the accusation, saying it has the right to pursue its nuclear program for peaceful use.

Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim said Tuesday Brazil would maintain negotiations with Iran on uranium enrichment and oppose any sanctions against Iran.

Amorim said Brazil was against the production of nuclear weapons, but Iran had the right to carry out a peaceful nuclear program.

For his part, Amorim said he considered any kind of sanctions ineffective and dangerous because they might cross a limit and jeopardize peace.

Iran's president made an official visit to Brazil in November, during which the Brazilian government defended Iran's right to have its own peaceful nuclear program including uranium enrichment similar to Brazil's, following international standards. (Xinhua)

Economy :

Rural Development Realities

By Dr. Kamal Raj Dhungel

A few days ago, I had a chance to visit to a model VDC Kabre of Dolakha district around 175 kilometers in the North-East of the capital. From the very beginning of its history, Kabre has remained relatively well educated village. Almost all the residents are Chhetris and Brahmins composed of different castes. It has a scattered, modest residential area with forest cover. A large quantity of well fertile land for paddy and wheat cultivation that covers approximately half of its total area is located below the residential area. The livelihood of its people largely depends on the production of this land under consideration. I find the village in this remote place a unique from the physical development perspective.

The village is well developed in the sense that it enjoys all the modern facilities. Houses are built with mud and stone and roofed with slate with basic furnishing inside. Each household has a toilet and is connected to drinking water pipe and thereby women need not go outside to fetch water. Hence the women are investing their extra time in other economic activities and spending enough time for their children. Electricity is available to all households. Every household has a radio and TV and even computer for communication. Mobile and CDMA phones are common among the villagers. Every residential pockets of village is connected by the link road constructed under the initiation of local leadership.

The entire arable land under paddy and wheat cultivation is well irrigated. Two parallel canals located at a short distance constructed in different time periods under the sponsorship of Swiss and Nepal Government provide adequate water permanently to irrigate the entire arable land of the VDC. This has facilitated farmers to diversify the product and cultivate their land on the seasonal basis. However, a farmer of the village laments that the pattern of cropping system has not changed. Farmers follow the traditional farming pattern of sowing food grains such as paddy, wheat, maize and millet. Nevertheless, both production and productivity of these crops has been increasing over the years. High value crops such as vegetable, potato, garlic, onion, cardamom and fruits farming are in practice in each of the household for the home consumption only. Commercial farming has not taken place yet. In addition to this, a well equipped government owned agriculture farm is also located at the center of the VDC. This has served the farmers in providing technical assistance since last three decades by producing improved variety of seeds locally and distributing to the farmers at reasonable prices.

This village has a well established financial institution. Yagya Raj Dhungel, an educationist and banking

sector management expert, opened a cooperative 'Jana Sachetan Sahakari Sanstha' to facilitate locals for saving and credit one and half decade ago. This sanstha has grown to have more than five thousand members. The villagers can take loan to operate businesses requiring minimum collateral. Likewise in education sector, this village has more than four primary schools located in the vicinity of different residential places. In addition to this, a higher secondary school with well trained teachers was established a decade ago. In addition, the village also has a campus for the students to further their education without having to migrate to Kathmandu.

Similarly, a health post with adequate health workers is providing a primary health services to the villagers. A local trained health worker has been providing this service since more than last two decades. He also has operated a medical shop to cater the medicine to the needy.

All these developments have taken place within a period of three decades. Indeed the village is an example for every other community in the rural areas of Nepal. But there are some questions which seek thorough investigation for answer. For whom and for what purpose these developments have taken place? How the people of the village have enjoyed the fruits of these developments? What message

these physical facilities do provide?

Theoretically, development of physical facilities promotes urbanization that expands market and enhances industrialization in varying capacities thereby promoting urbanization and creating broader access to the market. In addition to this, it transfers the traditional cropping to high value cropping pattern. The gradual progress of such type in the village as expected can expand employment opportunities and hence increases income. At this point the village should be on the verge of breaking into an urban area with lots of opportunities which is the most important factor to attract youths to remain in the villages. But in contrast despite the overwhelming development the village looks like a stranded desert. There are no youths in the village. The young generation from every household has migrated leaving the village only with children and elderly people. Almost all the rural areas of Nepal have the same fate as this village. It is mainly due to the lack of policies that can generate employment opportunities which is a prerequisite to lure the youths in the villages of the country. Only the physical facilities and services without the policies are not enough to keep the youths from migrating. If policies fail to address to utilize existing infrastructure for further progress the highly prospective areas like Kabre might turn into a no man land in future.

Handle the discharged with care



Discharged combatants		
Cantonments	Number	Date
Dudhauri	201	Jan. 7
Shaktikhor	222	Jan 17
Jhyaltungdanda	361	Jan 21
Chulachui	475	Jan 25
Masuriya	334	Jan 30
Dahaban	268	Feb. 8

care cannot be ruled out.

The detection of former Maoist combatants' involvement in criminal activities only indicates at the necessity of their well-planned rehabilitation.

"There is also an urgent need to rehabilitate them psychologically as they might look upon the discharge process as something that wrecked havoc with their hopes," say experts.

"If the political leadership downplays this urgency, it can invite serious social unrest," they caution.

WM correspondent

The discharge process of disqualified Maoist combatants finally completed on February 8 after more than three years.

The UNMIN (United Nations Mission in Nepal), in all, bade farewell to 2,394 combatants who joined the Maoist army as minors, and late recruits, from seven cantonments across Nepal over the past one month.

Even though the completion of the process can be deemed as crucial for the ongoing peace process, the future of those discharged is still clouded by uncertainty.

The Maoist party turned down the government's rehabilitation package that includes formal schooling and vocational training, among others.

The discharged fighters have been provided just Rs. 22,000 each as pocket expenditure.

Many of them have vented their ire with the entire discharge process.

So much so, even some furious discharged combatants even refused to shake hand with UCPN (Maoist) chairman Puspa Kamal Dahal who participated in the discharge process in Dahaban on Monday.

However, a large chunk of them have said that they would not avert themselves from supporting their party.

Be that as it may, they are obviously in need of socialization as a normal people.

The possibility of them being prompted into carrying out criminal activities if they were not taken proper

पत्रकार तथा संचार माध्यमहरूबीचको आपसी सम्बन्ध व्यावसायिक स्वस्थ, संयमित, मर्यादित र सुमधुर राख्न दुबै सक्रिय र प्रयत्नशील हुनुपर्दछ ।



नेपाल सरकार

सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय

सूचना विभाग

~ News ~

No public holiday on President's state visits

The home ministry is planning to end the tradition of giving public holidays on days the head of state embarks on and returns from a state visit.

The government will not give public holidays on the days of departure and return of President Ram Baran Yadav's impending state visit to India, Nagark daily reported quoting home ministry sources.

President Yadav is visiting India from February 15 to 18.

In the past, the government used to give public holidays on departure and arrival when the erstwhile King used to embark on state visits.

This is the first state visit of the first President of Nepal.

HLPM meet postponed

A meeting of the High Level Political Mechanism (HLPM) called for Thursday morning has again been postponed.

The meeting was set for today after HLPM did not meet on Saturday, Feb 6, due to complications in Nepali Congress president and coordinator of the mechanism Girija Prasad Koirala's health.

The meeting was to hold discussion on the integration and rehabilitation of the former Maoist combatants, the joint resolution motion for ending the political deadlock, and other issues.

Nepali Congress leader Krishna Sitaula said the meeting will be held either Friday or Saturday morning.

Japan extends food aid

Japan has agreed to provide a grant assistance of five hundred sixty-six million and four hundred forty thousand rupees (566,440,000) to the Government of Nepal under the food aid.

Japanese ambassador to Nepal Tatsuo Mizuno, and Finance Ministry secretary Rameshwar Khanal signed the agreement and exchanged the notes on behalf of their respective governments at the ministry on Tuesday.

The assistance is provided with the objective of enabling the Government of Nepal to procure rice and supply it to the food deficit districts, a press statement issued by the Japanese embassy said. The Nepal Food Corporation (NFC) is to distribute it through its national distribution network.

Speaking during the signing ceremony, ambassador Mizuno expressed his belief that the extended food assistance will help the Government of Nepal in addressing the urgent need in food deficit districts and in easing the difficulties felt by local people in their daily life. "It will, thus, further contribute to the moving ahead of the peace process in Nepal," he said.

Businessman shot dead in Banke

A businessman was shot dead Wednesday evening in Khajura, a hamlet 12 km west of Nepalgunj on the way to Bardiya.

Prakash Kumar Shrestha, 45, who used to run a Mo:Mo shop in Khajura was shot at by one of the two persons riding a motorcycle, when he was returning home after closing the shop, last evening.

Shrestha got injured by the firing and died while he was being taken to the hospital.

The incident occurred few hours after Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal had visited Khajura. PM Nepal was in Khajura Wednesday afternoon to inspect an under construction cancer hospital.

Deceased Shrestha had returned to Nepal one-and-half years ago after working in Saudi Arabia for six years.

आमा र बच्चाको सुरक्षाको लागि स्वास्थ्य संस्थामा मात्र प्रशुति गराई निःशुल्क प्रशुति सेवा उपयोग गरौं ।

नेपाल सरकारले सरकारी स्वास्थ्य संस्थाहरूमा सम्पूर्ण प्रशुति सेवा निःशुल्क प्रदान गरिरहेको छ । साथै सरकारी स्वास्थ्य संस्थाहरूमा प्रशुति सेवा लिने महिलाहरूलाई यातायात खर्चवापत हिमाली जिल्लामा रु. १५०००-, पहाडी जिल्लामा रु. १००००- र तराईका जिल्लामा रु. ५०००- दिइन्छ ।

नेपाल सरकार
स्वास्थ्य तथा जनसंख्या मन्त्रालय
राष्ट्रिय स्वास्थ्य शिक्षा, सूचना तथा
सञ्चार केन्द्र
टेकु, काठमाडौं ।



San Miguel BEER

International :

The Planning of war behind closed doors

Brussels, London, Istanbul: A week of western war councils

By Rick Rozoff

The defense chiefs of all 28 NATO nations and an undisclosed number of counterparts from non-Alliance partners gathered in Istanbul, Turkey on February 4 to begin two days of meetings focused on the war in Afghanistan, the withdrawal of military forces from Kosovo in the course of transferring control of security operations to the breakaway province's embryonic army and "the transformation efforts required to best conduct the full range of NATO's agreed missions."

Istanbul was the site of the bloc's 2004 summit which accounted for the largest expansion in its 60-year history - seven new Eastern European nations - and its strengthening military partnerships with thirteen Middle Eastern and African nations under the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.

The Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, Admiral Giampaolo Di Paola, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe Admiral James Stavridis and the top commander of all U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan - soon to reach over 150,000 - General Stanley McChrystal are also in attendance, as are European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton and United Nations High Representative for Afghanistan Kai Eide as well as the defense and interior ministers of Afghanistan.

The meetings follow by a week the International Conference on Afghanistan held in London, which in turn occurred the day after two days of meetings of the NATO Military Committee with the Chiefs of Defense of the military bloc's 28 member states and 35 more from what were described as Troop Contributing Nations; presumably NATO partner nations with troops stationed in the Afghan war theater. In all, the military chiefs of 63 countries.

The U.S.'s McChrystal was present there also as were Israeli Chief of

General Staff Lieutenant General Gabi Ashkenazi and Pakistani Chief of Army Staff General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani. Beforehand the bloc's website reported that "The various meetings will focus on the progress made in ongoing operations and the New Strategic Concept for NATO." That 35 top military commanders from non-NATO countries were present to hear plans for the escalation of what is already the largest war in the world is understandable, as their forces are on the ground as part of a 50-nation plus force under NATO military command.

That the same conference discussed the bloc's 21st century new global military doctrine - former U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright delivered an address on the topic - raises the question of how many of the 35 partner states' military chiefs may have joined their 28 NATO colleagues for that phase of discussions. That such a high percentage of the world's leading military commanders attended a two-day affair which deliberated on both the war in South Asia and the expansion of the world's only military bloc's activities even further outside the Euro-Atlantic area confirms that the Afghan war serves more than one purpose for the West. It is the laboratory for strengthening military ties with nations on every inhabited continent and for building the nucleus of and foundation for a potential future world army.

The London conference on Afghanistan, presented in the West as a benign undertaking tantamount to an economic development or humanitarian aid planning event - the conference's website described it as "The international community [coming] together to fully align military and civilian resources behind an Afghan-led political strategy" - was preceded by two days of meetings between top military commanders of almost a third

of the world's nations at NATO headquarters and followed by two days of meetings by NATO and allied defense chiefs this week. Many of the same people - EU foreign policy chief Baroness Ashton and the UN's Eide (who formerly occupied comparable posts in Bosnia and Kosovo and was Norway's ambassador to NATO from 2002 to 2006) - attended both the London conference and are attending the Istanbul NATO defense ministers conclave.

By way of reciprocity, the London conference was addressed by NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen who said, inter alia, "with more than 85,000 troops from 44 nations deployed to Afghanistan - and with over 39,000 additional forces arriving over the coming weeks and months - the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force remains NATO's top priority."

If any further evidence was required that the United Nations is at the service of NATO and not vice versa, that the EU is NATO's civilian valet de chambre, and that all three are subordinated to the United States, the last week's events and the roster of attendees at them should suffice.

The chain of command begins in Washington and orders barked out there work their way down to Brussels and New York City.

The two organizations based in the Belgium capital, the "military alliance of democratic states in Europe and North America" (NATO's self-definition) and the "European military superstate", are afflicted with political echolalia, parroting the U.S. position on conflicts armed and with the potential to become so around the world - Afghanistan, Iraq, Georgia-Russia, Georgia-Abkhazia, Georgia-South Ossetia, Russia-Ukraine, Kosovo, Bosnia, Somalia, Yemen, Colombia, Myanmar, Sudan, Chad, the Central

African Republic, North Korea, Zimbabwe, Israel-Lebanon, Lebanon-Syria, Israel-Palestine, Macedonia, Ivory Coast, Djibouti-Eritrea, Transnistria and all those to come - with truly impressive fidelity in this otherwise inconsistent age.

Condemnations, tirades and threats issued by the U.S. secretary of state and ambassador to the United Nations may as well be presented in triplicate.

Permanent Security Council members Russia and China may occasionally - all too occasionally - block hostile Western actions against defenseless third parties in the United Nations, but Washington always walks away with a mandate and the final say in the selection of viceroys to complement U.S. and NATO military forces on the ground in subjugated nations.

As a recent example, during the second day of the NATO Military Committee meetings in Brussels and the day before the Afghan conference in London, an "international" conference on Yemen was also held in London which Britain's Prime Minister Gordon Brown called for...in response to the failed bomb attack on an airliner over Detroit on December 25."

Ever-compliant UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon lent legitimacy to this American and British charade, as he did the following day's Afghan conference where he delivered a speech in the presence of 28 NATO and perhaps dozens of its International Security Assistance Force non-member states foreign ministers.

Yemen has joined the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq as a target for Western "assistance and stabilization." NATO will conduct more planning sessions with scores of military chiefs and defense and foreign ministers and not only for the war in Afghanistan.

Its New Strategic Concept knows no geographical bounds.

US to launch Fallujah-style attack in Afghanistan

By Bill Van Auken

As US and British troops prepare to attack the town of Marjah in Afghanistan's Helmand Province, military commanders and the media are openly comparing the operation to the November 2004 siege of Fallujah, one of the bloodiest war crimes of the Iraq war.

The operation in central Helmand province, long an area of intense resistance to the US-led occupation, will constitute the largest military offensive since Washington invaded the country in October 2001. At least 15,000 troops are expected to lay siege to the Helmand river valley town, which has 80,000 inhabitants and is said by the US military to be a stronghold of the Taliban.

A total of 125,000 people live in the district around Marjah, which is an agricultural center 350 miles west of Kabul. The population has been swelled by Afghans fleeing villages occupied by US Marines last summer, following President Barack Obama's order shortly after he took office to send 21,000 more troops into Afghanistan.

US Marines, frustrated and enraged over casualties suffered at the hands of an unseen enemy who is able to attack and then blend back into the local population, will be unleashed against the town in a violent military assault, with predictable results.

Brigadier General Larry Nicholson, commander of the US Marines in southern Afghanistan, spelled out the character of the upcoming offensive. Those found in Marjah would have three options. "One is to stay and fight and probably die," he said. "The second one is to make peace with his government and reintegrate." The third would be to attempt to escape, "in which case we'll probably have some people out there waiting on them as well."

In a highly unusual move, the US command has publicly announced plans for the offensive. "It's a little unconventional to do it this way, but it gives everybody a chance to think through what they're going to do before suddenly in the dark of night they're hit with an offensive," said General Stanley McChrystal, the senior US commander in Afghanistan.

The stated intention of revealing the target of the upcoming offensive is to allow civilians to flee before the Marines move in. It also provides a preemptive alibi for the US offensive by painting those who fail to heed the warning as die-hard Taliban who deserve to be killed.

Strafor, a military-intelligence web site with close ties to the US state apparatus, reported Thursday that "the assault is likely to include the cordoning off of the area, so many of the fighters dedicated to its defense will probably be forced to fight to the death or surrender."

The article continued: "With assaults on Fallujah and Ramadi in Iraq under their belts, the Marines are experienced with this sort of urban assault."

What is the record of urban assaults of this sort?

The Marine assault on Fallujah in November 2004 reduced most of the city of 300,000 people to rubble, as warplanes dropped thousands of tons of explosives and helicopter gunships and battle tanks fired missiles into buildings and strafed the area with cannon fire.

The US military command claimed to have killed 2,000 "insurgents," but the real death toll remains unknown. Civilians who remained in the town were subjected to the same

bombardment. Some were shot to death during the door-to-door raids that followed, and others were killed while fleeing. Wounded fighters were summarily executed, and medical facilities were targeted for military attack. All those in the city were denied food, water and electricity for more than 10 days.

The operation was a vicious exercise in collective punishment against the population of Fallujah for the killing there of four Blackwater mercenaries and the city's protracted resistance to foreign occupation. It embodied the criminality of the entire war and was characterized by multiple and gross violations of the laws of war.

If American military commanders are to be believed, a similar operation is being prepared in Afghanistan, and for similar reasons. The town of Marjah is to be turned into a killing field.

As in Fallujah, vengeance plays a role. US military forces have seen a steady escalation in casualties over the past year, while the CIA suffered a humiliating attack at the end of December that left seven of its operatives dead on the Afghan border.

In Afghanistan, as in Iraq, the US military command sees value in making an example of a population center known as a center of resistance to occupation, sending a message to the entire country that such resistance is futile and will be met with slaughter and destruction.

This bloodletting is officially justified in the name of a never-ending struggle against terrorism. Behind the propaganda, the driving force of the war in Afghanistan, like the war in Iraq, is the attempt by America's ruling elite to counter the crisis of US capitalism through the use of force and the seizure

of strategic positions in the Persian Gulf and Central Asia, both centers of vast energy reserves.

A year ago, when Barack Obama entered the White House, there existed hope among broad layers of the American people that his inauguration would turn such words as Fallujah, Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, Blackwater, torture and rendition into the lexicon of a dark and shameful, but closed, chapter in US history.

The preparation of the Marjah offensive only underscores that, far from being ended, the crimes of the Bush administration are continuing and escalating under the Democratic president.

Today there are more US troops deployed abroad in colonial-style wars and occupations than under Bush, and the killing has spread from Iraq and Afghanistan to Pakistan and Yemen. The Obama administration is seeking \$322 billion for the two ongoing wars and occupations, a figure that will doubtless be swelled by further demands for "supplemental" funding.

The supposed candidate of "hope" and "change" has emerged ever more clearly as the hand-picked agent of sections of the political establishment and military-intelligence complex that wanted to effect certain tactical changes in policy, while continuing to employ militarism abroad and wage a relentless assault on the working class at home.

American working people cannot accept a new round of war crimes carried out in their name. The demand for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all US and other foreign troops from Afghanistan must be joined with a political offensive against the Obama administration and the financial oligarchy that it defends.

~ News ~

Wen welcomes more foreign experts to work in China

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao invited more talented foreigners to work in China, saying the country will improve services for them.

Wen made the remarks at a meeting with more than 20 representatives of foreign experts, who have helped in China's social progress.

Wen said China pays equal attention to attracting both investment and talented personnel, while utilizing science and technology to achieve sustainable development.

This calls for an active flow of talented foreigners to China to help with the nation's modernization drive, the premier said.

He urged related organs to improve policy and service level for all the foreign experts coming to work in China.

She suggested the government reevaluate the current practice of closing primary schools in small villages and concentrating them in larger villages.

Other representatives of talented foreigners working in China, including Daniel Josph Dudek, a U.S. expert in environmental protection area, and Jean Dorey, a French expert in the education sector, offered suggestions to the Chinese government for tackling environmental challenges and boosting cooperation in the education sector.

Wen listened attentively to their remarks and exchanged views.

Gates gets European support on Iran sanction

After the last stop in Paris, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates wrapped up his European tour on Tuesday with widespread support from European alliance on sanctions against Iran, in the hope that concrete punishment can stop Iran from moving closer to military nuclear programs.

During Gates' meeting with his French counterpart Hervé Morin on Monday, the two nations' common position on Iran nuclear issue was a highlighted part besides other major topics such as France's sale of advanced warship Mistral to Russia, Afghan security issue, and competition and cooperation between European and U.S. plane makers.

Gates said sanctions were the only way to check Iran's military nuclear programs. "The only path that is left to us at this point...is that pressure track, it will require all of the international community to work together," he said.

Morin, on his part, said joint action would be the next step.

Almost at the same time, Iran reportedly informed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) about its plan to produce 20 percent enriched uranium starting from Tuesday.

French Foreign Minister Kouchner said all major European powers were in favor of a four-round of U.N.-backed sanction.

After a near-one-hour meeting between French President Nicolas Sarkozy and Gates on Monday afternoon, the Elysee Palace said the president agreed that "the time has come for the adoption of stronger sanctions, in the hope that dialogue could be resumed".

During Gates' visit to Rome on Feb. 6-8, Italy's Foreign Minister Franco Frattini also expressed support to the U.S. envoy.

In the wake of the Munich Security Conference held on Feb. 5-7, Germany also raised sanction threat against swaying Iran.

Later, Britain, a firm U.S. ally, said Monday it was "deeply worrying" about Iran's announcement of stepping up its enrichment process.

Moreover, Russia, who has resisted sanction calls against Iran, issued stronger criticism following Iran's announcement of higher level of uranium enrichment.

Russian security chief Nikolai Patrushev said Tuesday that Iran's actions "have raised doubts among other nations, and these doubts are quite well-founded."

As Gates finishes his European tour, a Pentagon spokesman said the U.S. defense chief wanted the sanction to be in force in "weeks, not months," underlining "time is of the essence."

For years, Western countries have suspected that the Islamic republic is enriching uranium to make a nuclear bomb, while Iran denied the accusation, saying it has the right to pursue its nuclear program for peaceful use.

(Xinhua)

President Rajapaksa dissolves parliament

Sri Lanka's recently re-elected President Mahinda Rajapaksa is dissolving parliament, clearing the way for early elections, officials say.

Parliament was dissolved at midnight (1830 GMT) and official sources say the poll will probably be held on 8 April.

Mr Rajapaksa won a second term in office by a large margin last month, but the outcome was rejected by his main rival, Gen Sarath Fonseka.

Former army chief Gen Fonseka was detained by security forces on Monday.

Opposition politicians say the government is engaged in a witch-hunt and have called for protests on Wednesday against the arrest.

The term of Sri Lanka's parliament was to have ended on 22 April, with an election to be held as late as June.

Election laws require a poll to be held between six and eight weeks from dissolution, and official sources say the date will most likely be 8 April, with parliament convening on 22 April.

The election commissioner must confirm the date of the election.

Mr Rajapaksa fought the presidential poll on the back of the government's successful military campaign to end the long insurgency by Tamil Tiger rebels in the north and east of the country.

They fell out soon after the fighting ended and fought a bitter election campaign.

He was discussing the parliamentary election with supporters at the time. They say the arrest is an attempt to prevent his involvement.

In the last election in 2004, the Freedom Alliance won 105 of the 225 seats in parliament and the main opposition United National Party 82.

However, the Freedom Alliance has been able to maintain a workable majority with defections.

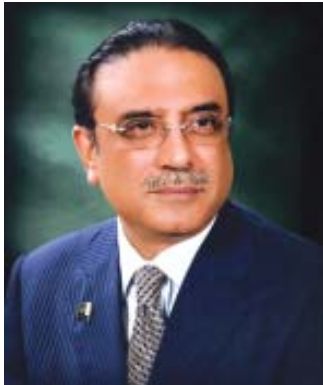
The Sri Lankan defence ministry says Gen Fonseka was arrested for breaking military regulations by holding discussions with politicians while serving on the national security council.

Gen Fonseka's wife Anoma says she has not been allowed to see her husband since the arrest.

Military spokesman Maj Gen Prasad Samarasinghe said Gen Fonseka was permitted to see family members and had been allowed legal advice.

BBC

On the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day 2010 Message from Asif Ali Zardari President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan



We observe the Kashmir Solidarity Day each year on 5th February to reiterate our political, moral and diplomatic support for the just and legitimate struggle of our Kashmiri brothers and sisters for the realization of their rights to self determination. This right is enshrined in the UN Charter and relevant UN Resolutions.

Kashmir Solidarity Day is also an occasion to pay tributes to the brave people of Jammu and Kashmir for their heroic sacrifices and for their steadfast resolve to realize their just aspirations.

I wish to reassure my Kashmiri brethren that Pakistan remains firmly committed to finding a just and peaceful solution of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and for full respect for their fundamental rights.

Pakistan would persist in its efforts for seeking a peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. We are of the firm belief that the Kashmiris should be associated with the dialogue process. Ultimately, Kashmiris would be the final arbiters of their destiny.

I reiterate to our Kashmiri brothers and sisters our pledge that they have our full moral, diplomatic and political support. We shall stand always with them in their just struggle.

On the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day 2010 Message from Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani Prime Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan



The people of Pakistan observe the Kashmir Solidarity Day on 5th February every year to demonstrate their unequivocal support for the valiant struggle of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to achieve their legitimate right to self determination in accordance with the UN Resolutions. It is a reaffirmation of our firm resolve to stand by our Kashmiri brethren in their endeavour to decide their own fate.

The Kashmiri struggle spans over more than six decades. Generations of Kashmiris have grown up in Indian occupied Kashmir in the shadow of oppression and violence perpetrated by the Indian occupation forces. They have lost their homes, friends and families. Yet they have not lost hope and have remained steadfast in their quest for their inalienable right of self determination.

Today, as we observe the Kashmir Solidarity Day, our hearts go out to the families of more than ninety thousand Kashmiris who have sacrificed their lives in upholding the ideas of freedom and liberty. We pay tribute to the sacrifices made by the Kashmiri people. The will go in vain.

Pakistan assures the Kashmiri people of its firm resolve to work steadfastly for the realization of their fundamental rights.

It is our hope and expectation that the international community would also play its role in bringing an end to repression, violence and human rights violations of the Kashmiri people.

I reassure our Kashmiri brothers and sisters of Pakistan's continued and unflinching moral, diplomatic and political support for their just cause.

Democracy: A promise for regional security and stability



- Syed Abrar Hussain, Ambassador of Pakistan to Nepal

to both the countries as well as the whole world.

Since its very establishment in February 2008, the democratic government has been faced with rising extremist and terrorist elements in the North Western parts of the country. Initially, the government tried to reason with the extremist leaders (in the shape of the Malakand Accord), but after exhausting all avenues for peaceful dialogue, the government was compelled to launch a Law Enforcement Operation in April 2009 in Swat and Malakand. Unlike in the past, the operation was supported by the whole nation through Parliament and All Parties' Conference. It was a difficult decision, but the unwavering support of the people of Pakistan to the democratically elected government on this issue has proved that it was a right decision.

The present government in Pakistan is working on three Ds policy to defeat terrorism. The three Ds mean dialogue, development and deterrence and the successes so far have made everyone acknowledge that it is the right strategy.

Addressing the two-day session of the NATO's Military Committee in Brussels on 27 January 2010, Chief of Army Staff General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani said, "In order to win the war on terror, confidence between NATO and Pakistani forces is needed, along with cooperation in intelligence sectors." He said NATO needed to understand Pakistan's strategy to root out terrorism from Swat and Malakand regions. The international community should realize that we achieved major success against terrorists in Swat and Malakand, through a comprehensive strategy. Besides achieving military success, we also helped rehabilitate more than 2.3 million people who had been displaced. The Pakistan Army managed to get a civil structure in place over there. Pakistan is playing a pivotal role for peace and stability in the region keeping in view our national interests.

At the bilateral level, after the nuclear tests by India and

then Pakistan in May 1998, the focus on this region had been almost exclusively on the nuclear dimension of the confrontation between the two states. After 9/11, this focus shifted to 'fight against terrorism'. While Pakistan is a frontline state in the fight against terrorism, it is simultaneously braving regional security challenges, foremost of which is the Kashmir dispute with India.

The Kashmiri struggle cannot be designated as a terrorist movement. On the contrary, the Kashmiris are engaged in a legitimate freedom struggle to exercise the right of self-determination promised to them by the United Nations. The UN Security Council resolutions of 1948 and 1949 provide for the holding of a free and impartial plebiscite for the determination of the future of the state by the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The basic points about the UN resolutions are that:

- The complaint relating to Kashmir was initiated by India in the Security Council;
- The Council explicitly and by implications, rejected India's claim that Kashmir is legally Indian territory;
- The resolutions established self-determination as the governing principal for the settlement of the Kashmir dispute. This is the world body's commitment to the people of Kashmir;

- The resolutions endorsed a binding agreement between India and Pakistan reached through the mediation of UNCIP (UN Commission for India and Pakistan), that a plebiscite would be held, under agreed and specified conditions.

Pakistan continues to adhere to the UN resolutions. These are binding also on India.

The Security Council has also rejected the Indian contention that the people of Kashmir have exercised their right of self-determination by participating in the "election" which India has organized from time to time in the Held Kashmir.

And let me clarify here that the Simla Agreement of 2 July 1972 did not alter the status of Jammu and Kashmir as a

disputed territory: Para 6 of the Agreement lists "a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir" as one of the outstanding issues.

Pakistan has remained engaged in a peace process with India that led to significant improvement in bilateral relations. However, Mumbai incident has put the peace process under strain. Nevertheless, the two countries must seize the opportunity provided by the international environment to address all problems especially the Jammu and Kashmir dispute that has been at the heart of conflict and tension in South Asia. This was also pointed out by the British Foreign Secretary David Miliband during his visit to the region last year when he advised India to resolve the Kashmir dispute.

Another source of regional tensions, which we often ignore as not so important is the scarcity of natural resources, most importantly the availability of water. Due to regional scarcity of water, the South Asian nations have long-standing disputes with their neighbors over the regulation and distribution of shared water resources, particularly rivers. These disputes are intensifying, as rising demand outpaces a shrinking supply of fresh water. Population growth, urbanization, industrialization and increased reliance on irrigated agriculture have steadily increased regional demand for water. These trends are only expected to accelerate in coming decades. We, therefore, need to work out our policies accordingly and resolve these issues with our neighbours amicably.

Destabilization of South Asia would have incalculable consequences for global peace and security. We, therefore, have been asking India to reciprocate Pakistan's offers for comprehensive and constructive engagement to jointly address the issues of peace, security and stability in South Asia. It is also important that the Composite Dialogue process between the two countries should be resumed. As a responsible state, we are committed to peace, stability and security in South Asia. We desire friendly, cooperative and good neighbourly relations with India. The Indian offer to have

Foreign Secretary level talks, as reported by the media today, is a welcome development. The international community should encourage a process of peace and rapprochement, help promote the peaceful resolution of disputes, and support nuclear stabilization and restraint in South Asia. The world must also pay attention to the root causes of insecurity and instability in South Asia.

In order to move forward, I strongly believe that Pakistan and India must conduct their relations on the basis of sovereign equality, endeavor to settle the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, and build a more secure and prosperous future for their peoples. If we are able to resolve the Kashmir Issue through dialogue, we'll strengthen our peoples' belief in democracy. Thus through enhanced security paradigm, we will be able to achieve the goals of stable democratic regimes, dedicated to the economic and social development of their peoples.

A democratic system has a natural pressure release valve. The democratic process automatically takes the edge off the most extreme positions. Hence at domestic level it is cure to all ills born out of tyranny, injustice and inequality such as intolerance, extremism and violence. And at regional level it promotes a democratic attitude leading towards dialogue rather than conflict.

Towards the end, let me briefly state few words about Pakistan-Nepal relationship. The friendship between our two nations is multidimensional. From similarity of aspirations to commonalities of culture and from political coordination to economic cooperation, there are many aspects that bring us close to each other.

This year we are celebrating Golden Jubilee of our diplomatic relations that were established in March 1960. We plan to organize a number of events to mark this occasion, and your participation in these events will be an honour for us.

I am confident that Pakistan-Nepal relations will continue to grow stronger to the mutual benefit of our two peoples. And let me conclude by saying that systems change and governments come and go but Pakistan-Nepal friendship will always flourish.

Today, I will share a few thoughts with you on the challenges of security and stability faced by our region and the role democracy can play in strengthening our nations individually and our region as a whole.

First of all let us see what security is. We have been talking about national security, economic security, food security, energy security, social security and so on. So a comprehensive meaning of security should include all aspects of security: physical, economic, social and political. As an opposite of it, insecurity stands for weak defence, weak economy, weak political institutions, and so on. But what is most important is political set up in a country and people's trust in that set up.

The famous Chinese philosopher Confucius was once asked about essentials of a strong and stable nation. He enlisted three elements: a strong army (i.e. defence), ample storage of food (i.e. food or economic security), and peoples trust in the government. When asked to prioritize these three elements, he said, you may have a strong nation even without a strong army; you may also have strong nation even without ample food; but you cannot have strong nation without people's trust in their government.

In today's world, the best system that can create trust between the rulers and the ruled is democracy. Hence it stands as a precondition to make a nation strong and stable and in turn bring stability to the region as whole.

The security in South Asia is challenged by interplay of several factors operating at three different levels: domestic, regional, and global.

Domestic

If we have a look at the

economies of the region, we realize that half of the world's poor population lives in South Asia. For more than 60 years now, the counties of our region remain mired in a vicious circle of poverty and under development. Our nations are at the bottom of the world league in social and human indicators. Very few people in South Asia have access to clean drinking water and fewer have the luxury of having a house. Education is available only to the most fortunate. This situation - economic deprivation, illiteracy and unemployment - provides a fertile ground for intolerance and extremism which in turn promotes conflict and violence in our societies. And it proves that all aspects of security are intertwined.

Regional
At regional level, there are various factors responsible for insecurity and instability. Some of them overlap with the factors at domestic as well as global levels. These include terrorism, pursuit of domination by some states over others, and long outstanding disputes. Moreover, the prevailing asymmetry - with regard to both strategic objectives and the relationship between the size of military forces - is a built-in factor for instability. Let us have a look at some of these issues.

Terrorism is one of the most important regional issues, and requires regional and global solutions. Pakistan is taking resolute law enforcement action to eliminate terrorism and militancy in our own national interest.

War against terrorism is not a conventional war. It is a different kind of war with a different kind of enemy, an enemy that straddles the borders of both Afghanistan and Pakistan, and poses equal threats