

NA, UNMIN and India



WM Correspondent

With the political situation going downhill more alarmingly, the possibility of further term extension of United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), invited to help Nepal's peace process, hangs in balance.

Nepal Army (NA) detests the proposition of prolonging its stay in Nepal.

So, it has been telling to the political parties that the Special Committee on Supervision, Integration and Rehabilitation of the Maoist combatants could well act as a substitute to the UNMIN.

The NA has been trying to render the continued presence of the UNMIN redundant by stating, "Its tenure should not be extended since the country is no longer in conflict."

In fact, the army is also accusing the UNMIN of conniving with the Maoists by recognizing it and PLA as parallel army structures to under the image of NA and prolong its stay beyond September 15.

The army also termed that the 60-week roadmap of the UNMIN as a plot designed to assist the Maoists to delay the army integration process apart from

extending the mandate of the mission at the expense of the position of the NA and the parliamentary system as a whole.

The army is also bitterly irked with the UNMIN for its stance that any new recruitment unleashed by the NA also violates the peace process.

"The reluctance on the part of UNMIN to convince the Maoists that NA recruitment is initiated as per the prevailing laws and the mission' move to challenge the Supreme Court (SC)'s clarification on army recruitment violates the rule of law in Nepal," states a paper prepared by Nepal Army Headquarters.

The army is also not happy with the UNMIN's role in monitoring the Maoist combatants who repeatedly appeared in public with UN tagged guns.

UCPN (Maoist) is vehemently opposing the exit of the UNMIN stating it would put the peace process in peril.

The Maoists have also made it clear that any decision regarding the term of the UNMIN must be based on political consensus. This Maoist stance should not be construed as something wrong since the UNMIN came to Nepal as per the collective consensus of the Maoist

and non-Maoist parties.

On the other hand, the political row over whether the army should be kept under the UNMIN's scanner in the changing political context is also intensifying.

Be that as it may, India is a prime external element that is desperate to see the early possible exit of the UNMIN as it also wants the post-conflict management of Nepal to be settled as per its vested interests.

In fact, the southern neighbour was dissatisfied with the very concept of UNMIN as it was detrimental to its unbridled dictates and clout in the internal affairs of Nepal.

As India is expanding its economy at an accelerated speed, it wants to keep its backward under its full influence.

It is also another reason behind the jittery shown by India towards the presence of an international body like UNMIN, which is related to the political process of Nepal.

The premature exit of UNMIN could further prompt India to treat Nepali political system as its private fiefdom.

Such being the reality, the issue of UNMIN tenure should be settled with utmost prudence and caution.

"Monarchy could be resurrected"

WM correspondent

The 239 years long institution of monarchy in the country was eradicated following the success of the People's Movement II in April 2006.

However, former Crown Prince Paras Shah has lately claimed that the major thrust of the April uprising was the change in the country not the abolition of monarchy.

Of course, no person in his/her right frame of mind can negate the failure of the legislative-parliament to pick a new premier for five consecutive times as something natural.

Politicos continue to resort to falsehood, lie and concoction in their frantic bid to absolve themselves from the felony of pushing the country into the current lame duck situation.

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"It was the vested interests of the foreign power centers not the genuine aspirations of common people that led to the abrupt end of the monarchy," he told Machhapuchhre F.M. on Monday.

"The international actors foxily capitalized upon the unawareness among the people about the change to serve their own interests," stating further, "The current scenario in the country has much to do with the game plan plotted by foreigners."

The accord was delivered with the clear midwifery of the Indian establishment and the general Nepalis were tactically forced to acquiesce.

In this context, former Crown Prince also raised objection over the way the monarchy was abolished. It was wiped out sans the "legitimate" process of referendum.

According to him, people's belief on monarchy has grown strong because of the worsening situation of the country.

"I have returned back from Singapore to start a campaign for restoring the monarchy as it is the need of the hour," he stated.

It is not sure whether his arguments are just an attempt to build a strong public opinion in favour of the dislodged monarchy when political parties are indulged in a ridiculous dogfight to elect even a new Prime Minister.

What is being enacted in the political stage is strictly a neurotic obsession with power and privileges at the expense of the while process of change and transformation of the country.

In this light, if the situation continues to go downhill, no one can emphatically rule out the possibility of the resurrection of the monarchy.

Shah also opined that the numerous non-government organisations (NGOs) and international non-government organizations (INGOs) that have been active in Nepal since 1990 are working as per the unscrupulous schemes of foreign power centers.

"We think that the NGOs and INGOs work for good but we should understand that they also do have interests. There are about 4000 village development committees across the country but there are more than 165,000 NGOs. These all work for the foreigners' interests," he argued.

The veracity of his allegation that the external elements are enjoying an excessive leeway to determine the political pulse of the country hardly needs solid verification.

The unbridled arrivals of "political mentors" especially from the southern neighbour in Kathmandu in the name of healing the political wounds only lends credence to the above-mentioned fact.



Political myopia worsening economic woes

WM correspondent

Top officials of Finance Ministry met with speaker Subhas Chandra Nembang last week and told him that the country would face severe economic consequences if the full-fledged budget was not presented by August end.

The Ministry also sent a three-page letter to the parliament alarming it about the same possible situation.

The ministry officials also prescribed an all-party mechanism to

work on the budget which would give approval to the government in place to present a full-size budget during August.

The same week, secretaries of various development related ministries met with Finance Minister Surendra Pandey to lament that they were facing several problems in implementing the development projects in the absence of a full budget.

Majority of them also expressed nervousness that the government could

be unable to provide bonuses to the government employees this Dashain.

Due to the political disarray, the government brought a special budget as an ad hoc measure under which only one third of the last fiscal year's expenditure can be spent until the full budget is presented.

There is every possibility that if the country continues to be bereft of the full budget, various government institutions including hospitals and schools will fail to provide salaries to

their staffers. It would also make them unable from purchasing essential goods for their daily operation.

The country had faced similar situation last year as the budget could not be endorsed in time thanks to political bickering.

In a normal time, one third of the total amount of the budget covers the salary of government employees for four months. But, the government agencies will have to pay the salary of four months [Cont. on page 6]

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Editorial

Unending drama of sordidness

As expected, the fifth round of election to pick a new prime minister ended in ignominy. It would be strictly a manifestation of foolhardiness to fathom this debacle as something common in democracy.

The way the political parties are failing to come together at least to extricate the country out of the present prime ministerial quagmire augurs well the deep rooted culture of procrastination and preposterousness in Nepali politics.

In fact, undermining the basic principles of democracy to fulfill the hedonistic political desires is not an alien trend amongst our politicians.

And, the ceaseless inability on part of them to put an end to the current lame duck situation serves just as a microcosm of this myopia.

When the notion of democracy for political parties relegates into a mere tool to hoodwink the public to bolster parochial and partisan interest, any nation is bound to falter into an abyss.

And the same is happening in Nepal. The country could not draft a new constitution mint to elect a new Prime Minister through the fifth elections as something common in democracy.

The strictly ridiculous inability of political parties to give the country a new premier in a timely manner and there are palpable doubts whether the parliament would draft a new constitution by time extended time i.e in April.

As the whole country is marred by the unwarranted delay in selecting premier, more serious issues of the peace process like federal system and integration of ex-Maoist combatants have been completely sidelined. As such, the peace process is in a fix, to say the least.

If more stupid somersaults are displayed to pick a new premier, there is every chance that not only the political but also the economic and social fabric of the country could be tattered in a more severe manner.

With the state of law and order getting more dreadful with the lengthened indefinite period, criminal elements are getting an excessive leeway to proceed with their nefarious activities.

The prolonged political crisis coupled with worsening law and order situation, bleak industrial outlook, power shortage is wrecking havoc with the socio-economic equilibrium.

But, unfortunately, our politicians are so smitten by the temptations of power and privileges that they are happy with their dog-fighting at the cost of the nation and the people.

As a result, the whole process of change and transformation of our socioeconomic order lurches from one corner to another without any sense of vision and direction.

Now the pertinent question: how long the parties will disrepute themselves by deliberately pushing the country into a morass of crisis for the sake of their petty interests.

South Asia mired in mutual suspicion

Yuba Nath Lamsal

South Asia as a region is often looked upon by the world in a negative light. South Asia is touted as a region of poor and backward people, which is often conflict ridden and hotbed of terrorism. Such a remark may appear to be quite disparaging. But this is true, to a large extent, which can be substantiated by facts and figures. South Asia is home to the largest number of poor people in the world. Perhaps, one third population of the world's poorest people live in South Asia. It is backward as its development level is only better than sub-Saharan Africa. The intrinsic conflict within a state and between states is worse than anywhere in the world. The level of animosity is so high that the clouds of war always hover in South Asian sky. No country in the region is in a position to fully trust the other. Every country suspects the other and there is hardly any harmony in relationship among them. Communal distrust and conflict are also high in the region. Communal riots are regular phenomenon in India. It is mostly between Hindus and Muslims. Sri Lanka, too, saw a worst war that was waged on communal basis. The Hindu Tamils fought for a separate state for decades but the government dominated by Buddhist Sinhala population crushed the separatist movement of Tamils. However, the animosity between the two ethnic communities has not been fully put to an end. The divide between Buddhist Sinhalese and Hindu Tamils is deep. Pakistan is an Islamic country with more than 80 per cent people belonging to different Islamic sects. The Hindus are in minority, who sometimes suffer harassment and attack in the hand of Muslim fundamentalists, although the policy of the government allows minorities to observe their religious activities without hindrances. Similar is the case with Bangladesh and Maldives. Bangladesh has overwhelming majority of Muslim population. Sometimes Bangladesh government adopts prejudiced policy against religious minorities. But the situation is beginning to change especially after the Awami League government headed by Sheikh Hasina was formed. Bangladesh was created in 1971 as a liberal and secular country despite overwhelming majority of Muslims. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who is called in Bangladesh as the 'Bangabandhu' (Friend of Bangladesh) was assassinated along with his family members by fundamentalists for his liberal and secular policy. With Awami League back in power with overwhelming majority, the demand for reviving the old secular

constitution, to which Sheikh Hasina has responded positively.

Maldives is an Islamic country which was under dictatorship. But it is slowly opening after last year's general election in which a liberal minded president came to power. Bhutan is the only dictatorship in the SAARC. Bhutan boasts to have preserved its Buddhist culture and religion. Bhutan has adopted the worst ethnic cleansing policy in South Asia by already evicting the Nepali speaking Hindu population out of the country. More than 1,25,000 Nepali speaking Hindus, who constitute one-fourth of the total population of Bhutan, have been forcibly driven out of the country. It is not only the Nepali-speaking Hindus but the native Ngalung people have also been forced to go on exile or serve severe jail term for demanding political freedom in Bhutan. In the name of preserving Buddhist culture, Bhutan is preserving dictatorship with strong protection and patronage of India. Buddhism is a democratic and peaceful religion but Bhutan has ridiculed Buddhism by denying democracy and rights to the people and using violent force to suppress democratic movement. India claims to be the world's largest democracy and champion of democratic values in the world. But New Delhi has patronized monarchical dictatorship and its ethnic cleansing policy in its own backyard.

So far as Nepal is concerned, it is undergoing a phenomenal change and political transformation. After a decade long violent insurgency, a peace process is underway that has given a nugget of hope for peace, prosperity and stability. However, the peace process is damn slow triggering speculations that the undergoing political process is reaching a stage of slow death. If the ongoing peace process gets derailed, Nepal is likely to return to the old days of violence and civil war. Nepal's political parties' inaction and narrow views are fundamentally responsible behind this situation. But foreign meddling-to be specific Indian interference- has also equally contributed to creating political volatility in Nepal.

In recent years, this region has earned the reputation of a breeding ground for terrorism. As a result, the focus of international war on terror has been shifted to South Asia. Afghanistan is the birth place of Taleban Islamic fundamentalists that provided base for Al Qaeda, a deadly international terrorist organization. Al Qaeda is behind most deadly attacks on several key interests of the Western countries in general and the United States of

America in particular. The US-led multinational forces are waging a war on terror in Afghanistan. Although some success has been achieved, the complete victory over terrorists in Afghanistan is still elusive. Terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to the region.

Despite having historical, social and cultural affinity, the relationship between the countries in the region is marked by mistrust and suspicion. The clash of interests, differing security perception and false notion of cultural superiority have fueled conflict and wars in the region. India and Pakistan have already fought three wars over Kashmir, which has, in a way or the other, afflicted the entire. Even a layperson understands that peace in South Asia is not possible unless Kashmir issue is resolved. Yet the issue has not yet been addressed amicably. Kashmir continues to remain a disputed territory. Every day, people are being killed, tortured and harassed by Indian troops and also by militants. While India and Pakistan are fighting a proxy war in Kashmir, people are caught in the crossfire. The tension has prolonged in Kashmir for more than six decades because India refused to abide by an agreement reached between India and Pakistan to hold plebiscite to decide the fate of Kashmir. The United Nation Security Council, too, adopted the resolution backing the plebiscite and calling for its early implementation. But this has never materialized because of India's unwillingness to conduct plebiscite, which is not only a violation of international treaty but also a disregard to the United Nations.

The menace of terrorism in Afghanistan has spilled over to Pakistan. As a result, Pakistan is fighting battle in two fronts. In the first place, Islamabad is hard bent on wiping out terrorism being perpetrated by Islamic militants while it is an ally of international war on terror in Afghanistan. Despite protests from different sectors, Pakistan has been cooperating with the US-led multinational force in its bid to defeat and wipe out terrorism. Pakistan is, thus, a target of Islamic militants because of its support in international war on terror.

India, too, is fighting tooth and nail in various fronts. There are more than a dozen insurgent groups that have waged war against Indian establishment. Some are fighting against centralized system and policy of the central and state governments while others are fighting for separate state within the Indian union. Some groups have even waged war

demanding disintegration from Indian union. The insurgents groups include Nagas, Bodos, Mizos, Ulfas, Gorkhas, Sikhs and the Maoists to name a few. Mizos, Bodos, Ulfas and Gorkhas are demanding separate autonomous states within the Indian union while Nagas and Sikhs want to be separate from Indian union. Sikh movement was completely crushed by applying brutal force. But Sikh community still carries a deep-rooted animosity and hatred towards Indian government, which can surface and flare up anytime in future. The Naga insurgency, although weakened slightly, is still active.

The case of the Maoist communists in India is different. They are fighting neither for a separate province nor for disintegration of India. They want to liberate Indian people from the exploitative feudal social, political and economic structure for which they want to overthrow the present parliamentary system and establish a communist state. The influence of the Maoists is expanding slowly. Out of 622 districts throughout India, the Maoists have influence in over 224 districts. That means almost 40 per cent population of India is under the Maoist influence. Similarly, the Indian establishment treats Muslims as second grade citizens. Muslims constitute almost 15 per cent of India's total population. If the population of Muslims, Mizos, Nagas, Gorkhas, Ulfas, Bodos and the Maoist supporters are put together, it constitutes more than 60 per cent population of India. This means Indian establishment has alienated more than 60 per cent people that include the Maoists, Muslims, Nagas, Mizos, Ulfas, Sikhs, Bodos and Gorkhas alike.

This is the scenario of South Asia. The animosity and lack of harmonious and cooperative relations among the countries of South Asia has contributed to further worsening the situation. These negative features have eclipsed the positive sides. Some countries in the region especially the bigger ones have the tendency of treating the smaller states as junior partners, which is the main reason for causing mistrust and suspicion. This has served as the main roadblock towards confidence building and fostering cooperative relations in a true spirit of genuine neighborliness. Despite all these pessimistic views, South Asia, indeed, possesses some positive characteristics which, if properly harnessed and utilized, the region can be turned into a prosperous zone. It would do well if South Asian countries identify the positive features and make best use of theirs for the common good of the people in the region.

It (now) is a dirty game!

Krishna Sharma

After surfing through the news websites that featured Nepal's demanding but disturbing politics, my uncle from Louisiana calls me to vent his frustration. While we agree that election is a process to drive the nation democratically, we disagree to its time consuming nature since it has extended the lame duck situation for an indefinite period of time.

Timely action in democracy is as important as the election itself. Buying time is not just the dirty game of the start of the hatching of conspiracy but of devaluing the democratic process itself. It is sad to note that the culture of buying time has become a norm in Nepali politics. It is because of this very nature that Nepal could not draft a new constitution in a given time frame and has bought one more year. And there are doubts if the parliament can deliver a new constitution within a year, the time extended in April by the parliamentarians.

Suresh Acharya, former president of Federation of Nepalese Journalists

and the producer of "Mission Constitution" in ABC TV told us at a meeting before winding up his visit to the USA that even the lawmakers are skeptical about the making of the constitution within the stipulated time frame. "They say on the record for my program that the constitution would be drafted within time but they say just the opposite after the program is over."

Realizing the value and the importance of the all powerful government for the public service and other security concerns, the USA has started a serious debate regarding the period of the lame duck government which spans to almost two months after the new president is elected every four years. The debate soared especially after David Cameron took the oath of office as British Prime Minister within hours of Gordon Brown's announcement of resignation after losing the general election earlier this year. The entire

world was surprised to see the swiftness of power transfer in Britain under Cameron's leadership in the hung parliament.

There is no doubt that the election is the first and foremost parameter that fathoms and fosters democracy in any nation. While Nepal's parliament is practicing this fundamental democratic process in its bid to elect the new prime minister to replace the care taker government of Madhav Kumar Nepal, too late to elect the leader has but its own drawbacks. While the nation is currently in the state of indecision, Nepal's everyday life is in limbo. There should be no lengthened lame duck government if democratic process is to be made more effective, transparent and service oriented.

If we continue to spend months in the name of exercising democratic process to select a prime minister, time will slip away from our hands and we would fall short of it when we

need it the most to brainstorm on the serious issue of federal system, the paramount concern of the new constitution.

Another matter of vital concern should be the law and order and the overall security situation of the country. There are instances the forces constantly involved in creating instability and havoc in the nation have been more successful in fulfilling their mission during this lame duck session. I am afraid if any international terrorist elements would take advantage of our 'let loose' security situation while we continue to engage ourselves in the political dog-fighting.

While we still boast ourselves as a yam between two giant nations and are way too cautious if the neighbors in the South or the North would take a portion of ourselves, we are being so politically stingy and naked that one of them has to come to us to remind that we are being not just stingy but are naked as well. It is time we clean up ourselves and put on some clothes.

India's Nepal dilemma

[Nepal's political situation continues to falter in the morass of disarray and dismay. The ceaseless inability on the part of political parties to elect even a new primer has posed a serious threat to constitution-writing and peace processes. In this light, it won't be gross gullibility to say that the Indian establishment has largely been responsible to push the country into the current instability. As the political parties continue to comply with the dictates of New Delhi for power and privileges, the state of the country is worsening at an alarming pace. The following article depicts at how India plotted the instability of Nepal in an insightful manner even though it is related with the political scenario of the country when former king Gyanendra Shan was at the helm of affairs.]

India and the United States seem to be working at cross-purposes in carrying forward their strategic interests in Nepal.

While the US is supporting King Gyanendra's and flirting with idea of supplying arms to the Royal Nepal Army to strengthen the hands of the monarch, India is covertly bridging the gaps between the seven party alliance and Maoist extremists who are locked in a deadly war with the establishment headed by the king.

The Maoists announced a unilateral indefinite ceasefire in the Nepalese capital Kathmandu.

But the crisis is far from resolved.

In India, two clear opinions have emerged out of the Nepal crisis.

One school of thought believes that the Maoists should not be trusted under any circumstance and India should not help, overtly or covertly, to bring them to power.

The Americans and India's intelligence hawks support this idea.

The Manmohan Singh government -- probably under the influence of its allies, the Communist Party of India-Marxist -- believes that people's aspiration for democracy is overwhelming in Nepal and popular support for the king is on the wane.

Many independent strategic thinkers in India also believe that the beginning of the end of Nepal's monarchy has already begun.

"There is nothing wrong in India supporting groups representing people of Nepal," says Professor S D Muni, India's foremost so called expert on India-Nepal relations. "Although the Government of India has not said anything against the king, but if at all India has supported the political parties and Maoists there is no harm because they are representing people, the king is not," he adds.

On February 9, 2006 after the not-

so-credible municipal elections in Nepal, the official Indian statement said, "We are of the view that the grave challenges facing Nepal demand the initiation of a genuine process of national reconciliation, dialogue and participation which can facilitate a peaceful political settlement."

The foreign office statement said that any credible electoral exercise should have the active involvement and participation of all the mainstream parties. Only then would such elections be able to contribute to the restoration of democracy and political stability the king doesn't seem to be listening.

For the last few months, India is supporting weak Nepalese political parties that are disunited and largely corrupt. These parties don't seem capable of forcing the public opinion on the king. The newly formed alliance of seven political parties and the Maoists have commenced mass protests all over Nepal from April 6.

The Maoists are far more effective than political parties in the interiors of Nepal.

One school of thought in India cringes at the thought of any messing around with the Maoists.

"Maoists will never abandon violence," says Dr. S. Chandrasekhar, a former intelligence officer and an experienced hand on Nepal. "We helped Bangladesh to gain independence and now their polity has turned against India. Nepalese Maoists will treat India in the same way. Once they are in power they will do everything to strengthen the Indian Maoists' violent struggle," he adds.

Professor Muni disagrees. "Why will Maoists not abandon violence? Why will violence be more important to them than power?" he asks. "Rather, if India and Nepalese Maoists come closer it will have a positive impact on Indian Naxalites who will get a cue to join the

democratic process like the Nepalese Maoists."

India has high stakes in the internal stability of neighboring Nepal -- higher than ever, because of the dramatic rise of Leftwing extremism in Nepal and India.

But coherent policy-making with reference to Nepal continues to pose a dilemma for the Manmohan Singh government.

The United Progressive Alliance government might have won praise from many strategic analysts for its handling of relations with the US, but it continues to give the impression of being confused in policy-formulation with regard to Nepal ever since the king overturned the democratic institutions of the country in February 2005 and took all power in his hands under the pretext that the political parties had failed to effectively deal with the Maoists.

The king was right when he said political parties have failed but he throttled democracy and put national security and political stability under serious threat.

Traditionally, India's policy towards Nepal had rested on the twin pillars of the king as the head of State and an elected democratic government being responsible for governance.

Now, with the king assuming total responsibility of governance with the help of nominated ministers and with the monarch showing no inclination to restore a genuine democracy in the foreseeable future, India finds itself faced with the dilemma of having to choose between the king and political parties that are getting increasingly disenchanted with the continuance of the monarchy.

India's dilemma has been further complicated by the Maoists coming together with other political parties in opposing the king and making overtures to India through various interviews

intelligently given to the media by Prachanda, Nepal's Maoist leader, who has been projecting his guerrillas as not detrimental to India's interests.

Master strategist Prachanda has also called for a common slogan, a common front and programme for a model of the 'people's parallel government against military power.' That means he wants to set the agenda to be followed by the political parties.

The US and China, much to India's discomfort, have been evincing increasing interest in Nepal in order to promote their own long-term agenda. James Moriarty, the US ambassador in Nepal, is hyperactive in helping the king in nabbing Maoists.

The US is opposed to the king's overthrow of democracy, but at the same time Washington is not prepared to relent in its opposition to the Maoists.

With China and US backing the king, Nepalese Home Minister Kamal Thapa is busy picking holes in the seven party alliance's agreement with the Maoist rebels. Thapa wants politicians to resume talks with King Gyanendra's administration on ending the country's political crisis.

India still remains the most influential external factor in Nepal.

The questions confronting the Manmohan Singh government with regard to Nepal are:

- Should it throw its entire support behind the political parties, even if it means abandoning the traditional policy of supporting the king as well as the Maoists?

- Can it make a distinction between the Maoists and other political parties? Will it be feasible in view of the willingness of the other political parties to cooperate with the Maoists against the king?

- How should it react to the feelers from the Maoists? If it reacts positively, what impact will it have on its campaign against Naxalites in India?

- Can there be a clash of interests between India and the US if India responds to the Maoist feelers?

- What options and capability does India have to prevent an enraged king from taking Nepal into the arms of China and Pakistan?

(It was published on 2005)

Two pathetic comrades: MB Singh & CP Mainali

Ritu Raj Subedi

The Nepalese communist movement saw many ups and downs in its more than sixty years of history. It also witnessed the rise and fall of many bright communist leaders. CPN founding general secretary Pushpa Lal Shrestha, Man Mohan Adhikari, Mohan Bikram Singh, Tulsī Lal Amatya, Nirmal Lama, Madan Bhandari, Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and CP Mainali were and are some few dynamic leaders who shaped the Nepalese communist movements in one or another way. They had own stories of success and failures. Late Pushpa Lal was perhaps the greatest of all. His far-sighted principle of left-democratic alliance is equally relevance even today. His disciple Madan Bhandari gave a democratic face to communism and saved it from being dumped into the abyss of history. However, fiery Prachanda adopted destructive measures to shake the Nepalese society. The country is still struggling to recover from the shock waves of ruthless insurgency that he spearheaded more than a decade back. However, this write-up is about the plight of two veteran comrades - Mohan Bikram (MB) Singh and Chandra Prakash (CP) Mainali.

Once upon a time Singh and Mainali were legendary figures in the circle of the Nepalese Reds. Sadly, both are now in their worst days of political career. They look like a setting sun. They have been deserted their own comrades one by one. Their parties split thrice just within a couple of years. They are facing a string of accusations and humiliations from their own friends and rivals alike.

Both hail from feudal background and joined communist party to ameliorate the condition of the needy and downtrodden. Many appreciate their intellectual prowess but they have lost their past's glow. CP once took up arms but MB always kept himself distance from violent means of revolution. They share commonality in defying the politics of ethnicity blown up by the Maoist in the recent past. Going a step further, MB stood against federal system, a common agenda of almost all parties today.

Discarded by his disciples

MB once led a powerful faction of communist group that schooled a bunch of firebrand Maoist leaders such as Prachanda, Mohan Baidhya, Dr. Babu Ram Bhattarai and Narayan Kaji Shrestha. But, these disciples are no longer with him now. His pupils have turned into fierce political nemesis. They marched into jungle calling him a dogmatic leader. MB was perhaps the first leader to push the idea of constituent assembly in the plenum of communist party. The Maoists carried out his agenda of CA but discarded him utterly.

To the wonder of all, MB still lives a semi-underground life even after the nation ushered into a democratic republic era. Autocratic king is no longer there. Apparently, there is no threat to his physical life. Our society is gradually opening up and embracing pluralistic values but MB prefers to live in a shadow only to confound the commoners.

In early 30s, MB and his peer Nirmal Lama came together to call late Pushpa Lal a traitor and broker. Time showed these were baseless charges against him. In his eventful life, marked with struggle and scarcity, Pushpa Lal endured many unwarranted allegations and tortures from his own colleagues, which many think, caused premature death of the founder of the Nepalese communist party. Both later realised their misdemeanours but it made no meaning because Pushpa Lal was not there to pardon them.

Ironically, today Prachanda stabs his old guru with the same terminology. "MB is the most despicable character and gadhdhar of the Nepalese communist movement," Prachanda had said in his infamous Shaktikhor video tape.

A lewd comrade!

Still few question MB's political integrity. He is considered the most learned communist leader of Nepal. MB never compromised on his principles he upheld throughout his life and kept away from power politics. However, he proved to be very weak in the matter of sex. He was alleged in sex scandals in the party thrice and faced action in the same number. In 2034 BS, he was dislodged from the post of general secretary for his illicit relations with the party's female worker Bidhya Dhakal 'Jalajal'. His illegal fiancée died in a rail accident in 2038 BS. But she left deep imprint in his emotional life. He is now writing a novel 'Jalajal' in the memory of his departed beloved. There are other cases of his adultery but this series came to an end when he settled his life with comrade Durga Poudel alias 'Anuska in 2057 BS'. The aged comrade must have found a good company with her, who is younger more than 30 years. Alas! She became a source of his economic debacle now. At the age of 75, he is finished because of his young wife.

Wife puts the old guy in financial soup

Anuska did not, by design, put her elderly spouse in soup. With a view to generate resources for her party CPN-Masaf, she collected a huge amount of money from her own cadres to send them to USA for job. The broker whom she believed in duped her and absconded taking all the money. He is now at large. Because of this scam, MB faced a bigger moral crisis at this senile age. Anuska paid Rs 4 million by selling his home and property. She put her sister house in collateral and got loans from the bank to refund the amount. She has yet to clear Rs. 1 million. MB said he would pay the rest of the amount through the royalties of his books. It is a big irony that a man, who called others to rise against injustice throughout his life, finally fell into a trap of a swindler!

CP, an egocentric comrade?

The condition of CP Mainali is just as pathetic. Once a charismatic leader of Jhapa Naxalite movement, CP is now a leader of a small left group that is dwindling day by day. CP was the son of feudal but led a peasant revolt under the ultra-leftist slogan of 'extermination of class enemy' that saw the beheading of 17 landlord in Jhapa in 2028 BS. Today's his deserted comrades blamed that CP is not free from feudal mindset. They said CP is egocentric and autocratic when it comes to handling the affairs of the party.

Finally the poetic justice!

His rivalry with Madan Bhandari bore no fruit. He was forced to resign from party general secretary in 2039 BS. In 2052 BS, he collaborated with Bam Dev Gautam to split CPN-UML. A charge that is frequently labelled against CP is that he always created factionalism in the party and nags the party's establishment time and again. This was a case when he went against the official decision of the party and backed Jagat Bahadur Bogali to get through National Assembly election in 2052. The same Bogali recently turned a renegade and broke the CPN-ML in the height of intense horse-trading that took place in the run-up to the PM's election. Mainali accused the Maoists of spending two million rupees to 'buy' his four lawmakers, who formed an splinter group under Bogali. It was a sheer paradox that Bogali, whose son was killed by the Maoists a few years ago, instructed his rebel CA members to support Prachanda in the ongoing election. Anyway Bogali kicked CP to his utter bewilderment. It is perhaps a poetic justice meted out on CP who did everything to tear down the UML in the past.

Economy boost up through Buddhist way of life

Sustainable economy can be obtained by human factors. The role of human factors is very dominant since time immemorial. This factor is supported more by the Buddhist way of life. Since Tharus are also Buddhist and so the life style and the cultivation is very near to the Buddhist economy. For instance, the bulk of the collection dealing with Saptary District sheds light on its agrarian history through that of leading Kochila Tharu family. We know from other sources that Saptary played a vital role in the economic history of Nepal after unification, being one of the richest Terai districts in terms of revenue collecting (M. C. Regmi 1984:137-140). Thus we see the link between this economic force at the national and the development of a strong local elite whose history, for some, continues up to the present day. Tharus as pioneer cultivators live near the forest but they never lived inside the forest. While most Tharu could not read or write, they were and are still today sophisticated farmers and cultivators of the Jungle, succeeding where others have failed. Their produce has nourished a nation. Gisele's carefully documented work also reveals the Tharu as land owners, developing villages and maintaining close contact with the court in Kathmandu.

The harsh environment of the Terai influenced the life of the Tharu as well. Among the people of Nepal, the Tharu are one of the very few who over centuries have acquired a substantial

Shankar L. Chaudhary

resistance to malaria, which has enabled them to survive in the Terai particularly virulent form of this disease.

According to Buddhist economy the country will be more prosperous and so one has to depend on it. The recent conflict and crisis especially in the Terai where present day problem is more crucial and painstaking. This is all due to sophisticated and wrong modern technology introduced and popularized in a wrong way. "Right Livelihood" is one of the requirements of the Buddha's Noble Eight fold path. It is clear therefore, that there must be such a thing as Buddhist economics. Buddhist countries have often stated that they wish to remain faithful to their heritage. Modern economics does not distinguish between renewable and non-renewable material as its very method is to equalize and quantify everything by means of a money price. Thus, taking various alternatives: fuels, like coal, oil, wood or water-power: the only difference between them recognized by modern economics is relative cost per equivalent unit. The cheapest is automatically the one to be preferred, as to do other wise would be irrational and "uneconomic". From a Buddhist point of view, of course this will not do the essential difference between non-renewable fuels like coal and oil on the one hand and renewable fuels like wood and water-power on the other cannot be simply over looked. The modern economy is propelled by a frenzy of greed and indulged in an

orgy of envy, and these are not accidental but the very causes of its expansionist success...such as causes, Carry within themselves the seeds of destruction.

As compared to this, Buddhist economy is based on the motto of happiness and welfare of maximum number of people (bahujanahitaya bahujanasukhaya: Vinaya pitaka, 1.21). Buddhist economics does not necessarily see unbridled modernism and westernism as a positive. Phenomenon as it is responsible for many of the major problems that we face to-day. Buddhist economics is guided by cooperation and human well-being instead of competitiveness and exploitation. Our current socio-economic system promotes competition rather than cooperation. This is bound to generate conflict and resentment.

A society founded upon the Buddhist Dharma recognizes that one should aim at promoting the good of the greater unit to which one belongs, and as a minimum one must not look for one's own satisfaction in ways that may cause harm to others. Thus, a Buddhist approach to social and economic development, the primary criterion governing policy formulation must be the well-being of members of the society as a whole. Production must serve the real needs of the people not the demands of the economic system. Buddhist economy has certain characteristic features which are as follows.

Buddhist economics is devoid of Egoism and Greed.

Profitability can never be the sole criterion in Buddhist Economics.

It emulates voluntary simplicity, contentment, liberty, and generosity. It aims at localization and decentralization.

It would use Middle-ranged Technologies with a Human Face.

It lays emphasis on Economic Justice, Social Equity, and Right Livelihood.

It would have Reverent Attitude towards Nature.

Its values mean that environment should not be over exploited. People and not Goods that matter in Buddhist Economics.

Instead of indulging in Mass production, Buddhist Economics would produce for the Masses.

It would be directed towards purification of Human characters.

It is very different from the economics of modern materialism. Since the Buddhist sees the essence of civilization not in a multiplication of wants but in the purification of human characters. Character, at the same time is formed primarily by a man's work properly conducted in a condition of human dignity and freedom.

It is non Buddhist to consider goods as more important than people and consumption as more important than creative activity. Hence if we follow the Buddhist way of life, the economy can be boosted up much faster that other way and it will be more sustainable as well.

Donor support and the policy for forestry sector

Dr Indra Prasad Sapkota

I have been reading several research articles from South Africa, Uganda and Tanzania assessing the impact of donor's funding supports to the civil society, and found several facts which fairly surprise me. The collective take-home message of those articles was- the best way to foster democracy and development is to strengthen local government institutions, and then let governments make the policies to be implemented through such institutions, with civil society as an important factor in the overall process- that is what the donor community commonly envisions.

Amidst the engagements of several donors in Nepal's development endeavors for many years, I brainstorm the research outcome, and look into the history and varying level of involvement of donor community in funding civil society and the government.

If we look at the history, the first donor support came into Nepal's development endeavors in 1951; and the modern civil society also started working in the same year. And it has been believed that as many as 200,000 such organizations have been registered so far. The United States was the first country to sign a technical cooperative agreement with the government of Nepal, but to name the ever first civil society organization is very difficult. However, from the beginning, the civil society has actually been taken as an important partner of government in all development process of the country, but their roles in service delivery and their limitations have always been contested.

Being a forester and based on my own experience for about 21 years in forestry development endeavor, I am trying to summarize the triangular nexus of government, civil society and donors here; and also I am trying to envisage their collective actions and roles for Nepal's forestry development.

At the time when I started learning the development process of Nepal along with donors' support in forestry, I often saw the civil society fitting into the process; but donors were largely embracing their stake with high importance. A significant number of civil society organizations working in forestry sector in Nepal are actually the result of donor's latent willingness to work with them- perhaps even more than that to work with the government.

This scenario was actually supported by a strong and 'perhaps true' argument of donors- the rampant corruption in all sectors of the government. Based on this 'perhaps true' fact, donors actually lifted the civil society with full momentum- without any proviso, and boosted them in a way that they came up very strongly in forestry sector, and actually delivered several forestry development services by themselves. This has made the government confused and even scrawny at the same time; and somehow it lost its priority forestry programmes, such as science based management in order to enhance the productivity of forests. More importantly, it completely lagged behind in enforcing the law in order to maintain good governance at all level and type of entities- from local to central level of Nepalese forestry sector.

I seriously think that the readers are fully aware of and worry about the downfall fate of forest resources these days; and I argue that this is a consequence of several factors- unscientific exploitation of forest resources, governance failure in forest management and total impunity due to the lack of law enforcement. The term 'governance failure' here implies to both for government institutions as well as for civil society organizations as the term does equally mean to all entities.

Having had these situations in Nepal, and also based on those researches from Africa, I, these days, feel that donors are actually slowly trying to come closer to the government, and make a reasonable distance with civil society, especially in executing the forestry development programmes. My feelings actually are supported by a number of opinions of colleagues and stakeholders, which have been expressed in several formal and informal interactions and discussions during the current policy deliberation process.

I truly admit the facts and obligations of the donors that the money they normally pledge in forestry sector should clearly address sincere aspirations of the tax payers down to their respective countries as well as the Nepal people. They should truly judge the competency of the management authority and its background, the methodology and output of their supports with very reliable information before making the decisions on how, to whom and for what the support needs to be made. Actually, I think that the donors have all right to make rigorous judgments' in all aspects of monetary support before pledging a significant amount of money in forestry sector.

At the same time, I also think that the increasing distance between donors and civil society does negatively affects the forestry development in Nepal. Donors should make a crystal clear borderline on the roles, responsibilities and limitations between civil society and the government. They should be very clear on a fact that government should regain its vitality so that it can accommodate the aspiration of civil society, and it should extend its solidarity with them for a robust forest development planning process. And

government should be in such a position that it can strengthen all elements of civil society - no matter whether it is a single citizen or a household or an organized community, or a central federation. In the course of strengthening these elements, donors should honestly support the government and expect the civil society- through its voice and accountability- to prod the government to make policies that favor the Nepalese people, especially the poor focused. I urge the donors not to be confused in the fact that civil society should be able to monitor government policies; they should dialogue with government for positive changes; and for that they should be encouraged enough. Civil society may deliver services in certain circumstances upon consent of the government, or together with the government, while most service delivery should only remain as a responsibility of the government.

Wrapping the things up here, we often expect the very important three development partners of forestry sector should clearly first understand their level and magnitude of engagements, their roles and limitations in forestry planning and development process. If they don't realize them well in advance, we afraid, none the three can move forward as they may merely encounter a situation of placing a snake, a scorpion and a frog together in a place; and none is able to move as they all are scared of and suspect to each other as what a popular Nepali belief is often envisaged. Snake thinks scorpion will definitely sting him, and scorpion thinks he will be easily eaten by the frog, and the frog is terrified with the fact that he may be eaten by the snake. Therefore, we don't want to see the government, donors and civil society are mimicking the snake, scorpion and frog and will stall at the same place where they are positioning today.

What else might happen in Nepal?

Prakash Bom

The current political crises have proved that a unity government is must under the Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution.

That's why the elections of Constituent Assembly were held for in 2008. Since the fifth round of prime ministerial elections yield no fruit the nation has politically demoralized not because CA could not elect the Prime Minister to lead a majority government but the main political parties failed to form a unity government.

At this point, what else might happen in Nepal is beyond the imagination. How cheap and disoriented the main political parties have become in regard to accomplish the fundamental objectives of Constituent Assembly has plunged the nation into the most hopeless and sorrowful state.

In my opinion, there should be no sixth round of prime ministerial election at this point, which can neither justify the political development of nation nor the democratic practice of an electoral system. Rather it gives a platform for main political parties (NC & the Maoist) to play dirty games, which will in long run undermine the significance of Constituent Assembly.

The political scenario of a joint meeting of 23 parties, which have come up with the new proposal for the United Communist Party Nepal (UCPN) Maoist to make official decision to form a nation unity government is the right means to end the crises.

It has become insignificant for both NC and the Maoist to compete in prime ministerial contest. Rather both parties should pull out of the race to respect the proposal of 23 parties for the unity government formation.

It has been too much for the world to observe the most ambiguous, self-contradictory, irresponsible, corrupt, and dirty politics of Nepal. This is all happening because political parties and political leaders are lacking in clarity with their concept and commitments.

As a consequence, every issue riches to the climax, instead resolving it with the mutual consensus and understanding. The Nepali political EGO seems to be pretty gigantic in every sense, in every occasion, with every group, and individual.

In the end, it becomes self-evidence when it reaches nowhere by wasting so much time, energy and resource of the nation. It is apparent that it is an unconscious effort of the ignorant egos, which do not see whether such a behavior will push the nation at a greater risk to become a failed nation.

Of course, as ignorance is bliss the ignorant would not mind to rule the failed nation ignoring the sorrow and sufferings of the innocent people. But, what next might be the revival.

Incessant rains cause havoc across the country

Incessant rains in various parts of the country since past few days have adversely affected thousands of people across the country.

Hundreds of acres of land has been inundated in most of the Terai districts including Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, Udayapur, Sarlahi, Bara, Chitwan, Kanchanpur and Kailali.

In many places like Udayapur, Sunsari, Chitwan and Bhujela at the banks of Mahakali river people have been displaced after floods entered their villages.

About a dozen persons were killed in landslides or flood related accidents on Tuesday.

Hundreds of houses of Madi region in western Chitwan have been inundated by the floods. The region has been totally cut off from the district headquarters and other places as the river separating it with other parts of the district has swelled too large to cross and the weather is too bad for helicopters.

Rain has also caused havoc in other parts of the country. The swelling Triyuga river, in Udayapur has breached the embankment and is at the risk of entering the settlements. Some of the houses at the river banks have already been inundated. Two persons were swept away by Triyuga river yesterday.

Landslides in various parts of the hilly areas have obstructed roads. Three people were killed in a landslide in Taplejung yesterday.

The level of water has also risen in Mahakali and Koshi rivers. Many people living on the banks of Mahakali river have left their homes in the fear of being inundated. There is a risk of the river entering the settlements as it has already breached the embankment.

There was continuous rain throughout the country for most of the time Tuesday. It has subsided slightly from Wednesday morning. Rescue workers are planning to carry out rescue works in Chitwan and other parts of the country as the rains subside.

Where do people stand in 'New Nepal'?

Political analyst

Major political parties dragged this bone-poor country into a colossally unbearable economic crisis and a brute exercise which did not have even a semblance of democratic political ethics. They ignored reason, ignored their own parties and over and above all, the feelings of the people. The whole nation plunged into the whirlpool of lawlessness, uncertainty and insecurity, in addition to turning the whole image of sovereignty and independent identity of the country into one of submission in the doctrine of Indianisation.

The political scenario has assumed a very chequered dimension with the three parties busy in dissensions and disputes over Prime Ministerial post. In view of the under-currents of dissensions, it will not be surprising if among the parties skirmishes escalate further because of distrust subsisting among themselves. Even now they do not seem to be bold enough to speak out courageously that the time for forging alliance for both lefts and democrats is over. There is direct and head-on collision between the constituents of the parties, and all this has only pushed the people into the background.

What's going on within the fold of leadership of the third largest party in the CA, the UML, is also a cause of concern. For this party was severely bruised in the past owing to internal feuds over the questions of Mahakali treaty ratifications as to whether to stay with democratic parties or go over to the Maoist party folds or form alliance with them. Party leaders are still seen flexing their

muscles, but still the hope that foreign interference and advice will settle differences and provide the beleaguered party a new direction remains.

These are the developments which have disturbed the entire course of national politics in such a way that the alliance is not getting that massive level public cooperation in their way of tackling national political problem. While this confusion is already there, the increase in political problem in Terai, Chure, Bhawan Pradesh and Hilly region and also the deteriorating law and order situation are further complicating the matter.

Given such conflicting developments, it is but natural that the basic national interest should be getting lost in the labyrinth of power lust. The people have heard a lot of sermons and preaching and swallowed sweet pills of assurances which are never fulfilled. It will not be an exaggeration to point out that our intellectuals and members of the civil society too are responsible for all this. This is a class which does not lag behind in extending their unwavering support to the sermon and preachers, provided their personal interest are served. The hopes and expectations with which the people had participated in the struggle appear to be fully belied. The changes did come, but only in name and faces of the guards. A number of political upheavals were witnessed in the course, but they were all based merely on gains and losses which the players of the power-game invited in

course of materializing their strategies. The people who actually constituted the main vanguards of the April movement could not even in the least experience the elements of any virtual change. For them the same type of cunning maneuverings and shrewd publicity stunts continued to dominate the people's psychology.

In fact, people who made sacrifices and suffered so much in the people's movement began to be ignored and political leaders and partisan interest began to overshadow all that ought to have been for the people and of the people. The changes also received the heritage of injustice, oppression, corruptions, nepotism and inequitable treatments in all sectors of the society. It is quite natural that the people should be doubtful about the motives of their leaders. In case it is really for the establishments of a true Loktantra, then it is morally quite appropriate that the people should ask where do they stand in the present Loktantra?

Democracy puts pressure on the responsible circles to respect the voices of the people. But our leaders who really run and control the parties and government forget the basic fact that they can survive as well as help institutionalize democracy only if they function in accordance with the mandate of the people. But unfortunately in our country the leaders began to utilize the entire government and party sources and resources for the fulfillment of their personal ambitions. The leaders do not take into account the fact that

power is not a permanent phenomenon and that the people are in fact the real force to reckon with.

The nation has had to always suffer political instability and uncertainty only when the people's urges and aspiration have been utterly neglected by those who occupy positions of authority and responsibility. The country could not feel political stability, and it was quite natural that economic instability and uncertainty should continue to linger on.

The situation the country is in can be compared to the precarious condition of the patient who is lying in the intensive care unit surviving on the life-supporting devices with the physicians still hoping against hope. The countrymen who were assured of receiving a boost towards their overall socio-economic relief have to wait in despondency because their condition is continuously deteriorating. Experiences reveal that those in power always think and proclaim that their emergence has been results of history and public mandate. The Nepali Congress only on hammering over its past. The leaders of this party often forget that the people have already paid very highly to them ever since the overthrow of the Rana regime and that they have on the contrary not honored the public trust reposed in them. Instead of remembering and reminding the fact that they carry with them a history of hard pain, sacrifice and contribution for the restoration of Loktantra, the leaders of the NC should also at the same time not forget that they have mostly betrayed the trust of the people

देशमा शान्ति, सुख्यवस्था र विकास सबै नेपालीको चाहना हो । यसप्रति प्रतिवद्ध हुनु नेपालीहरुको कर्तव्य हो ।



नेपाल सरकार
सूचना तथा सञ्चार मन्त्रालय
सूचना विभाग



Region:

Writing on the wall

This year on Independence Eve 2010, sitting in my study with H.G. Wells' eternal classic on time travel in my lap, I too take a trip through time. The year is 1948

S Tariq

the Kashmiri people, but in stark defiance, India turns the occupied area into a concentration camp, cleverly concealed behind a

Indians initiate a full-fledged war on the Lahore and Sialkot fronts. Foiled in their design to have a drink in Lahore Gymkhana by the



and intrigue dark and deadly stares me in the face. Kashmir has been denied the right to join the newly created Pakistan, in spite of the agreed formula that all Muslim majority states would do so. The Kashmiris, a traditionally docile race, rise up in arms and are soon joined by Pakistani volunteers. Success follows lightning success and Srinagar is within reach, when the Indian military is ordered to occupy the former princely state. Pakistan also mobilises its forces, but a little too late - the Indians push back the freedom fighters till a UN brokered ceasefire halts the fighting. Kashmir now stands divided into the Azad or Liberated Region and the Indian Occupied Zone.

The UN resolutions call for a plebiscite to determine the will of

glittering façade of tourists and Bollywood film crews. Behind this façade, there is a reign of terror let loose by the Indian police, intelligence services and the military. Things come to a point where even members of the UN Military Observer Group deployed to monitor the ceasefire and report its violations to the Secretary General are treated like internees and confined to the capital Srinagar.

The year is 1964 and the Kashmiris have once again risen in revolt. A year later, a frustrated India aggravates matters by cross border violations into Pakistan, which forces the latter to launch a military operation across the ceasefire line in Chamb-Jaurian area. With Pakistani troops on the verge of cutting off the vital line of communication at Akhnur, the

Pakistani armed forces, the Indians recoil with their tails between their legs. Regrettably, however, the insurgency in the Vale of Kashmir loses impetus because of this war. The Indian military now goes on a rampage against the population, the likes of which can perhaps be paralleled only by Nazi barbarism and the Holocaust.

It is now 1988 and a full-fledged insurgency has once again taken hold of the Kashmir Valley. These are common citizens turned freedom fighters, many of them refugees, who have fled the occupied area vowing revenge for the rape and death of their loved ones. More troops are pumped into the valley, till they number 700,000, along with 16 secret agencies spreading terror amongst 8.3 million citizens.

September 1999 and the twin towers of the World Trade Centre lie in ruins, with Muslims around the world wrongly stereotyped as instruments of violence. India is quick to exploit the situation and manages to internationally brand the Armed Kashmiri Freedom Struggle as terrorism, aided by Pakistan. The dice are once again rolling against the Kashmiri people.

I am jarred back into the present by a loud thunderclap as rain begins to pelt my house. It has now been three years since a revolt has once again taken hold of the Indian Occupied Kashmir, but this time things are different. The international media has finally seen through the Indian façade and is reporting the events in their true light.

The New York Times publishes a piece by Lydia Polgreen that talks of "Kashmir's bloody summer of rage." It reports that more than 50 people have been killed in this summer alone in protests against India's military presence in the occupied region. The New York Times terms the uprising as an "Intifada-like popular revolt against the Indian military presence." The report quotes Professor Amitabh Matoo from the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, and himself a Kashmiri Hindu, as acknowledging that there is a whole generation of Kashmiris who think that India is a huge monster represented by bunkers and security forces.

The New York Times report says that Kashmir's demand for self-determination is sharper today than it has been at perhaps any other time. It reinforces indications that perhaps, the final chapter in the epic struggle of the Kashmiri people against Indian occupation is now being written. Every death, every rape fuels the ferocity and scale of the revolt and a writing has begun to appear on every wall in the occupied area - a writing that heralds the dawn of freedom.

The writer is a freelance columnist.

A more flexible strategy to help flooded Pakistan

Wang Di

While the floodwaters continue to sweep across Pakistan and inflict serious damage on the country's economy and psychology, aid and assistance, including food, clean water and hygienic services, are still dreadfully inadequate.

Although starting a bit late, many countries have joined the world's rescue and aid efforts to reduce further harm to the central Asian nation.

However, fractious comments have surfaced recently on who should shoulder more responsibility during the crisis.

While proudly pledging to increase aid from \$60 million to \$150 million, some US politicians point their fingers at other countries, especially China, dismissing its Pakistani aid package of about \$9 million as a pittance.

Some Western media outlets have even listed countries by the monetary value of their financial aid packages, as if it were a contest.

The US past foreign aid is not so impressive if you consider the portion of GDP that other developed countries have donated.

The high-profile surge of financial assistance to Pakistan this time makes people wonder about if there is any ulterior motives under the surface.

The US has been largely increasing its aid to Pakistan in recent years. The sad fact is, not many Pakistani people love America.

China, on the other hand, has been winning the hearts and minds of its neighbor through continuing aid in the forms of infrastructure and economic cooperation.

In the latest disaster in Pakistan, China did not hesitate to provide not only necessary food, water and tents, but also military helicopters and personnel to the worst-stricken areas.

All this happened while heavy rains were laying havoc across China for three consecutive months, with a financial loss estimated at more than 152 billion yuan (\$22.4 billion), several times more than Pakistan's current loss of about \$6 billion.

The Chinese government has made it clear that China's aid to Pakistan has no conditions attached, and is not for show.

The foreign media's criticism is another round of noise trying to pressure China into taking more responsibilities, as its GDP now reportedly ranks as the world's second largest.

The noises will only grow in the coming years around natural or man-made disasters.

Times have changed since China would provide aid on more ideological grounds. Today the Chinese government is redefining its role to help those in need, especially neighboring countries and regions.

This does not mean China must follow the US suggestion to toss cash around.

While providing timely aid to a country when disaster strikes, China and its people need to pay more attention to smaller, less-developed neighbors during times of calm, so as to nurture a healthy and mutually beneficial relationship.

Global Times

Baidya, Bhattarai table separate proposals

The UCPN (Maoist) central committee meeting, which resumed Wednesday after being postponed thrice since August 12, is all set to see divided opinions over the policies and the future strategies of the party with two vice chairmen Mohan Baidya and Dr Baburam Bhattarai, presenting separate proposals that are seen as a 'counter' to party chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal political report.

Baidya and Bhattarai tabled their written proposals at the CC meeting simultaneously after Dahal presented his draft, saying Dahal prepared it without consulting other party leaders and that it could not address the viewpoints of all leaders in the party. Generally, chairman (or general secretary) prepares the political dossier in a communist party. Dahal had prepared his dossier during his overnight stay at a resort in Dhulikhel in the weekend.

Maoist spokesperson Dinanath Sharma confirmed that the two vice chairmen had filed their political dossiers at the party secretariat, but refused to call them 'separate dossiers'.

"They are not separate proposals, but supplementary proposals," said Sharma. "Leaders can put different views at the central working committee verbally or in writing. This time they have put their views in writing."

In his political document, Dahal has stated the party would not quit the ongoing prime ministerial race even if the PM election goes up to tenth round, sources said. He has attributed the failure to elect new PM to the flaws of parliamentary system.

Dahal, who is in the prime ministerial race, has also blamed Indian 'intervention', parliamentary parties and the sections within the Maoist party for the failure to form a Maoist-led government.

Similarly, vice chairman Baidya in his draft has emphasised the need to consolidate the republican system while preparing for a 'people's revolt'.

However, Dr Bhattarai has come up with a softer tone, saying the party should move ahead by forging consensus with the parties in order to defend the political achievements made so far.

Media overlooks developing world's struggles

Sometimes it seems as though the Chinese media is only interested in power and money.

It pays a great deal of attention to news events that take place in developed countries, while far more less stories from developing countries can be found in Chinese newspapers, magazines and TV programs.

Even though some Chinese newspapers occasionally report incidents that take place in developing countries, such reports are usually taken off the wire services or from media reports from developed countries.

Few Chinese newspapers have their own correspondents elsewhere in the developing world.

This has had a long-term impact on the Chinese public.

Surrounded by these kind of media reports, many people are quite familiar with the conditions and situations in the US, the UK, Japan and other developed countries, but know little about the developing world.

In such circumstance, many "third

He Hui

world" countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America appear far more foreign than the developed world to more and more Chinese, even if they're China's neighbors.

Take Pakistan, a neighbor and a friend of China. In the Chinese media, reports on Pakistan are severely inadequate.

Over the past few days, there were only a few reports on the flood that recently hit Pakistan, and these reports just touched the topic superficially.

Although the Chinese government provided Pakistan with a lot of aid for disaster relief immediately after the floods began, the Chinese media only covered the basics of the issue rather than investigating in depth or sending reporters to cover the tragic scenes directly.

According to the statistics released by Pakistani authorities last week, the floods in Pakistan had produced a colossal group of 20 million victims. At the current stage,

cholera and other water-borne diseases could spread in the country and put tens of millions of lives at risk.

The disaster-stricken country deserves more attention from the Chinese media.

In modern society, it is the media that creates the image of the world in people's mind.

A great number of less developed countries like Pakistan should be included in the image of the world the media projects.

In fact, many people do know "Pakistan" as a country's name, but they have only a vague impression of the country's geology, products, people's livelihood, politics and economy.

Many Chinese are quite familiar with New York, Las Vegas and Miami. However, not many of them can name Pakistan's capital city, and have no idea where places like Sindh and Balochistan are.

Such unfamiliarity is related to the strength of media, its limited resources and the interest of the

public. But indisputably, such unfamiliarity is also related to the habits of the Chinese media, which to a certain degree reflects the Chinese media's indifference to other developing countries.

Civilization is not a dish wrapped up in film and stuck in the fridge. If Chinese civilization worships a few powerful countries, but cares nothing about the poor and the weak, it will inevitably fragment in the end.

The media should not easily treat the people in those poor and weak countries as having nothing to do with our lives.

China is a responsible power, and its media should also possess tolerance and strength.

If the Chinese media can report more comprehensively and profoundly on disasters in the developing world in the future, the Chinese public will donate more to relief efforts.

Along with the wider reach of Chinese media, China will also help the world pay more attention to developing countries.

Global Times

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नेपाल टेलिकम

Saving Nepal's Tigers

Recently, Hollywood's heartthrob Leonardo DiCaprio visited Nepal on a secret mission to save its tigers. Capri joined hands with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Nepal visiting other Asian countries as well to launch an ambitious global campaign to double the world's tiger population. Capri, who is devoted to international conservation efforts,

technical assistance and financial support to complete the tiger population monitoring.

According to WWF Nepal, in 2010 Nepal's tiger numbers remain constant, though independent environmental conservationists and tiger watchers believe, it is at high risk of further

Surya B. Prasai

that movement is very important because sometimes it takes hours for a tiger to move one inch! I remember nearly two decades ago visiting the lush jungles of Chitwan at the invitation of the late Nepali adventure tourism cum explorer Jim Edwards who then chaired the Tiger Mountain group of adventure companies. As the only Nepali media walla invited, I joined a group of prominent Nepali tourism hobnobs and international celebrities, including the most talked about Hollywood celebrity then, Stephanie Powers, who used to star in Dallas and had come to participate in the first World Elephant Polo championship.

One dusk, we were all escorted on the back of open Land Rover 4X4s to a huge machaan platform overhanging another large tree about thirty meters away where an old female buffalo was loosely festooned to a tree, obviously the soon to be feast for a stray and hungry man eater which was rumored to be traversing that area for two weeks by local villagers. It took quite some time for that old tiger to join the stage and attack its prey, probably knowledgeable about our presence! But I remember it was swift thump to the neck that laid the poor buffalo to rest. It is no longer possible for the tourist to view this in the Chitwan jungles, or anywhere else, where a tourist can only capture a tiger occasionally from the back of an elephant or machaan with a camera.

In fact, I remember during that trip asking Karna Shakya, Nepal's most talked about environmentalist and adventure tourism promoter on what needed to be done. Shakya is also the owner of the famed Kathmandu Guest House and a number of other tourism properties in Nepal and was actively involved in Chitwan conservation efforts for a major part of his life. We were all riding the back of a magnificent elephant on a sun-filled but pleasant afternoon, as Shakya gave us a lecture on Chitwan's rare bio-diversity, its endangered flora and fauna. Shakya mentioned most importantly in preserving Nepal's tigers, one had to consider redistributing the population to unexplored surrounding habitats. We did spot three tigers that afternoon, the thrill of our lives! However, in 2010, land is getting scarce in Nepal's Churia hills, and this is a major challenge for WWF Nepal to find alternate tiger grounds amidst competing land claim demands of local indigenous populations. In 2010, the prime tiger habitat in Nepal consists of 1,261 concentric square kilometers where the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation of the Government of Nepal, WWF-Nepal and the National Trust for Nature Conservation focus their attention in providing technical assistance and

financial support to continue the tiger population monitoring.

It is also notable on Tiger Day, the Governments of Nepal and India joined hands to conserve biodiversity, including tigers, and strengthen ecological security in the trans-boundary region.

Anil Manandhar, Country Representative, WWF Nepal states, "WWF welcomes the steps taken by the Government of Nepal towards protecting tigers in the form of working with its neighbors in fostering trans-boundary co-operation as well as raising awareness nationally and globally on this issue. As Nepal celebrates Tiger Day today, we can see everyone from the youth to the private sector actively engaged in efforts to raise awareness on tiger conservation. This gives us hope that protecting this magnificent species is very much possible in Nepal." Nepal and India have also agreed to a joint monitoring mechanism for interaction and intelligence sharing and exploring funding opportunities particularly in the Terai Arc region that encompasses their open territories.

These were an outcome of the 4th Nepal-India Consultative Meeting on Trans-boundary Biodiversity Conservation. The Government of Nepal signed a similar MoU with the Government of China in June 2010. These two agreements must be considered a transnational milestone in biodiversity and trans-boundary cooperation in saving the tiger between Nepal, India and China. It will help check trade in illegal wildlife parts particularly of endangered species such as the tiger.

The Nepal Government is currently concentrating its tourism promotion efforts on making NTY 2011 a total success, which is actually a run off to the highly successful Visit Nepal 1998 campaign, a brainchild of Nepali tourism visionaries and eco-conservationists such as P.P. Prasai, Prabhakar Shamsheer Rana, Karna Shakya, and Dr. Harka Gurung. Here is a suggestion to the Nepal Government: how about blending in the NTY 2011 with a Tiger Conservation Promotion Year 2011 exclusively for Nepal? It would be equally worthwhile to set up a Nepal Tiger Conservation Fund as well, which could help the Nepal Government continue on with its encouraging efforts in saving the Royal Bengal tiger for the future generation. The Bengal tiger remains the most endangered species due to an onslaught of illegal wildlife trade, habitat loss and degradation, and human-tiger conflict. Nepal is important in the overall international tiger conservation endeavor since the Eastern Himalayas stretch across key tiger protected areas in north and northeast India, the Terai belt of Nepal and parts of Bhutan.



plans to raise nearly \$ 20 million towards doubling the world tiger population to around 6,400 in 2022.

While in Nepal, Capri got the opportunity to interact first hand with tiger conservation experts, participate in tiger patrols, meet Nepali park guards and interact with local villagers, besides, watch the magnificent animal in the Nepal Terai's beautiful forest surrounding. Capri considered his trip to Nepal one of the most memorable experiences in his life further boosting his inner resolve to do something more to save the world's tiger population.

This is indeed a good year to talk and elaborate on the Tiger. After all, it is the Year of the Tiger in the Chinese lunar calendar. On July 29, the World Wildlife Fund along with the private sector, government and NGO partners in Nepal, organized the First Tiger Day awareness activities in the major malls and shopping centers in Kathmandu, where hundreds of school children spent afternoon hours talking to visitors, shopkeepers and the general public on the need to conserve Nepal's tiger population. Many of the kids donned tiger masks. Supporting the campaign activity were high ranking Nepali officials, conservationists, educators, media and the general public. The first Tiger Day was a run-up to the Tiger Conservation Summit to be held in St. Petersburg, Russia in September 2010. WWF has been pioneering tiger monitoring activities since the early sixties besides providing Nepal with

depletion given lack of proper local community safeguards to keep human encroachment away. Nepal had 121 adult tigers in July 2010 compared to the same period in 2009. Nepal has four major tiger conservation areas: Parsa, Chitwan, Bardiya and Shuklaphanta. According to WWF Nepal, Parsa Wildlife Reserve has an estimated four tigers, Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve is likely to have eight tigers and Bardia National Park has 18. Nepal's Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation states Chitwan national park is still a stronghold for tigers with an estimated population of 91, thanks to intensive anti-poaching operations supported by WWF in recent years.

If one visits the Keshar Mahal library in the Ministry of Education and Culture of Nepal, one can glimpse through old time Rana photo albums where various European princes and Nepali Rana Prime Ministers are seen proudly posing with hunted tigers under their feet. A tiger catch was considered auspicious, increasing one's longevity in life, and a sacrifice to an important Hindu deity, according to the prevailing myth.

Capturing tigers is a different ball game now. When the WWF went to survey Nepal's tiger population between December 2009 to March 2010, they were armed with digital cameras equipped with infrared sensors that take a picture whenever a movement is sensed in the forest. Now

No wonder, the works of many small projects are being completely hampered.

The development related ministries are reluctant to call tender for their projects fearing that the new government may not accord priority to such development works.

If the full budget is not presented as soon as possible, development projects designed for the current fiscal year will be financially crippled, thus dogging the growth prospects of the country's economy.

On the other side of picture, the

business confidence has hit rock bottom due to lack of clear rules and regulations.

In such a situation, the private sector's contribution to the Nepali economy will also shrink.

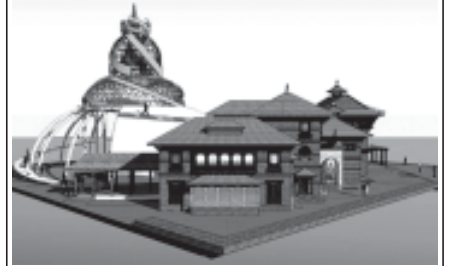
The impact of the delayed budget presentation has already been visible with the slow growth of revenue collection. The revenue grew by a just 12 percent during the first month of the current fiscal year compared to 52 percent growth recorded in the same period last fiscal year.

The political insensitivity is taking its toll on the economic arena more severely.

~ News ~

Nepal Pavilion among top ten

There is a high chance that the Nepal National Pavilion at the Global Exhibition 2010 being held in Shanghai, China, will be included among the top ten best pavilions, reports Rastriya Samachar Samiti (RSS).



This premise has been bolstered by the popularity the Nepal National Pavilion has been gaining at the exposition. The exhibition showcases the economic, social and technical progress of 189 countries, including Nepal and over 50 multinational companies that are participating in the event.

The Nepal Pavilion which has a unique feature has attracted the attention of the world community and generated a lot of interest among the visitors there.

"The possibility of the Nepal Pavilion coming among the top ten best pavilions has increased day by day going by the popularity it has been gaining among the visitors," Amrit Shakya, director of the Implementing Experts' Group, said. The Group constructed the Nepal Pavilion at the World Exhibition in Shanghai with the approval and cooperation of the Government of Nepal.

Some five million visitors have observed the Nepal Pavilion at the exhibition that kicked off in April. Ten million more people are expected to visit the Nepal Pavilion. The exhibition will conclude in October-end. Shakya said a team of experts from five countries including the U.S., Japan, China and Great Britain has been constituted for selecting the best ten pavilions and the team has liked the Nepalese pavilion.

The Nepal Mandap or pavilion with the theme- 'Beautiful City: Beautiful Life' depicts the ancient civilization and the urban development of the Kathmandu Valley said to have been established some 2,000 years back by the Chinese seer Manjushree.

The pavilion entitled 'The Story of Kathmandu' was designed and constructed by some 400 skilled craftsmen from Nepal. The building materials were designed by the craftsmen in Nepal and it took them four years to complete the work.

The building materials comprising artistic woodcraft, metal craft, stone sculptures and traditional bricks and tiles for the Nepal Pavilion weighing more than 500 tonnes were taken to Shanghai from Kathmandu. The pavilion was constructed in over a year's time. The Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies said the Nepal Mandap is the most attractive and largest of such pavilions so far constructed by Nepal in the international events.

WFP to provide \$ 35m to Nepal

The government has provided grant worth \$35.8 million to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) through the Ministry of Local Development (MoLD), to continue to combat hunger and malnutrition in Nepal.

The grant is gravitated towards assisting rural livelihoods for some 490,000 Nepalis living in districts to tide over a food deficit.

The funds will be utilised for food and cash assistance, micronutrient supplementation for children under five, and community assets projects that improve local crop production and income in 26 moderately to severely food insecure districts, it is said.

The funds will be used to improve the immediate and long-term food security and nutrition of nearly half a million people, Dominique Hyde, Officer in Charge of WFP Nepal was quoted as saying.

This is said to be one of the largest contributions by the Nepal government to a development partner.

Revenue collection up 12 pc

The government has collected over Rs. 13.16 billion revenue in the first month of the current fiscal year 2067/68 while it was Rs. 11.74 billion during the same period in the last fiscal year.

The revenue has increased by almost Rs. 1.46 billion which is 12 percent increment compared to last fiscal year.

According to preliminary figures of Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), the government has collected some Rs. 5.77 billion, Rs. 2.55 billion, 1.59 billion, and 2.21 billion from Value Added Tax, custom duty, excise duty, and income tax respectively.

It has also collected some Rs. 1.4 billion from land registration fee, vehicle tax and from non-tax revenue.

According to Finance Ministry, the revenue collection has been seen satisfactory in the first month of the current fiscal year compared to the same month of last six years. The revenue collection has also been increasing more than expected since last four years, it added.

The Ministry said that the main reason behind increment in revenue collection is because of improvement in the revenue collection offices and control in the leakage of revenue through the deployment of Armed Police Force.

Political ...

within three months as additional salary of one month is also given as Dashain bonus. It means, salaries for four months are all given within the mid-October.

It needs at least one month for the preparation of new budget for a new Finance Minister. That means, budget should come at least within mid-September to prevent any unloward situation in the absence of the full budget.

Development projects are also facing difficulties owing to the absence

of the full budget. Big projects, which are under construction, might face shortage of additional amount if the allocated budget is spent in the early days. The Mid-Hill highway may reel under such situation.

On the other hand, small projects have already been facing problems to call tender as they cannot do so for a small portion of the project with the one-third budget available for expenditure as per the advance budget. It is not practical to award a single small road project to different contractors because of low availability of the budget.



San Miguel BEER

International :

Afghanistan's turbulent history

Observer

Afghanistan's descent into conflict and instability in recent times began with the overthrow of the king in 1973.

The frail and ailing former monarch of Afghanistan was deposed by his cousin, Daoud, during a visit to Europe in 1973.

He returned to his former country in 2002 after 30 years in exile.

As a Durran Pashtun he has much support in the southern belt of Afghanistan and is still very popular.

Many Afghans are said to be dismayed that there has been no role for him in post-Taleban Afghanistan.

The Taleban advocated the return of the king during their early days in 1994, but later reversed this position.

Daoud deposed Afghanistan a republic, with himself as president.

He relied on the support of leftists to consolidate his power, and crushed an emerging Islamist movement.

But towards the end of his rule, he attempted to purge his leftist supporters from positions of power and sought to reduce Soviet influence in Afghanistan.

It was this that helped lead to a defining moment in Afghanistan's recent history.

President Daoud and his family were shot dead, and Nur Mohammad Taraki took power as head of the country's first Marxist government, bringing to an end more than 200 years of almost uninterrupted rule by the family of Zahir Shah and Mohammad Daoud.

But the Afghan communist party, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan - or PDPA - was divided, and splits emerged.

Hafizullah Amin, who had become prime minister, was opposed to Taraki, and in October 1979 Taraki was secretly executed, with Amin becoming the new president.

Amin, known for his independent and nationalist inclinations, was also ruthless.

He has been accused of assassinating thousands of Afghans.

He was looked upon as a threat to the prospect of an amenable communist government bordering Soviet Central Asia.

In a swift chain of events in December 1979, Amin was assassinated and the Soviet Red Army swept into Afghanistan.

Babrak Karmal was flown from Czechoslovakia, where he was Afghan ambassador, to take over as the new president.

Groups of Afghan Islamic fighters - or mujahideen - fought endlessly to try to force a Soviet retreat, with much covert support from the United States.

After nearly 10 years, the Soviet Union eventually withdrew, leaving in power President Najibullah, who had

replaced Karmal as leader.

He hung on for after USSR departure, but fell in 1992 as the United Nations was trying to arrange a peaceful transfer of power.

The mujahideen swept victoriously into Kabul. After a short interim measure, Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani became president of the new Islamic Republic.

But their victory was soon soured by infighting, as the mujahideen factions failed to agree on how to share their new power.

But when the mujahideen look over, it was the turn of urban areas to suffer from the conflict.

This was especially true of the capital, Kabul, about half of which was literally flattened. Tens of thousands of civilians lost their lives, and the country slid more and more into a state of anarchy.

It was towards the end of 1994 that the Taleban emerged in the southern city of Kandahar, heart of Afghanistan's Pashtun homeland.

Their initial appeal - and success - was based on a call for the removal of the mujahideen groups.

At first they succeeded in gaining control of Pashtun areas with little fighting. Mujahideen commanders defected to their ranks.

But as their control spread to other, especially non-Pashtun, areas, the fighting intensified.

The Taleban went on to control about 90% of the country.

It was in 1996, as they captured Kabul, that much of the outside world first reacted in dismay to the Taleban's extreme Islamic policies, especially towards the place of women in society. As Taleban control spread, the Western world intensified pressure on the Taleban to ban the growth of opium poppies, Afghanistan being the source of most opiates reaching Europe.

The United States, in particular, also began their pressure on the Taleban to give up the militant Saudi, Osama Bin Laden, whom the Taleban described as their "guest" in Afghanistan.

Washington blamed Bin Laden for masterminding the suicide attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington on 11 September 2001.

The following month the US and its allies began air attacks on Afghanistan which allowed the Taleban's Afghan opponents to sweep them from power.

On 5 December 2001 Afghan groups agreed a deal in Bonn for an interim government, at the head of which Pashtun royalist Hamid Karzai was then sworn in.

The Bonn conference, held under UN auspices, forged a political blueprint leading to elections scheduled for summer 2004.

In June 2002 a loya jirga, or grand council, elected Mr Karzai as interim head of state. A second loya jirga in January 2004 adopted a new constitution.

Since coming to power the US-backed Mr Karzai has survived at least one assassination attempt, in 2002.

Mr Karzai has been able to exert little control beyond the capital.

Turf wars between local commanders have been a feature of the post-Taleban period.

And the Taleban themselves have re-emerged as a fighting force, worsening the security situation in the east and south-east.

A top Nato commander has described Western efforts in Afghanistan as "disjointed" and warned that the battle cannot be won by military means alone.

Speaking in London, Gen John Craddock also said the political will in the fight against the Taleban was wavering.

The US general suggested that Nato allies were still failing to supply enough troops to fight the insurgency.

He said security must be provided to enable the Afghan government and its allies to deliver good governance.

General Craddock has added his voice to a growing chorus of frustration over Afghanistan among Western military commanders.

Military efforts were not being backed up on the civilian side.

"The conflict in Afghanistan cannot be won by military means alone. Nato forces are just one member of a greater team.

The military must provide a safe and secure environment... must come together as part of a truly comprehensive approach. The current effort remains disjointed in time and space.

He warned that the Afghan authorities must also do much more to tackle corruption and provide an effective police and justice system, and good governance - otherwise, any military victory would be in vain.

Hamid Karzai, who was sworn in as Afghanistan's first elected president in December 2004, is a moderate Pashtun leader from Kandahar.

A charismatic and stylish member of the influential Popolzai tribe, he has built up a considerable international profile, especially in the West and is backed by the United States.

But some at home view his closeness to America with suspicion and distrust.

He initially supported the Taleban but handed against them after the assassination of his father, a former politician, for which the Taleban was widely blamed.

His main task has been trying to bring stability to the country. His other challenges include fighting drug-trafficking, securing international aid, building up Afghanistan's own security forces and reconciling Afghanistan's commitment to international law with conservative interpretations of Islamic Sharia law.

More than 9,000 soldiers drawn from more than 35 countries make up the Nato-led International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) which is in charge of security, in Kabul and some provinces.

That number increased to 16,000 during 2006, with extra troops being deployed to the south to take the pressure off US forces.

Around 19,000 US-led coalition forces are engaged in fighting Taleban and al-Qaeda militants in southern and eastern Afghanistan, but the number is expected to decrease to around 16,000 as Nato forces deploy.

Coalition forces operate out of bases in Bagram, Kandahar, Gardez and a new base in Paktika province close to the Pakistan border.

Supporters and remnants of Afghanistan's former rulers are still active in many southern and eastern parts of the country.

It was unrealistic to expect that multinational forces would be able to wipe out armed bands of insurgents in the country.

Many believe certain legitimate elements of the Taleban represent the positions of the Afghan people and so should be a part of the country's future. Nato forces are not going to win this war.

"It's about reducing it to a manageable level of insurgency that's not a strategic threat and can be managed by the Afghan army."

If the Taleban were prepared to sit on the other side of the table and talk about a political settlement, then that's precisely the sort of progress that concludes insurgencies like this.

That shouldn't make people uncomfortable.

Although the group has suffered high casualties itself as a result of concerted offensives by foreign and Afghan troops, the attacks it has carried out have increased markedly in number and become ever more deadly.

Most of the violence has been in the south and east, but the Taleban, supported by al-Qaeda, has mounted attacks in provinces across the country.

The Taleban were overwhelmingly Pashtun, the ethnic group that forms the majority of Afghanistan's diverse population and also inhabits the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Balochistan in neighbouring Pakistan.

Even now, the resurgent Taleban draw considerable sympathy from fellow Pashtuns in Pakistan.

The events of 11 September 2001 signalled the beginning of the end for the Taleban's control of Afghanistan.

The US reiterated its demand that the Taleban hand over Bin Laden to face trial for masterminding the attacks on US soil.

But again, the Taleban defended Bin Laden and refused to expel him.

On October 7, 2001, a US-led coalition intervened militarily in Afghanistan and by the first week of December the Taleban regime had collapsed.

The Taleban is planning for a 20-year war in Afghanistan - and the US and its allies are now having to develop policies to match.

The problem is that the policies carried out up till now - a combination of military operations and civilian development in the hope that in due course the Afghan government will be strong enough on its own - have led to a deteriorating security situation.

Iraq: The legacy of seven years of war

The U.S. occupation of Iraq continues and the reduction of U.S. troops in Iraq can at best be called only a rebranded occupation. While the number of U.S. troops in Iraq will be reduced from a high of 165,000, there will still be 50,000 troops left behind, some 75,000 contractors, five huge "enduring bases" and an Embassy the size of Vatican City.

The U.S. military's overthrow of the brutal dictatorship of Saddam Hussein did not lead to a better life for Iraqis - just the opposite. It resulted in the further destruction of basic infrastructure - electricity, water, sewage - that continues to this day. The U.S. dropped more tons of bombs on Iraq than in all of WWII, destroying Iraq's electrical, water and sewage systems. Iraq's health care and higher education systems, once the best in the entire region, have been decimated. The U.S. war on Iraq unleashed a wave of violence that has left over one million Iraqis dead and four million displaced, as well as ethnic rivalries that continue to plague the nation. There were seriously wounded millions of Iraqis, creating a lifetime of suffering and economic hardship for them, their communities and the entire nation as it struggles to rebuild. Life expectancy for Iraqis fell from 71 years in 1996 to 67 years in 2007 due to the war and destruction of the healthcare system. The U.S. use of weapons such as depleted uranium and white phosphorus has taken a severe toll, with the cancer rate in Fallujah, for example, now worse than that of Hiroshima.

The majority of the refugees and internally displaced persons created by the US intervention have been abandoned. Of the nearly 4 million refugees, many are now living in increasingly desperate circumstances in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and around the world. As undocumented refugees, most are not allowed to work and are forced to take extremely low paying, illegal jobs (\$3/day) or rely on the UN and charity to survive. The United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) has documented a spike in the sex trafficking of Iraqi women.

Iraq still does not have a functioning government. Many months after the March 7 elections, there is still a political vacuum and violence that is killing roughly 300 civilians a month. There is no functioning democracy in place and little sign there will be one in the near future.

The Iraq War has left a terrible toll on the U.S. troops. More than one million American service members have deployed in the Iraq War effort. Over 4,400 U.S. troops have been killed and tens of thousands severely injured. More than one in four U.S. troops have come home from the Iraq war with health problems that require medical or mental health treatment. PTSD rates in the military have skyrocketed. In 2009, a record number of 245 soldiers committed suicide.

The war has drained US treasury. As of August 2010, U.S. taxpayers have spent over \$750 billion on the Iraq War effort. Counting the cost of lifetime care of wounded vets and the interest payments on the money US borrowed to pay for this war, the real cost will be in the trillions. This misappropriation of funds has contributed to the economic crises we are experiencing, including the lack of funds for our schools, healthcare, infrastructure and investments in clean, green jobs.

The U.S. officials who got US into this disastrous war on the basis of lies have not been held accountable. Not George Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, Karl Rove, Donald Rumsfeld. No one. Neither have the Bush administration lawyers who authorized torture, including Jay Bybee and John Yoo. The "think tanks," journalists and pundits who perpetuated the lies have not been fired - most are today cheerleading for the war in Afghanistan.

The war has led to the pillaging of Iraqi resources. The U.S. Department of Defense has been unable to account for \$8.7 billion of Iraqi oil and gas money meant for humanitarian needs and reconstruction after the 2003 invasion. The invasion has also led to the dismantling of Iraqi government control over the nation's oil. In 2001, Vice President Dick Cheney's energy task force, which included executives of America's largest energy companies, recommended opening up areas of their energy sectors to foreign investment. The resulting Iraq Oil Law has led to the global grab for Iraq's resources.

The US policy of torture, extraordinary rendition, indefinite detention, violent and deadly raids on civilian homes, gunning down innocent civilians in the streets and absence of habeas corpus has fueled the fires of hatred and extremism toward Americans. The very presence of American troops in Iraq and other Muslim nations has become a recruiting tool.

Withdrawal of all U.S. troops and military contractors from Iraq and the closing of all U.S. bases:

Repairs to help the Iraqis repair their basic infrastructure and increased funds for the millions of internally and externally displaced Iraqis:

The lessons of this disastrous intervention should also be an impetus for Congress and the administration to end the war in Afghanistan.

Australian election delivers first hung parliament in 70 years

Saturday's Australian federal election has produced a hung parliament, the first since 1940, triggering an enormous crisis for the Australian ruling elite and presaging heightened political and social instability.

Such was the extent of popular disaffection with the entire electoral process that neither the Labor Party nor the Liberal-National coalition was able to win a majority. Instead, the next government will be determined by a series of backroom manoeuvres and horse-trading by the leaders of both major parties with a handful of independent parliamentarians.

With around 80 percent of the vote counted, Labor appears to have secured 70 seats and the coalition 72 - both short of the 76 majority. The Greens won their first lower-House of Representatives seat in a federal election, independent candidates won 3, and another 4 seats remain undecided. One of the undecided seats may go to independent Andrew Wilkie, a former intelligence analyst who resigned in March 2003 over the weapons of mass destruction lies in the lead up to the Iraq war, while the other three will go to either Labor or Liberal, depending on the remaining, as yet uncounted, votes.

The result stands as a decisive repudiation of the Labor government. Its predecessor, the conservative government of John Howard, was thrown out of office in 2007 because of widespread popular anger over the Iraq war, WorkChoices industrial legislation, attacks on democratic rights, the police-military Northern Territory intervention against Aboriginal communities, the brutal treatment of refugees, climate change, and heightened household debt and economic insecurity. But on every issue, Kevin Rudd and his successor as prime minister, Julia Gillard effected a seamless transition, breaking all their election undertakings to advance a more progressive social and economic agenda. The Rudd and Gillard governments proved just as committed as their Liberal counterparts to the interests of big business and finance capital.

The June 23-24 coup against Kevin Rudd, however, marked a watershed in the deepening hostility to Labor. The factional apparatus and trade union bureaucrats who installed Julia Gillard badly miscalculated the extent of the anger generated throughout the population by their anti-democratic actions. Despite the Labor Party's best efforts to dismiss it, the issue shadowed Gillard's entire campaign, only rising in prominence as election day drew near.

For the ruling elite, both scenarios are equally unwelcome - which is why there is growing speculation that another federal election may soon be triggered in an effort to break the parliamentary deadlock.

Afghan villagers protest night raid



U.S. Flag-Burning. Villagers have staged similar protests in recent months, including one in Nangarhar in May (Reuters)

Hundreds of villagers have blocked a highway in eastern Afghanistan to protest a night raid by Nato and Afghan soldiers that left two people dead.

A statement from the Nato-led International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) said two "Taliban insurgents" were killed in the raid in a district near Jalalabad.

But villagers said the men were civilians; their protest temporarily

closed the highway connecting Jalalabad to Pakistan on Wednesday.

Many of the protesters chanted anti-American slogans, like "down with Obama" and "down with foreign forces," during the hours-long protest.

Isaf said the men had been involved in roadside bomb attacks, and that Nato and Afghan soldiers were fired upon from "multiple directions" as they entered the compound.

The protest mirrored a similar demonstration last week, when Nato and Afghan forces raided a house in Wardak province. Neighbours claimed the night raid killed three civilians, and hundreds of them took to the streets to protest the following afternoon.

Afghans have staged a number of similar protests in recent months: Villagers near Jalalabad burned tyres in May after a night raid killed at least nine people, and hundreds protested after Nato troops opened fire on a bus in Kandahar in April.

General Stanley McChrystal, the former commander of Nato forces in Afghanistan, issued a classified directive earlier this year calling on troops to limit their use of night raids, which routinely result in civilian casualties.

A United Nations report released last week found that raids by Nato troops killed 41 civilians in the first half of 2010.

Night raids have been a particular point of friction between Nato and Hamid Karzai, the Afghan president. Karzai demanded an end to all night raids in February.

How safe is air safety?



WM correspondent

The country has once again faced a dreadful air disaster. A German built Dornier aircraft, operated by Agni Air, crashed at Shikharpur of Makawanpur district on Tuesday killing all 14 aboard. The aircraft carrying eight Nepali including three crew members, four American tourists, one British and Japanese each lost their lives while the plane was returning back to Kathmandu after it could not land in Lukla, Solukhumbu due to bad weather condition.

However, it will not be logical to attribute only the adverse climate to this fateful incident.

The probability of technical failure for the onset of this disaster is also equally high.

Laxman Prakash Bikram Shah, the captain of the ill-fated Dornier, had reported to Air Traffic Controller (ATC) that the plane was facing technical glitches while he was flying.

A five-member committee has been formed under the aeronautics expert Kumar Prasad Upadhyaya Chalise to launch probe into the incident.

General Manager of Nepal Airlines Corporation has told a television channel that the incident could have been avoided if the Agni Airline had avoided the flight by



The impact crater of the Agni Air Dornier 9N-AHE crash at Shikharpur VDC of Makwanpur district, Tuesday, 24 Aug. 2010.

floats a number of recommendations for the safety but they are not followed.

Human error has been termed as the prime reason behind the frequent occurrence of air crash.

Some of the air accidents and their reasons are as follow:

On June 29, 2008, the Fishtail Air's As 350B helicopter met an accident in Annapurna Base Camp.

The probable reasons are as follows:

1. Insufficient high altitude flight experience of the PIC on type after a long gap.
2. Overlook in the laid down criteria of the renewal of license by CAAN.
3. Optimum weight calculation in IGE configuration with no power margin available for take off from Annapurna Base Camp.
4. Reluctant to use maximum power available where the helipad

complete the mission.

6. PIC not having adequate rest to undertake high altitude flight which demands a high state of physical fitness.

7. Standard OAT correction was not considered for take off weight calculation.

On March 3, 2008, Mi-8 MTV-1 Helicopter RA 27019 carrying United Nations Mission in Nepal met an accident in Ramechhap killing 10 persons aboard. The probe committee found the following causes of accident:

Violation of regulation:
The flight crew conducted flight

emergency situation inside CB clouds:

Auto pilot was on all the time during severe turbulence and maximum pitch and bank angle position of the helicopter. After the engine shut down PIC was unable to bring the helicopter safely to the ground in autorotation

On April 20, 2008, Twin Otter 9N-AFA of Yeti-Airlines met an accident. The reasons of the accident according to the captain was that the radio Navigation equipment were still inoperable at the time of landing.

On April 19, 2008, The 9N-ADL Mi-8 AMT helicopter of Shree Airline



in a helicopter certified for VFR only into IMC and encountered CB clouds. Severe turbulence inside CB and absence of visual cues led to spatial disorientation in the crew members leading to loss of control of the helicopter;

Lack of experience and familiarization with local terrain and weather:

the flight crew decided to climb to 4000m AMSL toward an area of thunderstorms to avoid terrain and weather without acquiring a weather forecast and without route planning;

Poor handling of flight control system by the flight crew in an

met accident in Makalu Base Camp. It was a non-fatal accident.

According to probe committee, the contributing factors were as follows:

- Risky landing attempt
- Illusion in height judgment might have occurred due to typical surrounding terrain condition.
- Hypoxia may be operative due to the use of inappropriate aviator's mask.
- Poor crew co-ordination due to language problem.
- Cargo over-weight could not be ruled-out, as the load was not verified after the incident.

If the airline and pilots care about at least on above reasons of plane crashes, many future accidents could be avoided.

5. Time constraint due to marginal weather condition to demands OGE power calculation to check sink rate during take off.

China plane crash death toll to 42

The government of Yichun, a city in northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, has corrected Tuesday night's plane crash death toll to 42, saying one dead body that was torn apart in the disaster was formerly counted as two.

A local publicity official said earlier on that 43 dead bodies were retrieved.

According to the death roll released by the city government, the dead were aged roughly from 12 to 55, calculated from their birth dates indicated in their ID numbers. Among them, however, was a Chinese holding a passport and three crew members whose ID numbers were not available.

Ninety-one passengers, including five children, and five crew members boarded the plane, sources with the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) said.

Officials in Yichun confirmed a group of officials from Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security were also on board, including a vice minister and six division chiefs. Most of them survived with injuries, and the vice minister Sun Baoshu was in critical condition.

The jet broke into two pieces before it smashed into the ground and exploded. Most of the casualties

were found in the back of the cabin. The cause of the crash is being investigated.

Henan Airlines launched the

previously known as Kunpeng Airlines and was only renamed Henan Airlines last year. It is run by the Shenzhen-based Shenzhen Airlines.

In November 2004, a CRJ-200 jet crashed shortly after take-off into a park in Baotou City, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, killing all 53



taking note of the weather conditions in Kathmandu and elsewhere.

Nepal has witnessed five big air disasters including the latest one over the last five years that killed 75 people.

A total of 18 major air accidents have taken place for the last 41 years.

This indicates at the urgency of prioritizing the air safety issue.

The numerous probe committees formed after the crashes have



Rescuers search for survivors at the site where a passenger plane crashed in Yichun City, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, early on Aug. 25, 2010. A passenger plane with 96 people on board crashed late Tuesday night the Yichun airport. At least 42 people were confirmed dead while the remaining 54 have been rescued and sent to hospitals.

Yichun-Harbin service this year and operated flights by ERJ-190 jets three times a week.

The carrier, based in a central China province with the same name,

China had kept a remarkable air travel safety record of about 2,100 days -- or 69 months -- without accidents before Tuesday's tragedy, statistics from the CAAC show.

people on board and two others on the ground.

The jet was owned by China Eastern Airlines, one of China's top three carriers.