

## Inter-party acrimony taking its toll



### WM Correspondent

The crisis of confidence among political parties is taking heavy toll on the process of constitution making as well as the integration and rehabilitation of the Maoist combatants.

The Maoists have opposed the timeline for army integration and rehabilitation set by Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal before the promulgation of the new constitution by May 28.

The Maoist stalwarts are suspecting that the ruling parties might have been conspiring to repress them by stressing more on disarmament.

On the other hand, the ruling parties have been maintaining that the process of army management should take precedence over the promulgation of the new constitution.

The standing committee meeting of the United CPN (Maoist) held two weeks back had concluded that completing army integration process before the new constitution would be disastrous for the party.

Only after clear-cut decisions on state restructuring and security policy are made, it is better to go for integration, the meet summarized.

A recent central committee meeting of the party also took decision on army integration in a linear fashion.

Undeniably, some concrete achievements have been made regarding the chain of command of the People's Liberation Army and the discharge of disqualified combatants. All the same, the road towards the accomplishment of integration and rehabilitation of the Maoist combatants

is still fraught with many sophisticated challenges.

The deadline for promulgating the new constitution is approaching near with less than 100 days remaining.

But, unluckily, the political leadership continues to wrangle over the model of state restructuring and new government.

It is crystal clear that that ceaseless acrimony between the top leaders has become the major barrier to the timely draft of a new constitution.

United CPN (Maoist), the country's largest party, is in no mood to write the new constitution unless they again ascend to the power corridors. On the other hand, other parties in the current government, are desperate to cling onto power as they fear that the Maoists will bulldoze them into oblivion if they step down.

## Shockingly shady

### WM Correspondent

Media mogul Jamim Shah was murdered by Indian criminals with the connivance of a number of Nepali criminals as well as police officers.

It is exactly what the police said while disclosing that notorious Indian underworld don Babloo Shrivastav had ordered his henchmen to gun down Shah.

This discloser also explained how the assassins managed to escape away despite heavy security presence in Lazimpat, where Shah was murdered in broad daylight gunfire.

Investigators further claimed, "Sub-Inspector Prakash Chhetri was in constant touch with Indian criminal Deepak Shahi 'Babbu' who hatched the plot in Kathmandu under the direction of Shrivastav and Bharat Nepali, key aides of Indian underworld don Chhota Rajan."

According to the police, Chhetri had passed crucial security related information to Babbu.

They also traced evidences substantiating the involvement of two serving SSPs, two DSPs and a retired DSP.

Chhetri, who was assigned in

American embassy Kathmandu, has been arrested.

However, former DSP Jagadish Chand has not been imprisoned due to pressure from top-level police officials.

Bharat Nepali reportedly called the Channel Nepal, owned by Shah, and said that he was killed for his anti-India activities.

The latest disclosure on the murder of Shah itself speaks that the notorious underworld criminals are holding sway over the upper crust of Nepali police.

That those brutally slaughtered by these criminals had been ceaselessly labeled by New Delhi and the Indian media as anti-Indians also gives ample space to suspect the role of external intelligence agency in the murder of Shah and others like him who met the same fate.

Undeniably, Indian intelligence agency enjoys big influence over the country's police.

That it has successfully mobilized police personnel to nab even Pakistani diplomats, based in Nepal, on the false charge of running fake Indian currency racket attests to this fact.

## President, India and Maoists

### WM Correspondent

The visit of President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav to India was politically significant as he discussed on Nepal's constitution writing process and peace process will all leaders he met.

Dr Yadav had rendezvous with Indian president Pratiba Patil, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, chairman of ruling coalition and Congress (I) president Sonia Gandhi, among others.

According to reports, New Delhi's political honchos were highly concerned over the Maoists and their campaign against the Indian establishment as well as Dr Yadav's perception on the current political stalemate of Nepal.

Likewise the southern neighbour was also keen to hear about the future course of Nepal's politics from the first president of the nascent republic.

The cardinal cause behind the current stalemate of Nepal's politics is the president's "unconstitutional" step to reinstate the then army chief Rukmangal Katwal whom the former Maoist-led government had sacked.

The Maoists ventured into several rounds of protests against the president's move and "the manipulations on the part of India" to



has been narrowed down to look into the external security policies and diplomatic efforts towards the security of India.

Be that as it may, the pertinent question is whether New Delhi hawks are genuinely interested to see the logical conclusion of the country's peace process through the timely draft of a new stature.

Experiences clearly demonstrate that India is more inclined towards capitalizing upon the flow of Nepal's politics in its favour.

The role of Indian security advisor

has been narrowed down to look into the external security policies and diplomatic efforts towards the security of India.

Be that as it may, the pertinent question is whether New Delhi hawks are genuinely interested to see the logical conclusion of the country's peace process through the timely draft of a new stature.

Experiences clearly demonstrate that India is more inclined towards capitalizing upon the flow of Nepal's politics in its favour.

That the Indian establishment was active to oust the Maoist government in a run up to the removal of the army chief does need to be substantiated with concrete evidence.

Of course, the ongoing peace process and draft of a new constitution will not see the light of the day without bringing the Maoists to consensus.

If the president ventures in to dissolving the constituent assembly to assume full power on the backing of any element, it will be only a recipe for another round of a bloody conflict.

## Perils of poverty

### WM correspondent

When the National Planning Commission (NPC) was boastfully saying that the country's poverty level was cut down to 25 percent, a family of Rukum district committed suicide owing to a horrendous destitution.

Dal Bahadur Oli, his spouse Kaili Devi and their daughter Tulasa lost their battle against grinding poverty and, ultimately, chose to kill themselves.

This appallingly terrible incident shows that the path towards eliminating poverty is still fraught with many potholes. But, there has been some improvement in reducing poverty just the same.

According to the NPC's draft report on poverty alleviation, the target of reducing poverty to 21 percent by 2015 as per the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) is most likely to be met.

The report has also outlined the need for specified approach to address the poverty of pocket areas. The traditionally impoverished areas of Far Western and Mid-western regions need more attention.

Every year, the Karnali region reels under the scarcity of food.

Due to lack of access to clean drinking water, more than 300 people lost their life in battle against dhireha and hajia last year.

Many people from the remote areas are constantly suffering from curable diseases due to lack of proper access to transportation to visit health posts.

Regional and gender disparity is strikingly rife despite overall progress in fight against poverty.

According to the report, the people of Terai have low poverty than hilly and mountainous regions.

In order to ensure proportional eradication of poverty, the state must be proactive to launch special measures to rescue the most poverty-

stricken regions on a priority basis.

The plights of the impoverished mountainous region really demand urgent attention.

The physical appearance of the inhabitants of Karnali region belies their age.

The people dwelling in the region

look older than their actual age due to enormous hardships they undergo for the sake of livelihood.

The report has stated the gulf between the rich and the poor not has also narrowed down.

Whether the latest portrayal of the country's poverty on the part of NPC holds water is doubtful.

The Human Development Report-2009 has shown that the gap between the haves and the have-nots is getting wider.

The poverty instruments to reduce income inequality in Nepal have been ineffective and condemned by a vast majority of the people. The reason is largely due to the failure to redesign and localize poverty issues in line with the Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs).

Nepal has already met the target of reducing proportion of undernourished children by reducing it to 22.5 percent in 2010 although the set target was to bring it down to 25 percent by 2015.

However, the target of achieving decent and full employment for all working age population is still a far dream with 30 percent economically active population under-employed, according to Labour Force Survey-2008.

In urban areas, under-employed working age population accounts for 50 percent of total population.

The government aims to provide productive employment in the upcoming interim plan starting from next fiscal year.

The creation of employment opportunities is certainly pivotal to tide over the rampant poverty. However, the pertinent question is: will the country's political leadership come together prudently to facilitate the growth of multiple fronts of economy to create more job opportunities?



R.No. BA. 39/027/028

Published by : Weekly Mirror Publication (P) Ltd.

Editor : Prem Kumari Pant

Sub-Editor : Nirjal Dhungana

Prithvi Man Shrestha

New Plaza, Ram Shah Path, Kathmandu

Tel No. 4412074, Fax: 977-1-4412410

Printed at : Dhimle Printing Press, Dillibazar

Email: weeklymirror@ntc.net.np

weeklymirror@gmail.com

## Editorial

### Energizing economy... the NTY 2011 way

The proposition of bringing one million international visitors in the country through the launch of the mega campaign of Nepal Tourism Year (NTY) 2011 sounds enthusiastic as well as challenging.

No doubt, for this see the light of the day, a buoyant economy with sound base for transport, services, market, hotels, and travel trade is simply mandatory.

Boosting the country as the premier holiday destination also calls for activation of multiple fronts of Nepali economy.

There must be clear-cut vision and congenial atmosphere to bolster sectors like investment, employment, enterprises and infrastructure.

Nepali political leadership, in its breakneck race for power, has failed to pay proper attention to the economy, particularly its sensitivity, and myriad linkages to public life.

Political honchos have not envisioned any measures to heal the wounds inflicted on the economy. The complete absence of compensating motivational package for the key sectors that could be instrumental in rejuvenating the productivity of Nepali economy attests to this fact.

The present day face of Nepali economy is characterized with the shattered base of industries and business.

This reflects the suffering of conflict times and negligence of post conflict era.

In this light, Nepal Tourism Year 2011, proposed by the then Maoist Government's Finance Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai in 2008 budget, alludes to optimism for the economy.

Entrepreneurs of the country must come forward to ensure success of this campaign.

The objectives of NTY 2011 include "establishing Nepal as a choice of premier holiday destination with a definite brand image, improving and extending tourism related infrastructures in existing and new tourism sites, enhancing the capacity of service providers, building community capacity in the new areas to cater to the need of tourists and promoting domestic tourism for sustainability of industry".

As such, the combined efforts on the part of the government and private sector to achieve these lofty objectives will definitely stimulate the economy.

The way the National Campaign for NTY 2011 is being pushed forward for gaining confidence from all quarters in the country also offers rays of hopes that the campaign would be pivotal in creating a stable atmosphere essential for industrial and business development.

Seeking one year guarantee for not disturbance of any sort in the economy, particularly in the tourism related sector, the campaign aims at reviving the suitable economic climate.

Such being the reality, it can be expected that the sincere adherence to the basic requisites of the NTY 2011 could help the country's ailing to get back in shape.

## After Haiti, Nepal braces for big quake

By Claire Cozens

As Haiti counts the cost of last month's devastating earthquake, experts are warning of the potential for an even greater disaster in another of the world's poorest countries, Nepal.

Geologists say it is only a matter of time before a major earthquake hits Nepal's densely populated capital Kathmandu, where 2.5 million people live in cramped, poorly-built housing with little or no awareness of the dangers.

Nepal sits on the border between two huge plates that have moved together over millions of years to form the Himalayas.

Geologists believe it is at risk from an earthquake with a magnitude of around eight — 10 times as powerful as the Haiti shock that killed more than 212,000 people.

Nepal has not suffered a major quake for decades, and expert David Pelley believes the troubled country is woefully unprepared.

"From a geological perspective the risk seems to be very large indeed," said Pelley, Wilson professor of hazard and risk at Britain's Durham University.

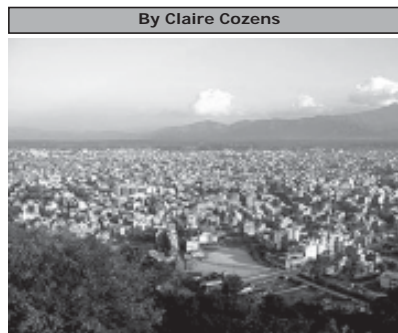
"The area to the west of Kathmandu is undergoing the processes that drive earthquakes, and there has not been a quake on that section of the fault for hundreds of years.

"The larger the time gap (between quakes) the larger the quake is going to be."

Many other major cities in the region are vulnerable to large earthquakes.

But a 2001 study by GeoHazards International, a US research group set up to reduce the human impact of natural disasters, found Kathmandu would suffer the worst losses.

Very low building standards, weak infrastructure and the fact that



Kathmandu is built on the soft sediment of a former lake bed all contribute to the high risk level.

Like Port au Prince, Kathmandu is served by just one single-runway airport, but unlike the Haitian capital it has no port, and experts believe the only three roads into the city would likely be destroyed in a major quake.

A decade-long civil war and years of political instability have also taken their toll on Nepal, whose capital Kathmandu has just eight working fire engines.

Experts warn that few of the hospitals and government buildings could withstand a major quake.

"What has been made clear in Haiti is that when a quake affects the capital and government infrastructure is destroyed, organising help becomes very difficult indeed," said Pelley.

Geologist Amod Mani Dixit was working for the Nepal government on landslide prevention in 1988 when a 6.5-magnitude earthquake struck the east of the country.

The high death toll and damage

caused by the quake prompted him to set up the National Society for Earthquake Technology (NSET) to raise public awareness of the dangers and help make schools and hospitals safer.

"It was a moderate earthquake, but the impact was huge. It killed 720 people and caused five billion rupees (67 million dollars) worth of damage, 25 percent of Nepal's GDP for that year," said Dixit.

"I was shocked. If even a moderate quake like that could cause such large amounts of damage, the question was what had we failed to do."

After discovering that none of Nepal's government schools had been built to withstand quakes, Dixit launched a programme to make school buildings more earthquake-resistant.

His organisation is retro-fitting around five schools a year to strengthen them against quake damage, and he also runs training for masons on constructing quake-resistant buildings.

But he says much more needs to

be done in Nepal, where awareness of the risk remains very low.

"It's not just buildings, but also a lack of knowledge that kills. Mindsets and practices need to be changed," he said.

"Awareness levels have increased tremendously in the past 10 years, but it is not enough. Nepal is a fatalistic country and to bring people out of their slumber takes time."

In 2003 the government introduced building codes to try to improve standards in construction, and now runs training for masons.

But Amrit Man Tuladhar, head of the Nepal government's earthquake preparedness programme, admits the regulations are often ignored, and says the older buildings in Kathmandu are a cause for concern.

"We believe more than 80 percent of old buildings could collapse," he said. "Many of the buildings in the Kathmandu Valley are very old. If a quake struck at night, people would not be able to escape their houses."

The last major earthquake to hit Nepal struck to the east of the capital in 1934. It measured 8.4 on the Richter scale and killed more than 8,500 people in Nepal and neighbouring India.

Mohan Bikram Thapa was living in Kathmandu with his parents when it hit and, 76 years on, he still remembers the massive devastation it caused. "Suddenly everything began to shake and the houses started collapsing, filling the air with dust," recalls Thapa, 86. "All the tallest buildings fell in place."

"Later, at about five o'clock, bodies started bringing out the dead people to be buried."

"In those days, Kathmandu was like a small village. If the same thing happened now, it would be very dangerous."

## Afghanistan and America's 30-year war

Observer

On February 13 the United States and NATO led an assault with 15,000

Western and Afghan government troops against Marjah, a town in Helmand province with a population of 75,000. One soldier for every five civilians. The NATO contingent involved in the offensive includes troops from Britain, Canada, Denmark, Estonia and the U.S.

In the opening hours of the massive attack, "the biggest airborne assault ever undertaken by coalition forces in the country," two rockets fired from a NATO High Mobility Artillery Rocket System slammed into a house outside Marjah and killed twelve civilians. General Stanley McChrystal, commander of all U.S. and NATO Forces in the country, described the incident as "regrettable."

The populous Taliban stronghold of Marjah has, say residents, become a ghost town. Shops are shuttered, streets deserted and most inhabitants are hiding inside their mud-brick houses wondering when their 'day of doom' will come.

The operation is the largest staged by the U.S. and its NATO allies since the war in Afghanistan was launched in early October of 2001. It is the opening salvo in the plan for escalation of the counterinsurgency war in that nation announced by U.S. President

There is no war without an adversary, and McChrystal identified the targets of the campaign that over 150,000 U.S. and NATO troops will soon be waging: The major insurgent groups in order of their threat to the mission are: the Quetta Shura Taliban (QST), the Haqqani Network (HQN), and the Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin (HIG).

Gates was referring to Operation Cyclone, the largest covert operation conducted by the CIA and indeed by any agency or nation.

The bulk of the billions of dollars Gates boasted of supplying to arm the Pakistan-based Mujahideen was directed to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Jalaluddin Haqqani. Those two are now identified by the same Pentagon that Gates heads up as two of the three targets of the world's largest and longest war.

The day Charlie Wilson died, Gates celebrated him as "an extraordinary patriot" for "liberating Afghanistan from Soviet occupation." On February 23 Wilson will receive a graveside service with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery.

As Gates praised his former colleague for playing a decisive role in arming and training the forces of Hekmatyar and Haqqani, so Wilson was effusive in his praise of both the latter.

Wilson once described the warlord Jalaluddin Haqqani as 'goodness personified'. Today the elderly commander is one of America's most wanted terrorists.

In the 1980s the self-proclaimed Holy Warrior, with close links to Osama bin Laden, was getting millions of American tax dollars to send Arab and Afghan volunteers into battle against Soviet troops. The CIA were his allies. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar was another Islamist commander bankrolled by Wilson's money. Today both men are in charge of militant networks responsible for countless attacks against US, Afghan and international forces.

The problem was in the conceptual framework created by America's Cold War policy makers in the first place that made Afghanistan the bleeding ground it remains to this day.

Having gone to great lengths to draw them into Afghanistan in the first place (beginning as early as 1973), the US wanted the Soviets to stay so that their mujahideen proxies could deliver a mortal blow to the 'Evil Empire.'

As the Cold War deepened and the Afghans drew closer to the Soviets, US interest in the country increased proportionately. Afghanistan would soon become a battleground on which the fantasies of Washington's Cold War policy planners would be played out.

Invisible History also shows how covert US meddling began as early as 1973 under president Nixon, following the ouster of King Zahir Shah by Mohammad Daoud. The US had not even extricated itself from its own Vietnam War when such plans were afoot as part of the 'Chinese-Iranian-Pakistani-Arabian peninsula Axis' to give the Soviets theirs.

According to the official version of history, CIA aid to the Mujahadeen began during 1980, that is to say after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan, 24 Dec 1979. But the reality, secretly guarded until now, is completely otherwise. Indeed, it was July 3, 1979 that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, a note to the president in which explained to him that this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention.

That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap. The day that the Soviets officially crossed the border. The US has the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam war

What is most important to the history of the world? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some stirred-up Moslems or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the cold war?

Brzezinski, had no regrets. No regrets for what the brutal guerrillas whose training and arming he arranged in Pakistan in the 1980s have done to Afghanistan and its people. No regrets that foreign fighters among them spread out to Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Balkans, North Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Empire builders have neither time nor inclination for regrets. The terrorism/counterterrorism strategy, tenuously and self-servingly linked with weapons of mass destruction, drugs and now piracy, has over the last decade alone ginned the U.S. and its NATO allies military bases and camps in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, the Philippines, Iraq, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Djibouti, Seychelles, Uganda, Mali, Bulgaria, Romania and Colombia.

There will soon be more U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan - 150,000 from fifty nations - than there ever were Soviet troops in the 1980s. The Western military forces were not invited into the country by any government or any political faction.

A second Vietnam-style war may well be realized. America's second Vietnam.

# Architect on a mission to save Kathmandu's soul

Nepal's ancient capital Kathmandu is famed around the world for its intricately carved

By Subel Bhandari

agency to try his hand at restoring old properties.

later, with the judges saying it "paved the way for the



medieval temples and ancient royal palaces.

But as the once-sleepy city hurtles into the 21st century, the distinctive architecture that visitors once flocked to see is



rapidly being replaced by the high-rise concrete structures favoured by modern residents.

It is a trend the Nepalese architect Rabindra Puri bitterly opposes — and he is on a one-man mission to prevent the disappearance of what he calls the "soul" of Kathmandu and its surroundings.

Puri, a former sculptor, was struck by the city's transformation when he returned from a two-year study trip in Europe in 1995.

"My heart wept to see so many concrete buildings, they were ugly and had no substance," the 40-year-old told AFP in an interview.

"These new building models are an act of arrogance, of alienation from our history. But they are popular with the wealthy elite."

Puri had developed a passion for the traditional architecture of Nepal when he worked as a model-maker on a project to restore ancient buildings in Patan, the historic city that adjoins Kathmandu.

So, four years after his return and much to the astonishment of friends and colleagues, he quit a highly-paid job with the German government development

agency to try his hand at restoring old properties.

later, with the judges saying it "paved the way for the

His first case was a 150-year-old dilapidated farmhouse in Bhaktapur, around 13 kilometres (eight miles) east of Kathmandu, that for the last five years had been used to

conservation of similar traditional buildings throughout Nepal."

The house, which now functions as a museum as well as Puri's studio, is equipped with a modern kitchen and bathroom to show that living in an old building need not mean skimping on creature comforts.

Puri — the first Nepalese architect to win the UNESCO award — prides himself on reusing as many of the original materials as possible, and believes this is the secret of his success.

"The basic theory of conservation is to make only minimal change and to use traditional methods for restoring," he said. "You do not destroy anything unless it's absolutely necessary."

Since then, Puri has worked on 35 other projects, at times restoring old buildings and at times transforming the concrete structures he hates to ensure they blend in with the

keep chickens.

The house was a classic example of the architecture of the Newars — the indigenous inhabitants of the



Kathmandu Valley who are renowned for their striking brick work and unique form of wood carving.

The restoration began in 1999 and won the prestigious UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Award five years

city's traditional architecture.

"Conservation of our cultural heritage would probably be the best way to describe what I do," said Puri, who makes no attempt to disguise his contempt for most of his colleagues in the

industry.

"In the 1960s, architects and engineers who studied in Russia and India came back to Nepal. They needed to prove the worth of their foreign degrees," he said.

"They started saying that traditional designs were not strong enough and were expensive, which is the exact opposite of my experience."

In fact, Puri says, traditional buildings are often more likely to withstand earthquakes than the modern high-rises preferred by Kathmandu's wealthier inhabitants because they sway rather than collapsing.

"In the city centre you can see many traditional houses that tilt, some by as much as 15 degrees, but they do not fall over. Modern buildings often cannot handle even five degrees of inclination," he said.

"The other big advantage of living in a traditional building is that they are warmer in winter and cooler in summer."

Last year, Puri launched a conservation foundation in his own name, and he is now planning his most ambitious project yet — the restoration of an entire town.

Panauti, 35 kilometres southeast of Kathmandu, combines architecture from the era of the Malla kings who ruled the area from the 13th century with 19th-century palaces built by Nepal's former ruling dynasty, the Ranas.

Its medieval water and sewage systems — among the most advanced in the ancient world — were restored in the 1990s by a group of French experts, and now Puri hopes to do the same for its buildings.

With support from local people, he hopes to restore and modernise around 700 buildings in Panauti.

"Panauti's cultural heritage has been preserved intact and

## National news :

### Govt committed to timely drafting of constitution

Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal has said the 22-party government is committed to create an environment necessary for drafting the new constitution within the prescribed timeframe.

PM Nepal said this during a meeting with the visiting foreign minister of Myanmar, Nyan Win, on Tuesday. According to PM's foreign affairs adviser, Rajan Bhattarai, the meeting between PM Nepal and the Myanmar FM dwelled mainly on the exploring the potentiality of tourism, trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

On the occasion, Win invited PM Nepal for a visit to Myanmar to which the latter assured to work out the date for the visit 'soon'. The Myanmar FM arrived in Kathmandu for a four-day trip on Monday.

### No integration before promulgation of constitution

Maolist vice chairman Narayan Kaji Shrestha Tuesday dismissed the stance of ruling political parties that integration and rehabilitation of Maoist combatants should be done before the promulgation of the constitution.

"Army integration cannot happen before promulgation of the constitution. This [integration before constitution] is a conspiracy of reactionaries," he said, speaking at the Reporters Club Tuesday.

"Their daydream will never come true," he added, claiming that 'army integration' means integration of all the PLA members into the army.

The Maoist leader also said chances of the new constitution being ready by May 28 were almost none, but still such a situation would not spell doom in the country because the term of the Constitution Assembly could be extended through political consensus.

Shrestha further said the current political deadlock would not end unless the Madhav Kumar Nepal-led government is replaced by a national unity government.

He added that the high-level political mechanism would be meaningless if it failed to throw out the current government and stall a new one.

### Nepal's poverty level expected to drop

Nepal is likely to meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of reducing poverty level to 21 percent of the population by 2015 as it has already brought down the figure to 25 percent by 2008.

A progress report on MDG prepared by the National Planning Commission (NPC) says poverty is declining at the rate of 1 percent annually. In 2005, the population below the poverty line was 31 percent.

According to an assessment report, the poverty gap also declined from 7.55 in 2005 to 6.10 in 2008. "It means the average gap between the haves and have-nots has narrowed down," said former NPC Vice Chairman Jagadish Chandra Pokharel at a consultation meeting on Sunday. Pokharel prepared the assessment report on poverty related targets.

"The government's allocation of a budget of around 43.7 percent for poverty reducing programs, non-governmental organizations' efforts and social safety programs are responsible for the achievements in poverty reduction," Pokharel said.

### Prices again see upward spiral

Prices have again started to skyrocket owing to a steep upward spiral in the price of sugar and sugar related products, pulses, spices, vegetables and meat.

According to Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), year on year (y-o-y) inflation, as measured by the consumer price index (CPI), moderated to 11.8 percent in mid-January. It had moderated to 11.3 percent in mid-December.

The CPI moderated to 11.8 percent against a 14.4 percent increase in the same period last year. "The price index of food and beverages group increased by 18.1 percent whereas the index of non-food and services group rose only by 4.5 percent," said central bank's report for the sixth month price analysis.

The index of food and beverages and non-food and services group had increased by 18.3 percent and 10.3 percent respectively in the same period last year. Of the items in food and beverage group, price indices of sugar and sugar related products had the highest increased rate of 77.5 percent against an increase of 37.3 percent in the same period last year.

In a similar fashion, the price indices of pulses, spices, vegetables and fruits as well as meat, fish and eggs sub-groups rose by 36.7 percent, 34.8 percent, 29.2 and 22.8 percent, respectively against an increase of 25.6 percent, 8.1 percent, 13.3 percent and 22.5 percent in the same period last year.

Wholesale prices under the agricultural commodities group, the price index of cash crops, increased by a whopping 64.7 percent against a decline of 7.7 percent a year ago. The price index of spices, pulses and livestock production rose by 50.3 percent, 34 percent and 33.8 percent, respectively as compared to an increase of 7.2 percent, 20 percent and 27.9 percent respectively during the same period last year. Within the group of domestic manufactured commodities, the price index of food-related products increased by 15.1 percent as compared to a rise of 12 percent a year ago.

Within the imported commodities group, the price indices of chemical fertilizers and chemical goods declined by 11.9 percent in the review period as compared to an increase of 8.3 percent in the corresponding period of previous year.

### Load-shedding mars industries

Production of industries in the Birgunj-Pathlaiya Industrial Corridor has drastically gone down due to the 11-hour load-shedding imposed by the Nepal Electricity Authority.

According to the Birgunj Chamber of Commerce and Industries, production in the corridor have decreased by 80 percent compared to the past due to excessive load-shedding. There are over 200 small and big industries in the corridor. Besides, the industries in the corridor are suffering irregular power cuts and low voltage, too.

The industrialists are bearing a loss of over Rs. 100 million in a day due to excessive power cuts. Sikariya stressed that the government should pay special attention towards the problems facing industries due to excessive load-shedding every year, as out of total revenue of the nation, over 40 percent is paid by industries.

# Time to revamp higher education in Nepal

Education, basically, means the practice of acquiring knowledge, instilling forms of right conduct and achieving technical and professional capability. It includes the development of skills along with the achievement of one's physical, mental and social development.

By Khagendra Thapa

If higher education can be made available to students from diverse backgrounds, it can become an instrument for progress toward democratic objectives. Moreover, increasing participation from diverse

gains. These kinds of leaders have done nothing for the country and it is an exercise in futility to expect something good from those who lack ethics and moral values.

Responsible political parties must not use these young people as tools to advance their political agenda. By doing so, the political parties are destroying the future of the vast majority of these students. One does, however, acknowledge the fact that some of these students will gain influential position within the party and thus ensure the replacement of the corrupt leadership. It is not a bad thing for students to be socially and politically active but do not do so at the expense of their education. They could be involved in such activities outside the Campus. But do not take some political party's agenda to the Campus and bring about polarization and dispute among students. Religion and politics cause polarization among people. Therefore, these issues should not be brought into Campus unless it happens to be part of the curriculum such as a course in political science or religion.

In order to improve and upgrade the whole higher education system in Nepal, the following steps should be taken:

## Students

1. Students form the most important component of the higher education because it is meant for them. They have a great stake in it in that their whole future depends on how they perform in their studies.

2. In order to ensure that the students succeed in the curriculum of their choice, there must be strict admission criteria. Perhaps, each institution can give an admission test if there is lack of any other measurable criterion.

3. Those students who perform poorly must be expelled from the university and there can be no exceptions.

4. The faculty must have strict attendance policy. Any student missing 10% of the classes should automatically fail the class. Any student involved in breaking university property (must be held accountable and must pay for the damages) and disturbing other student's education process must also be immediately expelled from the university.

5. There should be a time frame for a student to complete a degree. For example, a student must complete his or her master level degree in four years otherwise s/he will be denied continuation in the program. It will force students to concentrate on studies and filter out those who are there just to practice their political activities.

6. Any violent activities on the part of students will result in their immediate expulsion from the campus and those who destroy campus property must be made to pay for its repair or replacement.

## Curriculum

Curriculum is the second most important component of an educational institution since it defines the nature and the scope of education provided by the institution. Therefore, a curriculum must have the following components:

1. Each program of the college or university must have its well defined objectives. It must clearly state as to the nature and scope of the program and when a student receives a degree what kind and what level of knowledge,

and understanding a graduate will possess.

2. In addition to the objectives, each program must also specify a set of outcomes of the program. The program must also specify as to how each outcome will be assessed. For example, for each major topic the method of assessment such as homework, quiz, or test or even lab work must be specified.

A plan for continuous improvement of the curriculum must be included so that new knowledge is incorporated and old and useless information is deleted.

## Faculty

Faculty also constitutes a very important part of the higher education. There must be adequate number of well qualified faculty to teach the students in the program.

1. Students should be given the opportunity to evaluate the faculty performance at the end of each course. The evaluations should be made available the following semester. This will serve as an input for faculty to improve in their performance.

2. Non-tenured faculty should go through rigorous evaluation both through colleague evaluation and student's evaluations.

3. There should be post-tenure evaluation for faculty to ensure that they are keeping up with their subject matter and not negligent in their responsibilities. Promotions and merit raise should be given to only those faculty who excel in their performances.

## Facilities and Support

Depending on the nature of the program, there must be adequate number of class rooms, computers, laboratory and equipment available.

## Accreditation

In order to maintain the academic standards, Nepal must establish accrediting agencies (perhaps under Ministry of Education) which can monitor and accredit programs as well as educational institutions under well defined criteria. Faculty and other professionals may be willing to serve voluntarily in accreditation work. Perhaps, Non-resident Nepalese (NRNs) may be willing to help in this area.

Integration of Institutions of Higher Learning with Higher Secondary Schools During the seventies and eighties, Nepal used to have something called National Development Service (NDS). Nepal should revive and expand this program and require six month of service for undergraduates and one year of service for master's level degree. Majority of these students could be sent to teach in schools throughout the country. In order to increase mutual understanding among people of different regions and different cultures, they must be made to go to places which are unfamiliar to them. For example, student from Maholari should go to Doli or a student from Dhangadhi go to Taplejung.

## How about the Courses?

The faculty teaching a course must specify what are the outcomes of each course? In other words, what would a student completing the course expect to learn in the course? The course outline must list all topics covered in the course. In addition, the faculty must specify as to how the course will be assessed. It will be the responsibility of the faculty to complete each and every topic specified in the outline. The course outline must reflect what is specified in the program outcomes and objectives.

## Rabin's golden ways of knowing the 'oneness' in everything

By Sook de Jonge

"One is all and all is one. You are not you; I am not me." Said contemporary painter Rabin Koirala, on the day after the opening of his 3<sup>rd</sup> solo exhibition entitled: 'The Golden Ways of Knowing', launched by the Minister of Culture Dr. Minendra Rijal.



Originally from Eastern

Nepal, Koirala now lives in

Kathmandu. Professionally, he

houses in one of the NAFA studios of the Balmandi

building, and, at the age of 37, this is his 3<sup>rd</sup> solo exhibition, one of his many

achievements and awards collected along his brief but successful career.

"Alike the great Pablo Picasso, I was already drawn to painting as a young

boy," he proudly tells me, flashing a big smile in the process.

In actual fact, as a baby, Picasso's second word after 'mum', was 'pencil';

Koirala's second was 'dust': referring to 'painting in the dust', as kids in rural

Nepal do. But, with a Master's in his pocket, he moved on from dust long time

ago, onto canvas, to be more precise.

Koirala's paintings are acrylic on canvas, combining round and rectangular

shapes which outline the background, but in some of the paintings they draw the

eye immediately on them.

At first glance, the colours used in his works seem to be primary. However,

the use of overlapping and airbrushing techniques, add several different shades

that only become apparent after a thorough look at the paintings.

Rabin confesses that his work has been mainly influenced by Western culture.

He finds in Western artists the originality that the Asian ones lack. "Asian artists

only follow along," his eyes glint and he wobbles his head sideways.

Rabin is seeking creativity, so it comes as no surprise that aside from Picasso,

he names Vincent Van Gogh as his second biggest source of inspiration, mainly

because of his highly original painting techniques. Again, he flashes a smile, his

eyes sparkle as brightly as the stars of Van Gogh's *Starry Night*.

The quote, "one is all and all is one", can be appreciated in his work, which is

both: simple and symbolic, a depiction he eagerly admits since he wants his

work to speak for itself. In his paintings, you only see the outline of a human

being: no eyes, no mouth. "All humans look alike. For all are one and one is all,"

he says.

Although his work is meant to be simple and symbolic, there's a lot more to it.

Koirala typifies his audience "as those who are no longer solely interested in

material things." His buyers are people seeking a deeper meaning: "those who

are ready to confront their 'inner wonders'," he says while pointing to his head.

There's no need to ask Koirala why he undertakes to portray the complexities

of the mind into simplicity & symbolism. His paintings speak clearly enough.

The exhibition opened its doors to the public on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February and finished

on the 15<sup>th</sup>, however, in case you've missed it, he'll be running two further

exhibitions in India: Pune and Mumbai respectively.

## Al-Qaeda chief delivers a warning

By Syed Saleem Shahzad

Asia Times Online has received a message from top guerrilla commander Ilyas Kashmiri, whose 313 Brigade is an operational arm of al-Qaeda. The message arrived on Monday morning, shortly after the deadly weekend bombing of the German Bakery in the western Indian city of Pune. The message does not specifically claim responsibility for the bombing, but implies the Brigade's involvement. The text of the emailed message reads, in rough translation:

"We warned the international community to play their role in getting the Kashmiris their right of self-determination and preventing India from committing brutalities in Kashmir, especially in Badipaur, raping the women and behaving inhumanly with Muslim prisoners.

"We warn the international community not to send their people to the 2010 Hockey World Cup, IPL [Indian Premier League - a cricket competition involving international players] and Commonwealth Games [to be held in Delhi later this year]. Nor should their people visit India - if they do, they will be responsible for the consequences.

"We, the mujahideen of 313 Brigade, vow to continue attacks all across India until the Indian Army leaves Kashmir and gives the Kashmiris their right of self-determination. We assure the Muslims of the subcontinent that we will never forget the massacre of the Muslims in Gujarat and the demolition of Babri Masjid [a Muslim mosque destroyed by Hindu militants in 1992]. The entire Muslim community is one body and we will take revenge for all injustices and tyranny. We again warn the Indian government to compensate for all its injustices, otherwise they will see our next action.

"From 313 Brigade"

The bombing and Kashmiri's warning come as Washington tries to bring India and Pakistan together to work as allies in fighting the "war on terror". The intention seems to be to reignite conflict between the two countries, diverting Pakistan's attention from Afghanistan and the Pakistani tribal areas and preventing India playing a strategic role.

The Pune bombing killed nine people, including two foreigners, and injured 57. It came a day after India and Pakistan agreed to foreign-secretary-level talks in New Delhi on February 25.

Typically, 313 Brigade does not claim responsibility for its actions, which are said to include attacks on foreigners in India and Afghanistan and the Mumbai carnage of last November. The Brigade has also been linked to the so-called "Chicago Conspiracy" to massacre Indian military officers, attack the Indian nuclear arsenal, and attack the cartoonists whose anti-Muslim illustrations were published by a Danish newspaper.

It is unprecedented that 313 Brigade should send a message to a news outlet. However, Asia Times Online has previously been in contact with Kashmiri, and interviewed him last October. The interview, conducted in the Pakistani tribal agency of South Waziristan, was arranged by Kashmiri, primarily to discount rumors that he had been killed in a US drone attack.

The Indian government said on Monday that there would be no knee-jerk reaction to the Pune bombing and that the talks with Pakistan would go ahead. If more attacks are carried out in India, however, the tension between the countries would soar, and the US-led "war on terror" would be an early casualty.



Education is understood to be the primary factor for the cultivation of a civilized society. It is also responsible for progress in practical fields to enable each educated individual of society to make a living. Its purpose is also to prepare individuals of society to be self-sufficient. Moreover, education of the various practical fields produces productive citizens who can contribute greatly to the creation of wealth for a nation.

Education provides people with the tools and knowledge they need to understand and participate in today's world. It helps to uphold the human values that add to individual and collective well-being. In addition, education forms the basis for continual intellectual improvement. It inspires self-reliance and provides the skills needed to participate in public deliberations. Moreover, it makes people self-confident and aware of opportunities, rights and responsibilities. Education empowers people with the information and awareness needed to promote acceptance, tolerance and understanding among people.

Education is generally seen as the foundation of society which brings economic wealth, social prosperity and political stability. In addition, it is a major aspect of development of any modern society since if there is a dearth of educated people then society will stop its further advancement. Therefore, government should pay serious consideration to education and support it economically and morally. Nepal cannot develop and be competitive unless it upgrades its higher education to the same level as her neighbors. Without the educated population, Nepal's dream of successful democracy will remain a mirage.

Education is the best investment for the people because well educated people have more opportunities to get a job which gives them satisfaction. Moreover, educated people command respect among their colleagues and they can help in the development of their country. Smart people spend their time and money and sometimes even their health to raise educational level because they know that education is their passport to the future and for tomorrow.

groups does not just mean more people from diverse backgrounds in university. It is also a way of creating a more inclusive society. By encouraging students from all backgrounds to come to university, universities can do more than almost any other institution to improve social mobility and justice.

Additionally, higher education is most crucial- especially to those who want to practice a better career that offer a higher salary. In brief, higher education helps - gain knowledge, improves skills, widens vision, and makes one more competitive. The presence in society of groups of competent persons is a powerful force for improvement. Engineers can help build and maintain infrastructure, lawyers can advance the cause of formal justice, while doctors promote health. Teachers prepare the next generation, while scientists make discoveries that echo throughout the world.

Because of the political turmoil and inability of the political leaders to understand the nature of higher education, the state of higher education in Nepal is in total disarray to put it mildly. If we are to develop Nepal to take her to the same level as her neighbors, we must revamp, improve, and upgrade our higher education system. We must be willing to accept and adopt drastic paradigm shift. While revamping our higher education system, we must keep in mind the diversity of the population, sparsely distributed inhabitants, and difficult terrain.

It seems our college students are misguided and misled due to lack of learning environment and lack of advice from the faculty as well as the administration. It is very unproductive and harmful for students to go on strike for every little demand they have. There should be a common understanding as to what can be achieved with the limited resources and what is the optimum way to use the resources so that students can gain required knowledge and skills needed to either get a job or continue with their further education. However, an academic institution cannot be a breeding ground for development of future political leaders who learn how to mislead others for their personal

Region :

# NATO's role in the military encirclement of Iran

By Rick Rozoff

Following on the heels of identifying himself as the "Commander-in-Chief of a nation in the midst of two wars" and moreover the head of state of no less than "the world's sole military superpower" while being presented with what is still curiously called the Nobel Peace Prize, U.S. President Barack Obama in his first State of the Union address on January 27 asserted "the international community is more united, and the Islamic Republic of Iran is more isolated" and threatened: "As Iran's leaders continue to ignore their obligations, there should be no doubt: They...will face growing consequences. That is a promise."

Two days later his secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, delivered an address at a major French military academy, revealingly enough, and while there she coupled exhortation of Iran with an anything but diplomatic dressing down of China, stating "China will be under a lot of pressure to recognize the destabilizing impact that a nuclear-armed Iran would have in the [Persian] Gulf..."

Pressure from Washington, of course. On the very day of Clinton's speech in Paris the White House confirmed the completion of a \$6.4 billion weapons transfer to Taiwan.

On February 9 U.S. Department of Defense spokesman Geoff Morrell told the press that his boss, Pentagon chief Robert Gates, wants the United Nations to impose sanctions on Iran within "weeks, not months" and "clearly thinks time is of the essence."

During the First World War Austrian journalist and dramatist Karl Kraus lamented: "What mythological confusion is this? Since when has Mars been the god of commerce and Mercury the god of war?"

If he were alive today he would be equally bemused by the U.S.'s top diplomat delivering an address at a military academy and its defense chief pressuring the world to impose punitive sanctions against a country that has not attacked any other in centuries.

The secretary general of the U.S.-led "world's sole global military bloc" - Anders Fogh Rasmussen - spoke at the annual Munich Security Conference on February 7, delivering himself of a ponderous and grandiose screed entitled NATO in the 21st Century: Towards Global Connectivity, during which he touted the role of the military bloc in intruding itself into almost every interstice imaginable: The ever-expanding war in Afghanistan, terrorism, cyber attacks, energy cut-offs - the last two references to Russia if not formally acknowledged as such - nuclear non-proliferation, climate change, piracy, failed states, drugs, "humanitarian disasters, conflicts over arable land, and

mounting competition for natural resources," North Korea and Iran.

In repeating Alliance and other Western leaders' demands that "NATO should become a forum for consultation on worldwide security issues," Rasmussen stated that "to carry out NATO's job effectively today, the Alliance should become the hub of a network of security partnerships and a centre for consultation on international security issues....And we don't have to start from scratch. Already today, the Alliance has a vast network of security partnerships[s], as far afield as Northern Africa, the Gulf, Central Asia, and the Pacific."

Indeed NATO has a broad and expanding network of members and military partners throughout the world. It has one member, Turkey, the second largest contributor of troops to the bloc, which borders Iran, and a partnership ally, Azerbaijan, which does also.

Rasmussen's allusion to the Persian Gulf refers to increasing military contacts, visits and joint activities between NATO and the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which parallel the intensification of the U.S. buildup in the region and is conducted within the framework of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) launched in 2004.

The project received the name it did as it was inaugurated at the NATO summit in Istanbul which, after almost completing the absorption of all of Eastern Europe into the bloc, introduced the same graduated partnership process used earlier to incorporate ten new European members for the seven Mediterranean Dialogue nations in the Middle East and Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) and six states in the Persian Gulf (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). All thirteen are covered under the ICI, but extending NATO military partnerships to six Persian Gulf nations for the first time was the most ambitious and significant aspect of the program.

It marked the commencement of NATO's drive into the Gulf to complement the U.S. strategy of containing and eventually confronting Iran.

One of the stated objectives of the ICI was to "invite interested countries...to join Operation Active Endeavour (OAE)," the NATO naval surveillance and interdiction operation (a de facto blockade) throughout the Mediterranean Sea which will be nine years old this October. The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative links control of the Mediterranean with expansion through the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden, where the NATO Ocean Shield naval operation is currently being run,

and the Arabian Sea into the Persian Gulf.

What Zappata had in mind - the Iranian pretext for Western military expansion into the Persian Gulf for once wasn't evoked to hide NATO's real interests - was detailed in discussion of what was described as the "maritime dimension of the new strategy."

He said that "the network of ports, infrastructure and pipelines as well as vessels sailing along sea lines of communication supports trade and is vulnerable to disruption."

"With the beginning of the exploitation of the resources at the bottom of oceans, there is a shift in security and strategic focus."

The admiral added that the United Arab Emirates are "a significant trading partner and energy supplier in the global economy. The new French military base opening at Port Zayed will be an important addition to the increasing international efforts in support of maritime security."

On the same day as the above report appeared, May 26, 2009, French President Nicolas Sarkozy was in the United Arab Emirates to open a new military base, his nation's first in the Persian Gulf and the first major foreign base in the UAE. The French facility in Port Zayed, on the coast of the Strait of Hormuz, "contains a navy and air force base and a training camp."

The previous year France led war games in the UAE, the 12-day Gulf Shield 01, with military counterparts from the host country and Qatar. 4,000 troops participated in the exercises, which "simulated a war pitting two regional countries and their ally against a neighbouring state which has invaded one of the two countries."

NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen told an Al Arabiya correspondent that "NATO considers the Gulf region a continuation of the Euro Atlantic security area," and in reference to Iran - which of course was not invited to the conference - "we all are seriously concerned about nuclear ambitions and about the nuclear domino-effect they could cause in a region that is pivotal for global stability and security."

GCC states being integrated into international NATO operations are being recruited for the war in Afghanistan. A U.S. armed forces publication disclosed in late January that 125 security personnel from Bahrain were guarding "the headquarters for U.S. military operations in volatile Helmand province, where more than 10,000 Marines are stationed and more are on the way." The U.S. and NATO are launching the biggest and bloodiest battle of the more than eight-year war in Afghanistan in Helmand.

Troops from the UAE have been serving under NATO command in Afghanistan for years.

The true military powerhouse in the Gulf region, Saudi Arabia - armed to the teeth with advanced U.S. weapons - has been engaged in its first-ever war since last November. Riyadh has launched regular attacks with infantry, armor and warplanes in the north of neighboring Yemen against Houthis rebels. Hundreds of Yemeni civilians have been reported killed in the assaults, while rebel spokesmen claim have been accompanied by U.S. air strikes. 200,000 civilians have been uprooted and displaced by fighting in the north since 2004.

The Saudi government acknowledges over 500 military casualties, both dead and wounded.

The population of northern Yemen is Shia in terms of religious conviction, and the Saudi offensive is not only fraught with the danger of being converted into a war with Iran once removed but in fact can serve as a rehearsal - and training - for the genuine article.

Last month NATO started recruiting ethnic Kurds for Iraq's national security force in the north of the country near the Iranian border.

The country has been granted a NATO Individual Partnership Action Plan as have other former Soviet states like Georgia, Ukraine and lately Moldova. In January Azerbaijan hosted a planning conference for the NATO Regional Response 2010 military exercise. Last year "the Regional Response 2009 military training was held within the NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme in April 2009 in Baku."

"Commander of US Land Forces in Europe Carter Ham participated in the training."

Azerbaijan has doubled its troop strength in Afghanistan and will train Afghan National Army personnel at its military schools. The nation's Foreign Ministry recently announced that Azerbaijan is interested in joining the NATO Response Force along with Ukraine, regarding which the Alliance provides this description:

"The NATO Response Force (NRF) is a highly ready and technologically advanced force made up of land, air, sea and special forces components that the Alliance can deploy quickly wherever needed."

To Iran's east, the U.S. and NATO will soon have over 150,000 troops, and according to a recent study 400 bases, in Afghanistan and both Western belligerents are coordinating military actions with Pakistan, the Alliance through the Trilateral Afghanistan-Pakistan-NATO Military Commission.

The chain is being tightened around Iran from every direction and NATO is forging several of the key links.

## Be Like Reagan

On Iran, Obama should talk about democracy and support the demonstrators—but give the regime a chance to negotiate.

By Robert D. Kaplan

Iran is the new Eastern Europe during the last phase of the Cold War. Like Poland during the heady days of Solidarity in the early 1980s, the protestors in the streets of Iranian cities are not crazed ethnics demonstrating on behalf of some illiberal blood-and-soil nationalism, but enlightened, technologically savvy multitudes crying out for universal values of democracy and human rights. As such, they have captured the imagination of liberal intellectuals in the West. Even as the United States is tied down with 200,000 troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, Iran promises to be the signal issue of our time.

Just as the enemy of the Polish workers was a calcified secular religion - Communism—the enemy of the Iranian democrats is a clerical autocracy in its gerontocratic, Brezhnevite phase of existence. Beyond all its religious pretensions, it is protected only by goons in the security services. Solidarity was the spark that contributed to the tumbling of the Berlin Wall, which changed the map of Europe. A new regime in Iran would do no less for the Middle East. It would have a positive, pivotal influence on both the political and the security situation in Iraq—pushing Syria towards authentic moderation, and helping undermine Hezbollah and ease the path toward an Israeli-Palestinian peace accord. More broadly, it would unleash democratic tendencies throughout the Middle East, from North Africa to the Indus, forcing regimes and populations to focus more on their internal problems, thereby undermining radicalism.

An Iran that is both democratic and Shiite would tip the balance against the Sunni Wahabi extremism emanating from Saudi Arabia. And, in a globally networked world, where news of such regime change could not easily be suppressed, leaders in similarly autocratic countries like Venezuela and China would have cause for concern. Clearly Iran, bordering both the oil-rich Persian Gulf and the oil-rich Caspian Sea, is now more than just the geographical pivot of the Greater Middle East; it constitutes the central drama in Eurasia.

The Iranian regime is becoming less and less a religious theocracy, with the aura of a sort of papal infallibility, and more and more a traditional dictatorship, beset by a feisty and innovative opposition. It seems possible that, whatever the fate of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei may be destined to be the last Supreme Leader of Iran. The rest is harder to predict. The proletarian uprising against the Russian czar in 1905 did not lead to regime change for twelve years. There was a decade-long hiatus between the rise of Solidarity and a non-communist government in Poland. Despite the inspirational effect of the Saffron Revolution in Burma in 2007, that country is still stuck with its benighted military junta. So while we in the West hope that 2010 turns out to be the year of the Iranian Counter-Revolution, the truth is that we don't really know: these revolutionary inflection points are dependent on a host of intangibles that puts intelligence agencies far behind the curve.

A military strike against Iranian nuclear facilities would only complicate the calculations. Theoretically, a successful strike on a number of installations, if it killed relatively few civilians, could further weaken the regime. But a messy attack could so let loose Iranian nationalism that it would offer the regime a lifeline of years to come: much as Saddam Hussein's attack on Iran in 1980 allowed a new and faltering clerisy to consolidate political power. Odds are that such an attack, while it might set the nuclear program back, would prove a disaster for the bigger prize of regime change. But a nuclear Iran with a different regime might be no less benign than a nuclear India.

Given that the regime could last another month or another decade, what is President Barack Obama to do? Throughout his first year in office, he's attempted the Nixonian detente approach: talk, work back channels, get the two governments to negotiate on the basis of naked national interests. That approach seems to have failed—less because it doesn't make sense than because the Iranian regime is so internally divided that it can't adequately respond. That leaves us with the Reaganite approach: be open to far-reaching talks, as President Ronald Reagan was with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, but do nothing to legitimize the Iranian system. And, throughout any discussions, adopt the rhetoric of democracy. Make it clear that Washington is on the same side of history as the demonstrators, but also make it clear that the door is open to negotiations with those in power. And to avoid the risk of undermining the demonstrators by overt American support of them (thus catering to regime's base conspiracy theories), Obama should talk about democracy only in general, albeit pointed, terms, without directly referring to Iran. That is, he should get the language of universal values out over Iranian air waves as much as possible: encouraging the demonstrators without specifically backing them.

We are not in control. But something wonderful has begun: nothing less than the most positive development in the Middle East since President Anwar Sadat went to Jerusalem. And while that daring gesture led only to a cold bilateral peace between Egypt and Israel, the Green Revolution in Iran carries the potential to unleash a true Islamic Reformation.

जाति, धर्म, वर्ण र लिंगका आधारमा विवाद नगर्ौ, एकले अर्कासंग मिलेर अघि बढौ ।



नेपाल सरकार

सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय

सूचना विभाग



# India's water terrorism

By Sajjad Shaukat

The international community has taken war against terrorism seriously, while not much bothering about bloodless forms of wars, for instance India's water terrorism.

In a bid to calm Islamabad's concerns and speaking in diplomatic language, Indus Water Commissioner of India G Ranganathan, who recently visited Pakistan, said: "India had been affected as much as Pakistan due to water shortage in the Indus," denying that India's decision to build dams on rivers led to water shortage in Pakistan. He rejected Islamabad's concerns at water theft by Delhi or violation of the Indus Water Treaty, assuring his counterpart, Syed Jamaal Ali Shah that all issues relating to water would be

resolved through dialogue. However, ground realities are quite different from what Ranganathan maintained.

Nevertheless, apart from repeated violations of the treaty, for instance the construction of the Krishanganga project over Neelum River, New Delhi wants to use water as leverage in the composite dialogue especially when it comes to Kashmir where a new phase of protests has started. In this respect, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, while talking about the revival of Pak-India dialogue, said the other day that Pakistan's case on Kashmir and water was based on truth, and the government would fight it with full strength. One hopes Islamabad does not give up principled stand.

India's policy of water terrorism can

be confirmed from the report that it has secretly offered technical assistance to the Afghan government to construct a dam over Kabul River. These developments make it quite obvious that India is trying to use water as an instrument of terrorism against Pakistan in pursuit of its hostile aims. The conclusion is that New Delhi, taking advantage of the multiple internal as well as external challenges that Pakistan is facing, intends to advance its nefarious design of keeping a firm hold on Kashmir. The state is located in the Indus River basin and contributes to the flow of all major rivers entering Pakistan.

According to all evidence, its intelligence agency RAW has established training centres for terrorists in

Afghanistan. These militants are known to be committing such heinous crimes as suicide attacks, bombing of schools, etc. The scarcity of water that the stoppage of the flow of water by New Delhi creates spreads despondency among the public in Pakistan and ruins its crops.

Thus by employing water as an instrument of blackmailing, India is trying to intensify political unrest, economic instability and social strife in Pakistan. India's recent decision to resume contact with Pakistan should surprise no one. It wants talks' focus on terrorism instead of other issues on the composite dialogue agenda. Islamabad must forcefully bring out India's water terrorism and insist that it must abide by the Indus Waters Treaty, apart from tackling Kashmir.

# Islamabad can't give an inch

They have ruffled feathers, but they have since regained some lost ground in their mission to bring stability to South Asia. The United States' special envoy to the Af-Pak region, Richard Holbrooke, and Defense Secretary Robert Gates have nudged arch-rivals Pakistan and India back to the negotiating table after the November 11, 2008, Mumbai attacks had seen them on the verge of war.

Holbrooke had earlier caused a stir. After discussions with Indian External Minister S K Krishna in India he was quoted by attendant journalists as having announced, "India is a tremendously important participant in the search for peace, not only in South Asia, but throughout the vast region that stretches from the Mediterranean to the Pacific."

This was followed by Krishna saying, "Indians feel worried that the argument is gaining ground in Washington at all levels that New Delhi needs to be more flexible ... towards Pakistan ... on its eastern borders." The Holbrooke brief was seen in Pakistan not as bending India towards peace, but as an acknowledgement of its military muscle.

The waters having been muddied, it took concerted efforts on the part of Gates and Holbrooke to reassure Pakistan that this had not been the aim. It was not until Pentagon press secretary Geoff Morrell announced that the US had drawn the line at India training Afghan forces that Pakistan was somewhat appeased.

Suspensions, however, remained, compelling the White House to table

By Zahid U Kramet

an enhanced US\$3.1 billion budget proposal for Pakistan to calm the waters, with \$1.9 billion of this marked as civilian aid and \$1.2 billion marked as military assistance. To bring Pakistan deeper into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) embrace, the US offered to train Pakistani military officers in its schools.

Just days earlier, at a NATO commanders' meeting in Brussels on the eve of the London conference, both Pakistan's chief of army staff Ashtaq Parvez Kiani and pertinently Russia's chief of staff Nicolai Markov had endorsed NATO's new war plans to defeat the Taliban. Both reportedly said, "We have a greater interest than you that you succeed."

Russia's concurrence particularly would have made an impression on India as they have long stood as "non-aligned" allies. It therefore came as little surprise to see India bend towards "talking with the Taliban", though it said the Taliban were functioning as Pakistan proxies to launch terrorist acts on India.

Following the London conference, however, India's external minister took the first opportunity to announce to the press, "The international community has come out with the proposition to bring into the political mainstream those [Taliban] willing to function within the Afghan system ... We are willing to give it a try." But discomfort was visible.

"We consider them to be terrorists who have close links with al-Qaeda ... We are next door and our experiences

make it difficult for us to differentiate between good or bad Taliban," Krishna said, clearly pointing to Pakistan in adding that Afghanistan's stability was dependent on its neighbors' "support, sustenance and sanctuaries" for terrorists.

Meanwhile, it had dawned on Washington that Pakistan's charges of Indian complicity in Af-Pak affairs were not all ill-founded - that they must not be summarily dismissed. At congressional hearings both Admiral Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General David Petraeus, head of Central Command, advised Washington to accommodate Pakistan's perspectives on Afghanistan.

General Stanley McChrystal, who heads the US and NATO forces in Afghanistan, went further. In his report to the White House he said that "Indian political and economic influence is increasing in Afghanistan" and with the present government in Afghanistan perceived in Islamabad as being pro-Indian, this would "exacerbate regional tensions".

Pakistan's normally media-shy commanding general then clearly spelled out Pakistan's position to the press in his country: "We want strategic depth ... A peaceful and friendly Afghanistan can provide Pakistan strategic depth ... If we get more involved with the ANA [Afghan National Army] there's more interaction and better understanding."

Kiani reaffirmed that 140,000 Pakistani troops were fighting the militancy in Pakistan's tribal areas,

where 2,273 officers and men of Pakistan's armed forces have been killed. He denied Pakistan's reluctance to fight the Taliban in North Waziristan (seen as Pakistan's allies), bearing instead on the "hold-and-build" paradigm before opening another front.

Washington appeared to have understood Pakistan's predicament and taken it on itself and its NATO allies to up the ante against the Afghan Taliban in Afghanistan's Helmand province. Together they are set to launch the biggest-ever offensive in Afghanistan with a strike force of 15,000. The media are projecting the assault as the US's largest since the Vietnam war.

The Taliban were presented with an option. NATO helicopters dropped leaflets warning villagers of the impending assault. Doves of people began to evacuate the area. But the 2,000 plus Taliban are deeply embedded and steeled to resist. Reports filed quote locals as saying, "The Taliban will not leave ... They are bringing in people and weapons."

McChrystal responded, "If they want to fight, then obviously that will have to have an outcome. But if they don't want to fight [and elect to integrate into the government] that's fine too." The hope is that the Taliban will choose to integrate rather than fight. However, should the battle ensue, its result will have a direct bearing on the Pakistan-India talks.

Pakistan's stated position is that India must delink the talks from terrorism as Pakistan itself is a victim of terrorism. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi reiterated the view that Pakistan's strategic policies would remain India-centric as long as Kashmir and a water dispute remained unresolved. India has adopted a polar position.

Pakistan stands to lose all popular support if it concedes to Indian perspectives without gaining any concessions. Its greatest fear is that if the militants fall to the Pakistan army's assault in North Waziristan, they will infiltrate larger cities and play the type of havoc witnessed recently with the bombings in the southern port city of Karachi - or a repeat of the Mumbai attack in India.

If the Pakistan-India talks are to arrive at even an interim understanding, it stands to reason that both the terrorist and the Kashmir issues must be simultaneously addressed. The two are inter-related. But if hardened positions persist, the talks will be another exercise in futility - with al-Qaeda (read anti-state elements) gaining on both fronts.

## Stimulating the economy

By R.K.Regmee

Players of Nepali economy could utilize the preparatory works being undertaken at present to preface Nepal Tourism Year 2011 for pumping enthusiasm and energy into the ailing sectors: investment and production. They have an option — capitalizing on the atmosphere being created for what could be dubbed as the mega campaign to boost the country as the premier holiday destination.

Translated into real terms, the option refers to upgrading the capability of economy for receiving, serving and handling one million international visitors in the country next year as per the NTY '011 - target. For this, the country requires a buoyant economy with sound base for transport, services, market, hotels, and travel trade. The same could unlock opportunities for entrepreneurs.

The proposition, which also relates to boosting domestic tourism in the country constitutes a great vision for making the sector sustainable. Multiple arena of Nepali economy will have to be activated for this in terms of investment, employment, enterprises and infrastructure.

The option could be explained as a souvenir to entrepreneurs. Such opportunity was not available at any point of time in the past three years. Politicians, in their race for taking the country out of decade-long conflict, concentrated well on peace and transfer of power but failed to pay proper attention to the economy, particularly its sensitivity, and myriad linkages to public life.

### Transitional justice

Because of the exaggerated politics-centric policy, the much needed "transitional justice" was simply denied to Nepali economy. The voice for this got dwarfed in the high tone of party politics. Economic tools such as three full fledged annual budgets under separate governments and the Three Year Interim Plan turned out to be not more than rituals.

They could not envision any measures to heal the wounds inflicted on the economy. Neither could they come up with any compensating motivational package for the key sectors that could be instrumental in rejuvenating the productivity of Nepali economy.

The economy which had been victimized and shocked during the conflict times in various ways required special approach for revival. However, it continued to suffer from the same and some added problems even in post-conflict times. The present day face of Nepali economy, the shattered base of industries and business - clearly reflects the suffering of conflict times and negligence of post conflict era.

One silver lining, however, has been found in Nepal Tourism Year 2011, which was proposed by the Maoist Government's Finance Minister Dr. Baburam Bhattarai in 2008 budget. The subsequent 22-party coalition government, despite its serious differences with Maoist policies, chose not to drop the NTY 2011. The way it has been given continually signals optimism for the economy.

Entrepreneurs of the country should come forward to build on it. As the objectives of NTY 2011 of "establishing Nepal as a choice of premier holiday destination with a definite brand image, improving and extending tourism related infrastructures in existing and new tourism sites, enhancing the capacity of service providers, building community capacity in the new areas to cater to the need of tourists and promoting domestic tourism for sustainability of industry" get pursued, the economy will definitely be stimulated.

The way the National Campaign for NTY 2011 is being pushed forward for gaining confidence from all quarters in the country, it would be instrumental in creating a stable atmosphere essential for industrial and business development. Seeking one year guarantee for not disturbance of any sort in the economy, particularly in the tourism related sector, the campaign aims at reviving the suitable economic climate.

Investors and entrepreneurs who have little to cherish at the moment could find encouraging pastures in that climate. Transferring the tourism-based stability into other areas of economy would not be that difficult in future. Will NTY offer the country the much needed therapy? Will it serve as the rallying point for all in the economy?

## Cabinet fails to pick new governor

The government on Wednesday failed to appoint a new governor of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) from the three persons short-listed by a panel.

The cabinet meeting which was held in Singha Durbar today couldn't decide on the appropriate candidate for the coveted post from the three nominees for the position of NRB governor — Yub Raj Khatiwada, vice chairman of National Planning Commission, Bir Bikram Rayamajhi, incumbent deputy governor of NRB and Rameshwar Khanal, secretary at the finance ministry.

Finance minister Surendra Pandey, also the coordinator of the panel, had tabled the aforementioned names at the cabinet meeting today morning.

The position of NRB governor has remained vacant for over three weeks now after the erstwhile governor Bijaya Nath Bhattarai retired last month. According to NRB Act, the government should finalise the name a new governor one month before an incumbent governor retires.

Similarly, the cabinet meeting also decided to get rid of all the state-owned public corporations that have already

been liquidated.


The decision was taken as the liquidated corporations have been causing financial burden for the government, although they are not in operation.

According to Minister for Information and Communication Shankar Pokharel, the meeting has approved in principle the action plan on construction of Raxaul-Omlekhgung oil pipeline and the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the implementation of the Janata Aawash 2066 (people's residence).

The cabinet also promoted Nepal Army Brigadier General Kumar Budhathoki to the post of Major General. Similarly, Bishwanath Singh has been appointed as Chairman of Nepal Food Corporation and Anup Banskota as the Executive Director of Information Study Centre.



On the occasion, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sujata Koirala and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar Nyan Win jointly released a book entitled "Nepal-Myanmar Relationship" written by ex-diplomat Hiranya Lal Shrestha on Feb 17 2010



### "Ambassador of Pakistan Essay Writing Competition 2010"

- ▶ The Embassy of Pakistan, Kathmandu is holding "Ambassador of Pakistan Essay Writing Competition" in English among Nepalese students of various schools / colleges on the topic "50 years of Pakistan-Nepal Relations".
- ▶ A copy of written essay on the topic by the participants ranging between 2500 to 3000 words are required to reach the "Head of Chancery, Embassy of Pakistan, Pushpanjali, Maharajgunj, Kathmandu" by 15 March 2010. Cash prizes of NRs 25,000/-, 15,000/- and 10,000/- will be awarded to the first, second and third position holders respectively.
- ▶ For any queries related to the competition, please visit the website of Embassy of Pakistan at <http://www.mofa.gov.pk/nepal> or send an email at [parepkm@wlink.com.np](mailto:parepkm@wlink.com.np) or contact Head of Chancery at phone 01-4374024 and 01-4374011.

**आमा र बच्चाको सुरक्षाको लागि स्वास्थ्य संस्थांमा मात्र प्रशुति गराई निःशुल्क प्रशुति सेवा उपयोग गर्नु ।**

नेपाल सरकारले सरकारी स्वास्थ्य संस्थांहरूमा सम्पूर्ण प्रशुति सेवा निःशुल्क प्रदान गरिरहेको छ । साथै सरकारी स्वास्थ्य संस्थांहरूमा प्रशुति सेवा लिने महिलाहरूलाई यतायात 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 :

## Haiti: A Victim of Naked Imperialism (1)

By Ghali Hassan

As Haitians began the grim task of burying their loved ones after the January earthquake, the U.S. military used the pretext of providing "humanitarian aid" to invade and occupy a defenceless Haiti. It is clear Western "humanitarianism" has nothing to do with humanitarian aid, but much to do with U.S. imperialist domination.

In order to understand Haiti's current crisis, a brief history of the colonisation of Haiti is instructive.

The Island of Kiskeya was named Hispaniola by Christopher Columbus. Early European colonisation decimated the Island's Taino indigenous population. Today, the Island is shared by the nations of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The Dominican Republic, which occupies the eastern two-thirds of the Island, receives heavy rainfall, has less deforestation and more fertile soils. In contrast, Haiti (Ayiti, land of high mountains), which occupies the western one-third of the Island, is drier, more mountainous, mostly deforested (trees were cut-down and taken to France) and has less fertile soils. The two nations are different today because of their different colonial history. The Dominican Republic was colonised by Spain, which imported few slaves, and allowed the nation to "develop" its economy and trade with the outside world. Haiti, on the other hand, was colonised by France, which imported large numbers of slaves and turned the nation into a massive plantation, oppressed the inhabitants, and destroyed the environment. As a result of this colonial history, Spanish is spoken by the people of the Dominican Republic, whereas Creole (not French) is spoken by the people of Haiti.

In 1659, France established the colony of Saint Domingue (Haiti today) and began importing slaves from Africa to work on the sugar and coffee plantations, brutally exploiting them. In 1767, Haiti was the wealthiest colonised Caribbean nation. The "Jewel of the Antilles", as it was known, Haiti was supplying two-thirds of all of Europe's tropical products, such as sugar, coffee, indigo and cotton. Today, Haiti is described - rather shamefully - as the "poorest country in the Americas" with degraded environment.

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, half a million African slaves under Toussaint L'Ouverture rose up against 30,000 white European slave masters, and achieved a remarkable victory by defeating Napoleon's legions. On 1 January, 1804, Haiti was the first black republic to declare independence and effectively became the first non-slave republic in the Americas. France refused to recognise Haiti until two decades later. The U.S. continued to enslave the people of Haiti fearing that recognition of Haitian sovereignty would encourage a slave revolt in the U.S. "The freedom of the negroes, if recognised in Saint Domingue [Haiti] and legalised by France would at all times be a rallying point for freedom-seekers of the New World", said U.S. president Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson didn't want to see Haiti succeed as an independent nation. At the end, the U.S. and France - supported by Britain, Spain and the Netherlands - colluded to undermine the revolution and destroy Haiti's independence.

In 1825, France recognised Haiti, but only after Haiti agreed (i.e. was forced) to pay France 90 million francs in gold as "retribution for liberty". The French abolitionist Victor Schoelcher wrote at the time that the imposition of "an indemnity on the victorious slaves was equivalent to making them pay with money that which they had already paid with their blood". The payment was a loan with high interest that Haiti had to take in order to pay its odious debt. As a result, Haiti was indebted until 1947. It is estimated that France owes Haiti the equivalent of more than \$21 billion today.

The impact of the debt repayments on Haiti was devastating. "By the end

of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, payments to France consumed around 80 per cent of Haiti's budget", writes Peter Hallward, a professor of Modern European Philosophy at Middlesex University. France "extorted this money from Haiti by force and [...] should give it back to us so that we can build primary schools, primary healthcare, water systems and roads", said former Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The debt is used as an instrument of intimidation and exploitation of the country's natural resources, including Haiti's native forest and oil and gas reserves.

In 1915, U.S. Marines invaded and occupied Haiti under the guise of "protecting Haitians" from themselves. Over the next two decades, Haiti was occupied by a murderous U.S. military force that reinstated slavery, destroyed the nation's constitution and siphoned billions of Haiti's wealth out of the country. In fact, the U.S. took over the nation's treasury. More than 3,000 Haitians, mostly poor peasants, were killed by the U.S. Marines. While the U.S. occupation officially ended in 1934, the U.S. did not leave Haiti. The Marines left behind the "Garde d'Haiti", a repressive force created to terrorise Haitians. Further, U.S. love affairs with murderous dictators, corrupt despots, killers and torturers ensured Haiti's ongoing tragedy, enslavement and submission to U.S. diktat.

In 1957, Francois Duvalier ("Papa Doc") was elected president of Haiti and in 1964 he declared himself "president-for-life". Duvalier ruled Haiti with brute force and terror. In 1971, Duvalier's son, John-Claude Duvalier ("Baby Doc") was named "president-for-life" at 19 years old and succeeded his father as president of Haiti. He plundered the national treasury and turned Haiti into a major drug trans-shipment stop. In 1983, a popular revolt against Duvalier rule began throughout Haiti. In 1986, Baby Doc fled Haiti to France aboard a U.S. C-141 Starlifter cargo plane, taking with him hundreds of millions of dollars of Haiti's reserves. During the Duvalier murderous regime, Haiti was the ninth largest assembler of U.S. goods in the world where Haitians were paid near-starvation wages. The Duvalier despots left Haiti bankrupt, drowning in debt, "economically ravaged and bereft of functional political institutions". Their 28-year brutal era was an era of "darkness", and it remains a bloody era in Haiti's history. The Duvalier despots were protected by the infamous Tonton Macoutes, the secret death squad. More than 50,000 Haitians were murdered during the Duvalier dictatorships. They were armed and backed by the U.S. and France against the people of Haiti.

The end of the Duvalier brutal regime did not end the U.S. control of Haiti. The U.S. continues its domination and control of Haiti using the United Nations (UN) as a fig-leaf to legitimise U.S. interference in Haiti, ensuring the continuation of the repressive government.

On 16 December 1990, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a proponent of Liberation theology who was popular among the country's poor majority, was elected President. His Fanmi Lavalas Party won 67.5% of the counted popular vote. However, in September 1991, a U.S.-backed military coup d'état, orchestrated by the CIA and USAID and led by General Raoul Cedras, overthrew Aristide's administration. Cedras' Military Junta was a brutal military regime. Marc Bazin, a U.S. favourite thug and former Finance and Economy minister under Jean-Claude Duvalier's dictatorship, who won only 14.2% of the popular vote, was appointed prime minister by the Military Junta in June 1992. It was during this period (1991-1994) that a U.S.-backed political assassination campaign began leading to the murder of more than 5,000 Haitians and supporters of Aristide. Cedras remains an undicted criminal living in Panama.

In February 1993, a joint UN/OAS International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) was deployed to "monitor the human rights situation and to investigate violations" at the "request" of President Aristide to "resolve" the Haitian crisis. In September 1993, the United Nations' Peacekeeping Operation in Haiti (UNMIH) was established to monitor Aristide efforts to rehabilitate the army and create a new police force.

In 1994, President Aristide - demonised and discredited by Western media and U.S. corporate politicians - was reinstated president of Haiti by a U.S. military intervention ("Operation Restore Democracy") after he succumbed to Bill Clinton's demands and accepted a U.S. "blueprint for Haiti's economic development". His return was designed to legitimise Washington's neoliberal ("free market") policies. After the withdrawal of the U.S. military in 1996, USAID and U.S. corporations remained in charge of Haiti. In 1996, René Préalval was elected president of Haiti, a rare moment in Haiti's politics.

In July 1996 UNMIH was replaced by the UN Support Mission in Haiti (UNSMIH) with a mandate until May 1997. It was tasked with "assisting in the development and professionalisation of the police". In November 1997, UNSMIH was replaced by the UN Civilian Police Mission (MIPONUH) to March 2000. Following MIPONUH, the International Civilian Support Mission in Haiti (MICAH) was established in December 1999. Its mandate ended on 7 February 2001. While all these acronyms were authorised by the UN Security Council, they were serving U.S. imperialist interests, not Haiti's.

In November 2000, Aristide was re-elected by a landslide for a second five-year term. The election of Aristide prompted the U.S. to impose economic sanctions on Haiti. The U.S., Canada, and France colluded to undermine Aristide's government and destroy the economy by withholding international aid and loans to Haiti from 2000 to 2004. Yet Haiti was required to pay interest on its debt, which left Haiti cash-strapped. More than 90 per cent of Haiti's reserves were sent to Washington to pay for the odious debt which was linked to the Duvalier regime.

While the U.S. government continues ranting about giving "aid" to Haiti, U.S. aid to Haiti was not destined for the people of Haiti. Most of the aid money went to undermine the democratically elected Aristide's government and paid for the UN/J.S. occupation. It is a familiar trend that the U.S. employs around the world to undermine and destroy democratically elected grassroots movements. Moreover, Aristide was never popular in Washington and was despised by the U.S. corporate class.

On the night of 28 February 2004, American CIA agents and members of the former Haitian military kidnapped the democratically elected Aristide, and his American wife, and held them against their will. They were taken out of the country to the Central African Republic, and were later forced into exile in South Africa. As he was in the Central African Republic, Aristide said: "I declare in overthrowing me they have uprooted the trunk of the tree of peace, but it will grow back because the roots are l'Ouverture. There is no doubt, one day Haitians will be free again."

On 29 February 2004, a U.S.-backed military coup d'état led by Guy Philippe and Louis-Jodel Chamblain, two of Haiti's most notorious criminals, obliterated Haiti democracy and ignited a bloody campaign to liquidate Aristide's supporters. It was a carefully staged military-CIA operation against Aristide's democratically elected government. "We're grateful to the United States!" shouted Louis-Jodel Chamblain. Around the world, U.S.-

backed military coups were "consistent with the long-standing pattern and priorities of imperial foreign policy" of the U.S., writes Peter Hallward.

Guy Philippe was a former Haitian military officer, who received training at a U.S. military base in Ecuador. He joined the police as chief of Delmas and Cap-Haitien in Port-au-Prince after the Haitian army was demobilised. He was known by the U.S. embassy as a criminal and drug trafficker. In March 2006, the International Tribunal on Haiti found Guy Philippe and Louis-Jodel Chamblain guilty of master-minding massacres, carried out by paramilitary gunmen under their command on Haiti's Central Plateau between 2002 and 2004.

Chamblain, a former death-squad member and convicted assassin, was the vice-president of the CIA-created and armed Front for the Advancement and Progress in Haiti (Front Revolutionnaire Arme pour le Progres d'Haiti, [FRAPH]).

FRAPH was a notorious death squad involved in terrorising and murdering pro-democracy Haitians during the first military coup against Aristide (1991-1994). Thousands of innocent Haitians were murdered and hundreds of thousands fled the country to the Dominican Republic and elsewhere. FRAPH leader, the former paramilitary thug, Emmanuel "Toto" Constant, was guilty of crimes against humanity including participating in the Raboteau Massacre in 1994, rape and torture. In 2008, Constant was living in safe haven New York when a Brooklyn jury found him guilty of mortgage fraud and grand larceny and sentenced him to 12-37 years in prison. It was evident how much the U.S. really cares about human rights violations.

It is important to note that, while Aristide was not a saint, he was never violent. A Gallup poll in 2002 showed that Aristide was by far Haiti's most popular and trusted leader. The Aristide government was a progressive government and worked to better the lives of Haiti's poor majority. According to the Washington-based Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA): "Under Aristide, for the first time in the republic's tortured history, Haiti seemed to be on the verge of learning free from the fabric of despotism and tyranny which had smothered all previous attempts at democratic expression and self-determination" (Cited in Chomsky, N. (1993). Year 501: The Conquest Continues, Verso, p. 209). It was the end of a short-lived democracy in Haiti.

On 29 February 2004, the UN Security Council authorised the creation of the Multinational Interim Force (MIF) to provide "security". On 9 March 2004, the U.S. installed a puppet government and Gérard Latorue, an expatriate and a supporter of the military coup, was appointed as Haiti's prime minister to serve U.S. imperialist interests.

On 30 April 2004, the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was established, and Haiti was re-occupied by some 7,500 Brazilian troops on behalf of the U.S. Like its predecessors, MINUSTAH, which began its mission in June 2004, has been marred by scandals of killings, rape, and other violence [against Haitians] by its troops almost since it began, according to a report by the Centre for the Study of Human Rights at the University of Miami.

In short, the history of Haiti's struggle against Western imperialism is long. The last few hundred years have seen the people of Haiti colonised, enslaved, exploited, oppressed, massacred, liberated themselves, invaded, occupied and terrorised. Today, Haiti remains very poor, lacks adequate healthcare services, education and vital infrastructure. And unlike its small neighbours (e.g., Cuba, Jamaica and Dominican Republic), Haiti is unprepared and lacks the capacity to deal with natural disasters.

[To be continued...]

## Europe's five "Undeclared Nuclear Weapons States"

Are Turkey, Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands and Italy Nuclear Powers?

By Prof. Michel Chossudovsky

According to a recent report, former NATO Secretary-General George Robertson confirmed that Turkey possesses 40-90 "Made in America" nuclear weapons at the Incirlik military base. Does this mean that Turkey is a nuclear power?

"Far from making Europe safer, and far from producing a less nuclear dependent Europe, [the policy] may well end up bringing more nuclear weapons into the European continent, and frustrating some of the attempts



that are being made to get multilateral nuclear disarmament." (Former NATO Secretary-General George Robertson quoted in Global Security, February 10, 2010)

"Is Italy capable of delivering a thermonuclear strike?..."

Could the Belgians and the Dutch drop hydrogen bombs on enemy targets?...

Germany's air force couldn't possibly be training to deliver bombs 13 times more powerful than the one that destroyed Hiroshima, could it?...

Nuclear bombs are stored on air-force bases in Italy, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands - and planes from each of those countries are capable of delivering them." ("What to Do About Europe's Secret Nukes." Time Magazine, December 2, 2009)

The "Official" Nuclear Weapons States

Five countries, the US, UK, France, China and Russia are considered to be "nuclear weapons states" (NWS), "an internationally recognized status conferred by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)". Three other "Non NPT countries" (i.e. non-signatory states of the NPT) including India, Pakistan and North Korea, have recognized possessing nuclear weapons.

Israel: "Undeclared Nuclear State"

Israel is identified as an "undeclared nuclear state". It produces and deploys nuclear warheads directed against military and civilian targets in the Middle East including Tehran.

Iran

There has been much hype, supported by scanty evidence, that Iran might at some future date become a nuclear weapons state. And, therefore, a pre-emptive defensive nuclear attack on Iran to annihilate its non-existent nuclear weapons program should be seriously contemplated "to make the World a safer place". The mainstream media abounds with makeshift opinion on the Iran nuclear threat.

But what about the five European "undeclared nuclear states" including Belgium, Germany, Turkey, the Netherlands and Italy. Do they constitute a threat?

Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands, Italy and Turkey: "Undeclared Nuclear Weapons States"

While Iran's nuclear weapons capabilities are unconfirmed, the nuclear weapons capabilities of these five countries including delivery procedures are formally acknowledged.

The US has supplied some 480 B61 thermonuclear bombs to five so-called "non-nuclear states", including Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey. Casually disregarded by the Vienna based UN Nuclear Watchdog (IAEA), the US has actively contributed to the proliferation of nuclear weapons in Western Europe.

As part of this European stockpiling, Turkey, which is a partner of the US-led coalition against Iran along with Israel, possesses some 90 thermonuclear B61 bunker buster bombs at the Incirlik nuclear air base.

The stockpiling and deployment of tactical B61 in these five "non-nuclear states" are intended for targets in the Middle East. Moreover, in accordance with "NATO strike plans", these thermonuclear B61 bunker buster bombs (stockpiled by the "non-nuclear States") could be launched "against targets in Russia or countries in the Middle East such as Syria and Iran"

Does this mean that Iran or Russia, which are potential targets of a nuclear attack originating from one or other of these five so-called non-nuclear states should contemplate defensive preemptive nuclear attacks against Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Turkey? The answer is no, by any stretch of the imagination.

While these "undeclared nuclear states" casually accuse Tehran of developing nuclear weapons, without documentary evidence, they themselves have capabilities of delivering nuclear warheads, which are targeted at Iran. To say that this is a clear case of "double standards" by the IAEA and the "international community" is a understatement.

The stockpiled weapons are B61 thermonuclear bombs. All the weapons are gravity bombs of the B61-3, -4, and -10 types.2.

Those estimates were based on private and public statements by a number of government sources and assumptions about the weapon storage capacity at each base.

# Master Dhyānabhadra and Buddhism in Fourteenth Century Korea

## Background

The ideas and thoughts of civilized world made inroads into less civilized areas. The society that refused to accept civilized cultures and did not prefer changes in the cultural backwardness usually collapsed. Therefore, cultural exchange could help sustain native cultures effectively. The transmission of Indian Buddhism has been a part of it. Buddhism reached China in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. The first monks to reach China were the Tokharians. Since then, monks from Central Asia, India and Nepal visited China for the mission. Chinese monks also performed pilgrimages in India. After Buddhism reached Korea, people began to take interest in it. Korean monks A-nan ye-po-mo (Anandavarman), Pen-jo-p'o-mo (Prajñavarman) and Hye-cho (Prajñavikram) visited India. It helped to develop Buddhism in Korea since the three Kingdoms period. An inquiry into historiography of great Indian monks helps to understand historical development of Buddhism in China and other adjoining countries.

## The Tradition of Dhyāna

Nālandā and Vikramāñjīra monasteries served as

## Shanker Thapa Ph.D.\*

Dharmapāla, Ūlabhadra, Ūntarakṣita, Kamalāñjīla, Bhāvaviveka, Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. Nālandā was also famous for tantric studies, Dhyāna, Mādhyamika, and Yogācāra. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century when Yuan Chwang entered the Nālandā, there were 10,000 resident students, 1510 teachers, and about 1,500 workers at Nālandā. They came from all parts of India and foreign lands. Its chancellorship was reserved for India's foremost Buddhist scholar. Dhyāna was an important subject of study at Nālandā, which called Ch'ān in China. Its roots are found in *Satipatthāna Sutta*. It is realized by personal efforts rather than reliance on scriptures.

## Dhyānabhadra from Nālandā to Yunnan

Ven. Dhyānabhadra (Kor: Chi Gong Ch; Chih-k'ung or Zhi Kong), a 14<sup>th</sup> century Indian monk, rendered significant contribution in Yunnan and Korea. He was known as Chae-hsien in China but was called Ūnyādi'saya, Ūnyādiūya or Sunyādiya. He was an Indian educated in Nālandā tradition of esoteric and Dhyāna practices. He belonged to an Indian princely family. Some

and non-Buddhists. Nevertheless, a few isolated groups of Buddhists remained some parts of India.

Buddhism that prevailed in Yunnan consists of Theravāda, Mahāyāna and Tibetan Buddhism. Hinayāna Buddhism exists only in Yunnan throughout China. Dhyānabhadra has rendered invaluable contribution in the development of Buddhism in Yunnan and Koryo Kingdom. Present tradition of Seon Buddhism within the Chogye order in Korea is mostly credited to the Indian monk. Ven. Dhyānabhadra as a scholar, practitioner and a missionary has profound impact on historiography of Buddhism especially Dhyāna, Vinaya and esoteric practices in East Asia. His role in Buddhist historiography of Yunnan and Koryo is prominent.

Dhyānabhadra was trained under Master Vinayabhadra (Lushien) at Nālandā. He took five vows and studied Prajñāpāramitā. Once he asked about multitude of living creatures, the void and the three worlds (*Dhātu*) to the master. The Master has replied that both their existence and non-existence is not true. This is the wisdom. He was then advised to

contact between Koryo and Yuan dynasty was regular and recurrent with the travel of Korean monks for educational purposes. Naong was a famous Korean monk who met Dhyānabhadra in Dādu. The latter was famous there as the Master of Vinaya and the esoteric practices.

His activity in Yunnan and Koryo is studied only by a few scholars. His academic pursuit at Nālandā, travel to Sri Lanka and contribution in the development of Dhyāna practices in China and Korea is yet to be explored. After completion of study in Sri Lanka, he visited Yunnan and thereafter the Koryo kingdom. In Sri Lanka, he traveled to Ūrigiri and from there to Kashmir. He also visited Nepal and Sikkim on the way to Tibet. Finally, he reached Yunnan where he rendered invaluable contribution in the development of Buddhism. Thereafter, he moved to Koryo kingdom and contributed in the development of *Seon* tradition.

In China, Dhyānabhadra translated Nilakantha Sūtra in which Avalokiteśvara appears as the metamorphosis of Hindu Ūva. This Sūtra was translated eight times into Chinese. Nilakantha Avalokiteśvara was also popular in Khotan in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The Amoghavajra Sūtra describes Nilakantha Avalokiteśvara as an ascetic, great ascetic and the lord of ascetics. An inscription discovered in Korea mentions about the Indian monk who visited Kañcipūra and listened to a discourse on Avatamsaka Sūtra in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Dhyānabhadra built a temple in Yunnan, which became very popular. He completed the construction of Zhengxu Chan Su Temple located near Kunming in Yunnan. This temple is very important in connection with his activities in China. Chaozong, a Sichuan monk started construction of the temple and Dhyānabhadra completed it. The temple stele mentions his activities as well. Chaozong also constructed Manjueri and Vimilakīrti pavilions. The monk lecture hall and Buddha statue were started to build in the spring of 1315 and completed within five years. As mentioned in the inscription, when Master Chaozong returned to West Sichuan, an Indian Ch'an Master Zhi Kong arrived there. He visited the place and rested here. He took no food but just sat. He opened up to proper realization and guided and encouraged monks and the laity. All those who admired his teachings and received his trust were converted to Buddhism. Dhyānabhadra was a very reputed Ch'an Master in Yunnan. When he was involved in the construction of the temple, he was worried that the lack of quality facilities at the temple might limit the temple's ability to attract and keep qualified. So, he solicited donations from the government officials.

## Buddhism in Koryo

Prior to the arrival of Buddhism, the main religious practice in Korea was



Shamanism. Shamanism holds that human beings as well as natural forces and inanimate objects possess spirits, which must be appeased.

It was in Koguryo Kingdom in Korea, Buddhism was first established. In Silla and Koryo dynasties, euphemisms were usually used for distinguished monks. Silla people believed that people worshipping Buddha enjoy prosperity. Koryo dynasty assumed power in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Its era heralded important events such as the creation of the Korean Tripitaka (*Taejanggyong*), a complete collection of the Buddhist texts carved in Chinese characters on over 80,000 wood blocks. This era has witnessed the birth of an eminent monk Bojo Chinul (1158-1210) who made a balance between *Seon* (mind only meditation practice) and *Kyo* (scriptures). He founded the Songgwangsa temple, the headquarters of the Chogye sect, the main sect of *Seon*. Buddhism remained dominant thought in the Korean society from 6<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century. Korean tradition believes on transmigration between six kinds of lives i.e. heaven, humans, hell, hungry ghosts, shambles and beasts under the principle of cause and effect concomitant in their retribution, which has greatly affected Korean society.

In medieval Korea, Hoguk Pulgyo (Buddhism protecting the state) was developed. The protection of state through protection of Buddhism was based on the belief of 'salvation through good deeds.' Buddhism in Korea emphasized spiritual idealism and laid emphasis on moral and religious self-cultivation. For medieval Koreans, Buddhas were enlightened persons, something anyone could strive to become through ascetic trainings.

Koryo Kingdom gave priority to Buddhist idealism with the help of monk Toson. Buddhist ceremonies became mandatory for all the loyal subjects, thus making Buddhism a social affair. Koryo has protected Buddhism. Silla and Koryo people believed that farming principles were in direct relevance to Buddhism.

Buddhism, originally a product of commercial civilization, suited agricultural societies in

both Silla and Koryo Kingdoms. Buddhism had promised people a future of well-being. In turn, people offered religious devotion and material donations. Since 14<sup>th</sup> century, with the assumption to the throne of Chosun Dynasty and their adoption of Neo-Confucianism, Buddhism fell into decline. They destroyed all the Buddhist temples in the main cities and banished the monks to the mountains. Dhyānabhadra came in Korea in such a critical time. He arrived there in 1328 and died in 1363 CE. After his death in China, his remains were brought back to Korea and enshrined at Hoem-sā temple in the Northern outskirts of Seoul.

The Diamond Mountain (Kumgang-san) is considered within the Buddhist tradition as a place where the Dharmodgata Bodhisattva permanently teaches 'the Perfection of Wisdom'. The texts, material objects, evidences and cultic practices centered on Dharmodgata in the Diamond Mountain since the late 8<sup>th</sup> century are too fragmentary or elusive to determine the aspects of this cult over a longer period of time. Thus, most of the scholars considered the cult of Dharmodgata merely as a local phenomenon primarily based upon the Avatamsaka (Hua-yen) and Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras. However, recent scholarship has enabled an evaluation of doctrinal, social, and political aspects connected with the cult of Dharmodgata during 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. After Korea's submission to the Mongols, the perception of the Diamond Mountain as being located at the eastern extremity of the Yuan Empire caused a large-scale promotion of the cult of Dharmodgata. The Yuan court regularly dispatched emissaries including Central Asian and Tibetan monks to the Diamond Mountain who promoted a version of Dharmodgata cult differing from the existing one. A representative example is monk Dhyānabhadra, whose cultic activities and textual production in connection with Dharmodgata reveal Tibetan and Central Asian influences.

\* Lumbini Buddha University, Kathmandu, Nepal, drsthapas721@yahoo.com



educational institutions in medieval India until their destruction at the end of 12<sup>th</sup> century by the Muslim invader. Nālandā was the best known of ancient Indian universities and popular among in Nepal, China, Korea, Japan, Sumatra, Java, Sri Lanka and so on. Caste, creed and nationality were no barriers in keeping with the Buddhist spirit. Chinese monks who visited India to learn Buddhism used to go to Java to brush up their Sanskrit. The study of Mahāyāna doctrine was compulsory for Buddhists. The doctrines of eighteen sects and other secular subjects were also offered at Nālandā. Six Hindu philosophies were also taught. Hinayāna Buddhism was offered as well. Lectures, debates and discussions were part of the curriculum. Yuan Chwang states that 100 lectures were delivered every day. Nālandā was graced by the presence of India's most brilliant Buddhist luminaries Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva,

Chinese Buddhist historians mistakenly referred him as a Central Asian.

Mahāyāna, under the influence of aboriginal cults, came to assume a darker and debased form of Tantrism. This might have resulted from a misunderstanding of the symbolic language of esoteric texts. Secret rituals were introduced into later Buddhism particularly in respect of the female deities. It was therefore not surprising that people were antagonized by some of the corrupt practices of Tantra. This form of Buddhism was in the ascendant and was studied at the Buddhist universities of Nālandā and Vikramāñjīra until the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Monasteries in Bihar were despoiled and Buddhist monks fled to Nepal. The lay Buddhists were left without any religious guidance, which made it easier for them to be absorbed in the non-Buddhist community as there was little distinction between Buddhists

contact Master Samantaprabhāsa (P'u-ming) at Mt. Ūrigiri (Chi-hsiang) to earn inner meaning of the doctrine. Consequently, he left for Sri Lanka. Afterwards, he turned a missionary and made an arduous journey to China and Korea. In 1300 CE, he traveled throughout India and set out for Ta-li in Yunnan taking the most strenuous route via Nepal, Sikkim and Tibet. He also stayed in Dādu (Beijing) and traveled to Kaegyong in 1326, the capital of Koryo kingdom. He is the last Indian missionary to go to China and Korea and devote entire life for as a missionary.

It is not yet proved whether Dhyānabhadra was interested in Buddhist tantra. However, his knowledge of esoteric Buddhism was good. He has the Master of Dhyāna tradition of Nālandā. He became famous as a Ch'an Master in Yunnan and Korea. It was he whose efforts has transformed Korean Buddhism. During 14<sup>th</sup> century,