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# Human Security in a New World Disorder

ISSUES FOR DEBATE:  
**Democracy & the  
Crisis of Change**

# Human Security in a New World Disorder

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# Introduction

HARSH SETHI

ANY HOPE that the new century would help dispel the despair of the previous has yet to be realised, if not severely impaired. If anything, the euphoria that had greeted the start of the new millennium, in particular the crafting of a new world order based on equity, justice, participation, tolerance, diversity, values espoused in the wake of numerous conflicts – two world wars, revolutionary and decolonisation upheavals, the wide variety of grassroots social movements, and what have you – seem now under stress. No longer are we sure, despite the disappearance of the cold war and the demilitarisation and denuclearisation exercises conducted by once warring military blocs, that the world we inhabit is a safer or a better place to live in.

Nothing exemplifies the current era more than the processes unleashed since 9/11, a date firmly etched in global consciousness. Debates about the significance of the fateful day continue, fast and furious – whether the use of suicide aircraft against the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon implied a blow against the hegemonic assertions of the sole superpower, a strike-back by the oppressed – there is little doubt that the American response to a first strike on their homeland has created an extremely dangerous situation. The rapidity with which US policy-makers identified an enemy in the Al-Qaeda, hitched it onto a militant and jihadi tendency within global Islam, inaugurated an era of a ‘war of civilisations’ and launched a ‘global war against terror,’ both unilateral and in complete defiance of all hitherto accepted global norms, can only be described as staggering.

Not only was Afghanistan ruthlessly bombed – the plea being that the then ruling Taliban regime provided a safe haven to global terrorists, mainly Islamic – efforts are now underway to launch a fullscale attack on Iraq. Why, George Bush has even sanctioned an executive strike against Saddam Hussain, this notwithstanding that such acts are expressly forbidden under US law and, of course, are violative of international law governing war between states. If perchance this does happen, the catastrophic outcomes, and not only for the Iraqi regime and people, can only be guessed.

The growing clouds of war are only one part of the disturbing scenario – albeit a crucial one. For not only do we now have an enhanced US military presence in parts of the world where so far they had been kept out – South Asia is a good example – or had only a decade earlier been forced out – the Philippines – the pretext of fighting terrorism has engendered major shifts in military and diplomatic policies of other smaller nation states. The Indo-Pak conflict has escalated in recent months with close to a million men facing each other across a tense border. Israel has been emboldened to harden its stance against a beleaguered Palestinian Authority. In fact, everywhere, regimes have strengthened their internal security apparatus – passing new laws against terrorist activities, cracking down against all forms of dissent and so on. Simultaneously, we see a tendency towards nationalist homogenisation and majoritarianism, if not a whipping up of xenophobic sentiments, pushing back the moves towards pluralist accommodation. The ruling maxim is both that if you are not with us you are against us (with ‘them’) and that might is right.

Of course, each of these moves are being resisted and challenged mainly by scattered groups of civil society actors committed to peace. Equally, not all nations or regional blocs are equally pliant towards or accepting of the new US assertiveness. But, so far, these various moves appear frail, not quite equipped to stall the juggernaut.

Not surprisingly, these trends are accompanied by shifts in the economic domain, though here the picture is both more complex and contradictory. Ever since the collapse of the Berlin Wall and then the Soviet empire, neoliberal economics based on the role of mega, multinational corporations in a ‘free’ market has acquired pride of place. Not just socialism, but even Keynesian welfare economics is being given the go by as country after country readjusts its national economic policies to downgrade the role of the state both as provider of basic goods and services and as regulator of concentration of economic wealth. Globally, the earlier consensus crafted under the aegis of United Nations institutions is being supplanted by new frameworks under a WTO regimen governing not just trade in goods, but services, agriculture, even knowledges, severely

impairing the ability of national regimes to adequately service their populations.

The entrenching of a commodity logic, all in the name of competition, has in the last decade or so led to the loss of millions of jobs and livelihoods, both of smaller producers and those who depended upon the commons. Not surprisingly this has deepened national and global inequity and the ensuring crisis of survival has exacerbated conflicts further deteriorating the security environment.

It is at the moment unclear what these sweeping changes entail, both for the institutions of governance that were evolved over the last century as also for some key conceptual and organising principles. Every notion – from sovereign nation states to representative democracy and human rights – is today under contestation as humanity struggles through an era of uncertainty.

Not that these changes/dangers come from a single source – the attempt by the West led by the US to remake the world in its own image and for its self-interest. Equally dramatic has been the veritable explosion of ethnicity and identity, invariably masculinist, communitarian logics, a harking back to mythical traditions, most of it based on religion. The post-Enlightenment project of modernity and rationality foregrounding science and reason is today in danger as the underside of modernity unravels. Alongside is the celebration of difference, not diversity but of incommensurability between communities, traditions, religions and peoples. If the modernist impulse comes accompanied by exclusion and inequity, the contrasting impulse of tradition too valorises its boundaries, homogenous within and conflictual without. At stake is the very notion of humanity and a shared future.

\* \* \* \*

## I

This issue of *Asian Exchange* – Democracy & the Crisis of Change: Redefining People's Security in the New World Order – grapples with some of these questions – in particular with the challenge of redefining human security in the changed environment. Also with this issue, we introduce a new section '*Issues for Debate*.' Rajni Kothari, arguably India's leading political scientist and public intellectual, long associated with causes and institutions as diverse as Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Lokayan and global efforts like the World Order Models Project, the Peace and Global Transformation Project of the United Nations University, among others, kicks off with a provocative essay '*Beyond Democracy*.'



He argues that even as democracy has become important in providing legitimacy to regimes it is observed to be a continuous arena of strife and erosion of basic values such that the long-cherished ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity seem increasingly difficult to realise. Not that the ideals are no longer worth pursuing, just that the institutional framework of democracy, particularly representative democracy, seems now incapable of translating these visions and ideals into reality.

Part of the problem can be traced to capitalism, its impulse towards accumulation and the corresponding rise of inequalities; but equally, the different experiments at a non-capitalist path have neither succeeded in displacing capitalism nor in helping realise democracy. Is the problem that democracy is more a norm, a myth that operates on the notion of an abstract citizen thereby incapable of handling the embeddedness of concrete individuals? Or is it that it is too difficult a system to establish and operationalise, demanding a constant and continuing engagement from all. Little surprise that representation, unavoidable in large and complex collectivities, destroys participation and citizenship even as it serves accountability and private rights.

He also raises the issue of an ideological vacuum – with neither liberalism, Marxism, Gandhism, or other religious frames providing workable models to combine value aspirations with socio-economic transformations. The new phase of globalisation, more than contribute to emancipation, has led to growing erosions of self-governance, autonomy and decentralised units of identity and self-definition. All of which contributes to a growing uncertainty.

Not that he ends on a defeatist note. 'Uncertainty only indicates an absence of certitude, not an entirely negative outlook.' He calls for a 'new' movement for democratic resurgence incorporating both the hitherto excluded as also activists and intellectuals from human rights, ecological and political movements who together could deal with the 'crisis of change' converting it into a 'challenge for change.'

*(We hope this inspiring essay will initiate a vigorous and meaningful debate among concerned scholars and intellectuals. All those interested in furthering this debate could send in to ARENA their contributions, which will be duly published. The mailing details are provided on the backcover.)*

## II

The next set of articles, clubbed under the rubric 'In Search of Human Security' is kicked off by Kumar David. 'The Making and Unmaking of a Terrorist' unpacks one of the most 'abused' words of our times, arguing that the term 'political terrorist' as defined by either the ruling

establishment or the dominant media is suspect. David, whose seminal essay on the different Tamil rebel/insurgent/terrorist groups in Sri Lanka caused waves when first published in the mid-80s, argues that those classified terrorist by the establishment are better described as 'social rebels who strike out against the poverty and social oppression of their people using armed force and violence in a manner that the established value system of the dominant social order finds abhorrent.' Note that his preferred definition rules out the criminal and the purely individual, uses the relationship to the community as a referent and stresses the rejection of the dominant value system.

The modern-day armed insurgent is marked by both a sense of outrage and a belief in a just cause. This takes us to the issues of efficacy and moral relativism, though the danger of violence becoming a pathology cannot be ruled out. What makes this brief note apposite is that it simultaneously flags the problem of such movements becoming nihilistic. For David, the real unmaking of a terrorist lies in the unmaking of a world that breeds terrorists.

Melani Budianta, in 'Plural Identities: Indonesian Women's Redefinition of Democracy in Post-Reformasi Era,' explores the making of another crucial term 'democracy' – the context being provided by the struggle of women in post-Reformasi Indonesia. Unlike the Soeharto 'New Order' era which valorised women as supporters of their husband's careers and as procreators and educators, the Reformasi struggles saw women's activism remake and reformulate identities as part of a larger project to redefine democracy.

Unlike the inaugural act of the 'New Order' – the 1965 crackdown on the Communists and the fear of diversity in the social domain – the overthrow of Soeharto has led to a flowering of multiple identities, often in ways violent. Indonesia today is marked by a spread of ethnic, religious and communal strife, as also armed struggles for separation. How do women carve out space for meaningful everyday praxis in such an atmosphere?

Like in many other societies, women are critically engaging with both modernity and tradition, especially one defined by religion. Surprisingly, or not so, the movements of women are deliberately plural, recognising that context shapes both understanding and aspiration. Budianta discusses the creative use of the esteem in which motherhood is held, in particular its use against the masculinist military, the opening out of the discussion on state-generated violence thereby helping empower victims, forming inter-faith networks and asserting a new role in tribal and religious communities. Significantly, the movement deliberately seeks to build a

new axis of activism outside Jakarta and thus privilege the non-metropolitan. Overall, this phase of women's activism is both helping redefine women's identities and roles as also the notion of public space.

Anuradha Chenoy, in a brief note 'Globalisation and International Security' shows how the Bush-led war against terror post 9/11 is creating a new international structure of security – one tilted towards serving the interests of dominant western powers and undermining established multilateral institutions and rules of engagement. She highlights the danger of depoliticisation in the name of national interest and security, as also the upgradation of military technologies – all contributing to reducing people's security.

Few processes explicate the contradictory impulses of the momentous changes in global political arrangements forced by the events of 9/11 than the two-decade-old ethno-political conflict in Sri Lanka. A combination of a local regime change from the SLFP to the UNF and the palpable global hostility to terrorist violence as a strategy to resolve political conflicts has forced the two warring parties – the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE – to come on the negotiation table. Of course, the role of the Norwegians in brokering a peace should not be underestimated.

Analysts have been debating both the reasons contributing towards the ceasefire as also the likelihood of more durable peace, if not a final settlement. In a thought-provoking article, 'Civil War and the Peace Process in Lanka,' Jayadeva Uyangoda discusses the complex factors at work, partly revising an earlier assessment that war provides its own rationale for continuation. Even while outlining what he sees as major factors nudging both sides into revising their earlier positions, he warns against an over-optimistic reading by peace enthusiasts.

This is both because of a long history of failed negotiations, contributing to a climate of distrust, as also the different starting premises of either side. Uyangoda argues, convincingly, that while a ceasefire is welcome to all, further progress could break down on issues such as an interim administration, or whether the negotiation should focus on the consequences of conflict or the causes. Not unexpectedly, he favours processes that bring a cessation to violence, without however overly strengthening the stranglehold of the LTTE on Tamil politics in the North and East. He also alerts us to the dangers of an 'illiberal' peace – one that seeks to downplay the violation of human rights in the last two decades, by all sides. Equally, the paradox that even if we see the LTTE as 'fascist,' the costs of continuing violence may outweigh a flawed and limited peace.

Bringing an end to long continuing conflicts is never easy, even when participants genuinely desire peace, mainly because of war-weariness.

Memories of horror do not easily fade away. Nor does the self-interest of those who gain from the violence. The real danger in Sri Lanka is that a settlement is being sought between leaders of the two sides without sufficient effort at sustainable reconciliation in civil society. How to move towards a greater involvement of common people, both by reducing the degree of violence and facilitating renewal of livelihoods while keeping alive the negotiations, is the challenge.

### III

The next set of essays draw upon presentations at the Regional Workshop on 'Reimagining 'Asia': Redefining 'Human Security' and 'Alternative Development'; Movements and Alliances in the 21st Century' during the last ARENA Congress in Colombo (2000). It bears mention that this discussion, well before 9/11, was prescient in tracing many of the trends now visible. In 'Rethinking Human Security,' Vinod Raina argues for the need to rescue security concerns from their militaristic antecedents, using the South Asian scenario, in particular the nuclearisation of the subcontinent, as context. He is, like all peace activists, sharply critical of moves to involve common people in rightwing, masculinist agendas which deepen insecurity even while claiming to enhance national security.

Stressing that peace means more than an absence of war, that appropriate environments have to be created for people to be able to improve their lives, he argues for the need for livelihood security, both by reducing military expenditures and by empowering people to take charge of their lives.

Some of these points are further developed by Anuradha Chenoy in 'Militarisation & the South Asia Nuclear Crisis,' showing how the increased militarisation of the subcontinent has, in addition to worsening external security exacerbated fundamentalist/sectarian movements, a reflection of weak grassroots democracy. More specifically, she focuses on the India-Pakistan relationship, which currently (2002) stands at its lowest point. Like Raina, she displays little faith in the sagacity of ruling regimes and looks to movements of peace activists and marginalised communities to build sufficient pressure for change.

In 'Militarisation & the Okinawa People's Struggle,' Ichiyo Muto, better known as the founding spirit of PP-21, a regional movement/alliance of progressive forces, discusses the 'militarisation' of Japan by looking at the struggle of the Okinawan people against US military bases. What appears as a local confrontation, occasioned by the rape of a 12-year-old girl by an American militiaman, helps question the logic of the postwar arrangement wherein the US provides a security umbrella to countries like Japan, Taiwan,

Korea, Singapore. So far this arrangement has been accepted because national governments claim that it reduces their military expenditures. But what does it do to the security of ordinary people? Muto extends that logic to also the national military, arguing that very often the military itself becomes the cause of insecurity in ordinary people.

Kinhide Mushakoji in 'Global Governance & Anti-Hegemonic Alliance,' discusses notions of global governance to tease out the possibilities of an anti-hegemonic alliance. He points out that the dominant structure and discourse on global governance is designed more to support and sustain a global neoliberal economy, one which gambles with the surpluses produced by the majority for the benefit of states and corporations; it is hegemonic and discriminatory, based on surveillance, preventive strike and punishment. What is needed instead is common human security.

Towards this end, he stresses the need for an ethical grounding which opposes the greed and fear generated by casino capitalism. Eschewing any faith in the hegemons, Mushakoji feels that there is greater potential in movements and gatherings like Seattle, Porto Alegre, the Assembly of the Poor in Thailand and so on.

Through a case study of the global sex and entertainment industry, both the formal and legal and the informal and criminal, Mushakoji illustrates the working of the neoliberal global order, how it even accommodates the cross-border trafficking of children and how movements have sprung up in opposition.

Mushakoji's gendered perspective is complemented by Melani Budianta's essay 'Gender, Culture and Security: Old Legacies, New Visions – The Indonesian Context.' In many ways, it supplements her earlier essay, showing how the legacy of the New Order with respect to internal security impacts on gender relations. The case being that any rethinking of the security paradigm should necessarily include the unpacking of the underlying gender ideology. Basing itself on the concrete experience of women's rallies in the Reformasi years, she makes clear that more than an external enemy, the country faces a threat of internal disintegration. That is why peace, tolerance, and respect for human rights are more integral to security than military strength.

Finally, we present an essay by Joel Rocamora, veteran of the anti-Marcos struggle and now academic and political activist. It provides an interesting example of cross-national solidarity, a Filipino writing on Indonesia. 'Commitment at a Time of Disorientation: The Philippine Left & Indonesian Choices' discusses a central problem of progressive praxis, how to remain engaged when one's assumed and received theoretical

apparatus (in this case Marxism) is in disarray. He stresses the need to return to values rather than a rigid framework, as also to be involved in matters of governance rather than merely provide critiques. Much of the decimation of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in 1965 as also the marginalisation of the Communist Party of the Philippines can be traced to these tactical errors of foregrounding theory over life. Unless movements can involve both the activists and the common people, and not privilege the former they have no future.

#### IV

The fourth section of this issue presents ARENA's continuing research on Victims of Development, this time through an essay on Burma (Myanmar) by Myo Nyunt and Nancy Hudson-Rodd. As work-in-progress, it documents the social consequences of the military takeover of the country and the effort by the pro-democracy movement led by Aung San Suu Kyi to restore civility in the conflict-wracked country.

Finally, we return to the overarching theme of this collection – terrorism and the resultant insecurity through an interview with Noam Chomsky. Instructive, in particular, is the shifting terrain occupied by terrorists/freedom fighters, how the US has succeeded in occupying the high moral ground such that few think of that country as the leading exporter of global terrorism. It is this ambiguity of language that we as concerned intellectuals/activists need to engage with, both to rip off the veil of hypocrisy surrounding the US actions as also to remind ourselves how easy it is to fall into self-justifying traps.

In these difficult (and tragic times), it is our hope that this collection will further our reflections and steel our resolve to continue to struggle.





Issues  
for  
Debate





# Beyond Democracy

RAJNI KOTHARI

WE SEEM TO HAVE ENTERED a phase of human history when the long-cherished ideals of 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' seem increasingly difficult to realise, especially through the institutional framework of 'Democracy.' The ideals themselves are no doubt worth pursuing – as are many other expectations and norms like social justice, individual freedom and the very idea of a state that could liberate people from the oppressive shackles found in both tradition and modernity, together providing humankind with a veritable vision and utopia of a humane and just social order. The issue is: how is one to translate these ideals and vision and utopia into reality? For long it has been imagined that a 'democratic way of life' will provide humanity with the necessary structure and framework, both institutional channels and ideological appeals, through which they (the ideals and the Utopia) could in fact be realised. It is only in recent decades that such an ideological perspective and institutional design is proving incapable of 'delivering the goods.' And with it the very imagination in the minds of people which could make such a perspective and design part of a holistic thrust in the historical process. For the prevailing reality is full of ironies – democracy is unable to deliver the goods even within its realm of expectations, let alone it becoming a catalyst of realising so many other values, above all social justice in its full ramifications, as well as further opening out towards new potentialities of creative interventions in the social process and the psycho-cultural domain. And yet it is also true that without simultaneously realising these other values and potentialities, there is no point discussing what democracy stands for,

what is inherent in it. In the whole panorama of human values none is more full of paradoxes, dilemmas and ironies than is 'democracy.'

The basic paradox of all is that democracy has become important in providing legitimacy to regimes (even anti-democratic leaders refer to it in seeking legitimacy); yet on the other hand democracy is observed to be a continuous arena of strife and erosion of basic values (including in countries laying claim to being democracies). The 'arena of strife' that seems to overpower the 'basic values' is found especially in the economic arena, following the rise of capitalism since it has emerged with an independent thrust over the last 150-odd years. There is an element of mutual antipathy between democracy and capitalism ever since human consciousness in general and people's struggles from below in particular produced a growing challenge to the capitalist order. Yet the two seem to have moved side by side and in course of time there emerged a growing interface between the two, leading to the idea of a welfare state.

### **Capitalism and democracy**

This growth of capitalism and democracy along parallel lines starting with the 19th century and gaining in strength during the 20th century, resulting in the welfare state, changed the very definition of the role of the state towards an interventionist perspective. Taking off in particular following the 'Great Depression' of the 1930s, producing in the process a more positive conception of the state which began to be conceived as a means of correcting the imbalances of the capitalist order, in the process making capitalism itself an agent of the liberal perspective on the state though in the process also giving a lease of life to capitalism – this being the crux of the so-called 'Keynesian Revolution.' This double-edged conception of the role of the state following the growth of the 'welfare state' became clear in that while for some democracy was a kind of means to counter capitalist statecraft and its imperial-colonial spread around the world, for others, mainly the antidemocratic leaders, from Napoleon III in France to fascist and communist leaders in the 20th century, capitalism could move faster when democracy was suspended than when it was in saddle. The former conception was seen, both in the thinking of Fabian-style intellectuals from Beveridge to Keynes and in consequence of class-based movements putting labour/social democratic parties in power, giving rise to social security states, all of which led to the basic idea that the integration of the welfare ethic into democratic theory could well pose a challenge to capitalism. Around the same time Marxist revolutions in major landmasses – USSR and China being the catalysts of the global phenomenon of a major

challenge to capitalism – were also taking place. And from this followed another phenomenon, namely a growing coalition of forces, between either the ‘Soviet Empire’ or China and leading powers of the Third World, in course of time making the latter work towards producing global formations like the nonaligned movement and the G-77 in the United Nations.

Yet, on the other hand, it has been shown that even with the power of the welfare ethic and global assertions from non-capitalist peripheries while capitalism can do without democracy in periods of crisis the opposite of it, namely democratic movements and movements arising from global peripheries displacing capitalism, did not take place. The theory that this could happen did emerge but failed to be translated into reality. This was best illustrated by Allende’s Chile when it was shown that without being accompanied by an organised revolutionary movement democratic politics can at best be treated as an inconvenience that could well be contained by the capitalist political economy. Perhaps the same can be said about Nehru’s India, Nyerere’s Tanzania and Cardoso’s Brazil. So long as iniquitous and apartheidised civil societies rule the roost, democracy will prove incapable of undermining the power of capitalism. This has proved especially pertinent under corporate capitalism of the late 20th century. What the latter has brought out is that so long as the democratic state is structurally operating in the framework of capitalism, irrespective of democracy’s ideological intent to contain the capitalist thrust, it is in reality found to be compatible with high degrees of inequalities. Even the social security regimes are unable to stem the tide, at both national and international levels of capitalism. The key point of course is quite different. It is that the crux of the idea of democracy consists in its invocation of the concepts of dissent, resistance, exposure, ‘liberty’ in its full-blown sense of both individuals and communities asserting their unique configurations in the growth of a democratic social and ethical movement. But all this taken together did not amount to a dislodging of the capitalist order though no doubt they forced the latter to lower the thresholds of injustice and exploitation.

### **Democracy as myth**

But while democracy is proving unable to defeat the basic logic of capitalism it continues to remain a living myth – by which large masses of the people swear and in which national and international intelligentsia have placed their faith, its grand appeal being considered by both sets of individuals as self-evident and obvious, almost ‘taken for granted.’ It is precisely because it is in the process of emerging as a Myth, that when questions

are raised about it – about its limits, its weaknesses – it only means that one is going through a process of historical change, which needs to be taken note of for improving its efficacy, underscoring the very point that it has been a powerful myth all this time. Following democracy's conversion into a myth (say, since the French revolution on) almost everyone began claiming to be a democrat and as far as the West is concerned, it started being exported as a value – democracy as a universal value – also becoming a criterion of ethics (as with Kant), becoming in course of time a carrier of science and philosophy, of modern education, and partly due to the expansion from the monoculturalism of the Occident to a wide array of and encompassing a large variety of cultures, of culture as well. And from there on to elaboration of themes like justice, exercise of power, engagement in speech (hence the legitimisation through parliamentary institutions), declarations like 'all are equal' and through a number of conceptual steps, the birth of a normative conception of politics. Democracy becomes a norm, democratic politics a normative engagement, both underscoring participation on the one hand and transparency and informatics on the other.

### **Democracy and legitimacy**

In the West, ever since the French and American Revolutions a clear enunciation emerged that a society to be truly modern needs to be 'constitutional' and 'democratic.' The American Revolution added to the democratic ideal the thesis of self-determination. Only nation-states were 'natural' political entities, they only were permissible. Hence the growing catchword of democratic national self-determination, 'democracy' and 'nation-state' to be two aspects of the new (modern) incarnation. Moreover the concept of revolutionary rebirths, all the way from the French and American revolutions to the nationalist revolutionary fervour of ex-colonial states and societies (those that were part of composite empires at one time, and later of colonial empires) became part of the package of political transformation, a reordering of societies generally by their adopting a democratic framework. This was further reinforced by the upsurges of the subaltern classes within national democratic societies.

### **Disappointments with democracy**

But while the idea of democracy has led to great expectations and is increasingly becoming a key pivot of political legitimacy, it is 'democracies' (both already established and those aspiring to be so) that are in our time

producing great disappointments and frustrations. A whole series of struggles has been waged throughout history and found in particular in our own time for the survival, defence and restoration of democracy, but it is also in democratic systems that citizen disappointment is found to go furthest.

In non-democratic systems there is neither that level of expectations as found in democracies nor the kinds of frustration and alienation as found in democracies, except that at various points of time and in many regions of the world there have emerged leaders and advocates of antidemocratic systems who have argued that socio-economic results can better be achieved as indeed things like national security and national unity, in the absence of democracy. On the whole democracy is perhaps the most difficult system to establish and operate. It tends to be extremely fragile, inherently unstable, and open to unpredictable fluctuations, so that while for achieving legitimacy democratic claims are becoming vital and necessary, each of them is found to encounter, at different phases in its evolution, some kind of a crisis or another.

### **Larger context**

To put the whole thing in a global context, there seem to be two simultaneous tendencies at work: The rich are found to be continuously engaged in excluding the poor and the middle strata of society while the poor are seeking to gain access to power (and even a degree of prosperity) by engaging in the democratic political process. To put the whole thing obversely, the poor are found to be involved in opening up the democratic political process precisely at a time when the rich seem to be inclined to shut the doors of the system to them and impose iniquitous and apartheidised societies worldwide. Both tendencies seem to be at work in respect of not the peoples around the world – the diverse strata – but also communities, ecologies and their ethnic and plural roots in diverse political cultures and psychological thresholds.

There seems to have taken place a phenomenal increase in both inequity and apartheidisation on the one hand and resurgence in democratic faith on the part of the poor and the hitherto victimised themselves on the other. The democratic process is being impinged upon by two contradictory forces: democratic assertion of the subaltern classes on the one hand and the forces of globalisation reducing available democratic spaces on the other. While the latter are turning more and more towards technised conceptions of both development and governance the former appear determined to make poverty eradication an accepted social goal,

they themselves undertaking to engage in realising that goal. The 20th century has been a century of pushing further the accumulation of both wealth and poverty; the failure of revolutions too is pushing the poor towards exclusion while the declared goal of human rights by Western powers has tended to become an instrument of consolidating the corporate capitalist thrust of modernising societies. It is against this background and the discontent and despair that it has given rise to that there is a growing demand for making the 21st century as the century of the poor (in which democracy and human rights are to become real catalysts of the poor themselves eradicating poverty), thus starting on a completely new conception of revolution altogether both beyond the idea of democracy and beyond the traditional conception of violent overthrow of governments.

**Models of democracy**

While with the 'collapse of the Soviet Union,' and with that development the announcement of the 'end of history' and the use made of that development for making a major appeal for the spread of democracy and human rights round the world under the auspices of the Western powers could appear to enhance the prospects of democracy in large parts of the world, a closer look at so many of the functioning 'democracies' has begun to raise important questions as regards the authenticity and validity of real growth of democratic governance in a situation of a fast-changing world.

A crucial aspect of the changes overtaking the world is the northward shift of balance of power, control of resources and growth of economic opportunities. Taken alongside internal centralisation of power, resources and opportunities that has already taken place in large parts of non-West (both the Third World and the former socialist world) this has produced a fast changing scenario of both civil societies and 'world order.' Meanwhile the challenges that had arisen from the 'grassroots' of most societies are suffering fresh erosions while the theoretical underpinnings of the critiques and challenges from the 'South' (especially the bottom layers of the 'South') have also witnessed lack of self-confidence as also have the new assertions from the 'bottom-up.' Democracy is more often contrasted with absence thereof than an actually realised standard in practice in countries and domains where it is supposed to operate. It is expected to be more accountable to the people (than in other systems) and hence fulfilling minimum levels of justice and egalitarianism. But in practice democracy by itself does not promote either equality or justice; only logical axioms

like 'equality before law.' It is in practice found to live side by side with high levels of inequality, poverty in the midst of opulence and ill-treatment of a wide variety of 'minorities' for whom there is little by way of compensatory 'justice.'

It is in this context that we need to evaluate the idea of 'representative democracy' which has presumably become necessary with the growth in size and complexity of functions to be performed by governments and political systems. In fact we have had a process of historical evolution that is in itself rather interesting: moving from 'direct democracy' provided by assemblies of small republics as prevailed in ancient systems of governance (ranging from ancient Greece to ancient India) to systems of representation as demands on governments grew to the present point when once again there is a growing desire to move to smaller and more spontaneous units, to 'decentralise,' to move towards greater autonomy and 'self-rule' in one form or another, striving once again towards people ruling themselves in more rather than less direct forms of democracy.

In sum, democracy can survive only by striking roots in a direct form. It is secured not by great leaders but by competent, responsible citizens. 'Effective dictatorship require great leaders. Effective democracies need great citizens.' We are free only as we are citizens and our freedom and liberty are only as durable as our citizenship. As this has been brought out somewhat dramatically by Prof. Benjamin Barber, author of *Strong Democracy*, 'we may be born free but we die free only when we work at it in the interval between. And citizens are certainly not born, but made as consequence of civic and political engagement in a free polity.' On representative democracy in this context he has this to say: 'Representation destroys participation and citizenship even as it serves accountability and private rights.'

### **Movement for creating emancipatory democracy**

With growing disillusionment with prevailing models of democracy, in particular representative democracy, and the slowly emerging aspirations for what could be called 'genuine' democracy (which in the present context becomes 'direct democracy' based on various degrees of self-rule, self-governance and self-determination) there emerges a newly-inspired aspiration for transformative politics of which democracy could well become a legitimate instrument, but which is in the main arising out of a more comprehensive thrust based on an ethical imperative towards world transformation, calling for a new breed of intellectuals and activists, to begin with arising from the core of an idealistic middle class – one hopes



that such a core still exists – and moving towards larger and ever-enlarging struggles of the mass of the people in country after country, ultimately the world as a whole. Just the opposite of the neoliberal model of globalisation and producing instead an authentic ‘global’ upsurge of ‘peoples, communities, and ecologies.’ Moving beyond the so-called ‘new social movements’ of environment, women, tribals, ‘backwards’ and through them all castes and classes. A movement that is deeply rooted in the whole of civil society

### **Emancipation and democracy**

Having for long been an advocate of democracy, not only as a system of governance but also as an aspiration through which a wide range of other ideas and values and goals were sought to be realised, I would now like to move to the crucial question that has been emerging over the last several years both globally and within individual nation-states. What prospects/possibilities are there of democracy leading to people’s emancipation/empowerment/ liberation from shackles of both modernity and tradition? Democracy seems to be better equipped to impart legitimacy to elected regimes than to fulfil basic aspirations of the people, as already argued.

Democracy is itself an aspiration, in fact more an aspiration than a truly realised goal. How then are we to conceptualise the idea of democracy? As propelling a movement that produces diverse strands of the politics of transformation or simply as a framework of governance which then, failing to deliver the goods, leads to a variety of problems and frustrations, dilemmas and contradictions? The latter calls for a more comprehensive and socially widespread radical ‘movement’ which is supposed to galvanise of the whole of civil society, as well as the polity through a type of politicisation that goes to the roots of the whole culture and civilisation, both of them reaching out to both individuals and communities, both grassroots and regional and local structures of governance. Together moving beyond mere ‘democracy,’ towards human emancipation.

Which brings us to the next logical question. How is human emancipation to be conceptualised? As focusing mainly on the exploited and excluded strata, ‘emancipating’ them? But then one is only repeating the whole mental baggage of ‘development’-cum-‘democracy.’ In my view emancipation needs to be conceived in comprehensive and holistic terms, reaching out from each individual (including individuals in the established social strata) to wider and wider ‘cycles’ of classes and communities. Emancipation as a deeper, and deeply rooted process of change, mobilisation and transformation.

Emancipation is not a subject-object relationship in which some are emancipators and others are being emancipated. Either the whole society is emancipated, and with it every human being in it, or no one is – and each and every one is enslaved, in effect emaciated (opposite of emancipated). Emancipation is to be conceived as a state of being, applying to one and all, and not limited to a few or even a large population. Those left out of the web of the emancipated must suffer the consequences of being left out. Being so left out involves also a state of being, of a condition characterised by alienation and anomie on which diverse philosophies (from existentialism to nihilism) and leading philosophers (from Weber to Durkheim) have dwelt at length, bringing out deeper psycho-social states in which individuals and communities find themselves.

I would like to now go further on the point of ‘whole society has to be emancipated’ and that emancipation is at bottom a: ‘state of being’ which applies to all. I should like to add here that it is of particular relevance for the middle class, at one time considered the torch-bearers of ‘Swaraj’ along various dimensions – not just political – and of egalitarian restructuring of civil society, and thereby a comprehensive model of equity, justice and emancipation.

Something seems to have happened along the way, following the model of economic development and its trickle down perspective vis-à-vis the poorer countries and the mass of the people generally on the one hand and the trickle up model of catching up with the richer and more affluent countries on the other, together providing a ‘catching up’ syndrome of development – both for the poorer social strata and for the poorer nations and states. For these classes and systems to resume the idea of emancipation will call for a major ideological remodelling towards transformative politics, economics, environment and culture.

### **Ideological restructuring**

Seen from a variety of thresholds the ethics of emancipation necessarily calls for a major shift in ideas, institution-building and political engagement, the three of them together providing a powerful normative thrust, almost a kind of catharsis that ranges from individual selves to community structures to national and international alignments of both mutative and paradigmatic kinds.

The ideological challenge is probably the most pervasive and multidimensional of all. We happen to be facing a major intellectual – and hence ideological – vacuum. Neither the Liberal nor the Marxist nor in many ways even the Gandhian or the still deeper spiritual ideological

conceptions provides us with a workable model of fundamental change. For change to be truly far-reaching and fundamental one needs to dwell deep into the psychic, cultural and existential arenas of human striving. Not long ago a combination of these three or four streams, at once interacting and mutually reinforcing-cum-questioning, provided a workable framework of not just development, growth and structural refashioning but also one that made it possible for human communities to take on ever new challenges that were emerging from a whole variety of sources. It appeared possible to engage in a range of changes and undertake a whole variety of choices that were emerging on the horizon of the human agenda. Today it seems neither possible to even conceive of what direction of change may be possible to undertake nor to make social-political choices that can lead to the long-called-for transformative processes and place them on people's agendas at various levels and thresholds of human striving. How then is one to move out of such a stagnant pool (in which one seems to be presently drowned)? Is it at all possible to even conceive of a course of action, some kind of a movement away from where one is at present positioned? To the extent one can conceive of such a course of action, should it be possible to at least indicate the steps involved in undertaking such a course of action, so that one is not thinking of some abstract yearning and think instead of a truly concrete set of steps along a course of action in a way that takes one beyond the present (and the past) towards some idea of the future, a theoretical conception of it, and on that basis towards some refashioning of the human effort that will in effect be 'ideological,' involving in course of doing so a restructuring of the socio-political discourse that is undertaken in some kind of a systemic framework (or model).

Such a conception of the ideological challenge leading thereby towards a new stirring of the mind, among all political strata, but in particular of the marginalised and victimised ones, involves moving towards an emancipatory ethic of the whole of the society. This will involve taking into its purview the whole series of problem encounters facing humankind in its present condition, dealing as adequately as possible with poverty, inequity, injustice, erosion of basic resources (both natural and human) and the ethnic, ecological and civilisational dimensions of that condition. To take the first of these, namely poverty, it will involve (as laid out in my *Growing Amnesia* published by Penguin in India and Zed Books in London) a wholly new conceptualisation of a basic issue that humanity *must* face but which is increasingly becoming an object of all-round amnesia, all the way from the intelligentsia and 'social scientists' to the wider mass of the people, at different thresholds, from the political system to cultural

contours to environmental concerns to the whole ethical domain. This entails a considerable canvas of concerns and both theoretical and practical perspectives. It is at bottom a concern about nothing short of refashioning the whole of the human enterprise (and through its reach and spread, diverse other species and life-engaging terrains of livelihood); in short, restructuring of life on this planet.

Such a comprehensive interface of issues and problem encounters is not limited to the issue of poverty. This becomes evident even in dealing with poverty for one is up against almost the full canvas of human concerns. The emergence of an iniquitous and unjust, an increasingly polarised, social order is in fact what one is up against. A polarisation consisting of a minority of the gifted and the privileged (not gifted due to any innate qualities nor privileged on account of some natural and immutable hierarchy) and a vast majority of the deprived and the destitute (as poverty is fast degenerating into destitution and desperation even in respect of maintaining minimum standards of living and livelihood: health, shelter, education, access to the environment and such other basics of livelihood). It is fast becoming a society from the mainstream of which larger and larger numbers of people and livestock – and forests – are excluded, driving them all into ghettos, lately described as the ‘unorganised sector’ consisting of migrating in humans and animals, clusters of refugees (again not just human), women and child labour (so often including species and plantations that are not part of the mainstream), the entire ‘underclass’ of existence, human and non-human. An unemancipated world encompassing diverse social segments, species and forests and their large and evergrowing interiors.

Nor can there be genuine ‘emancipation’ without moving towards a truly just and egalitarian state of existence, not only in respect of the basic social order that is at bottom ‘democratic’ but also in respect of the vast diversity of ethnic, biological and ecological components thereof. Let it be observed that the very mention of democracy in this overall context of ‘existence’ involves moving towards both a broader social thrust of political and cultural kind and its ecological and bio-ethnic infrastructures. For there can be no real democracy without creating both an emancipated social order and a free and fulsome diversity of natural resources and their ecological contours, what has lately been described as ‘Biodiversity.’

The world we live in is a world of growing erosions of self-governance, autonomy and ‘decentralised’ units of identity and self-definition. No doubt, it is also a world in which countervailing tendencies are increasingly on the move. One is witness to major upsurges of consciousness on the part of the hitherto suppressed and victimised strata. And not just of

consciousness and self-awareness (of and by themselves these may not be able to bring about social transformation and 'emancipation'). There is also at work a more activist dimension. The so far marginalised and underprivileged (broadly described as 'dalits' and still broadly as the 'poor') are also found to want to engage themselves in arenas of action, whether through the ongoing electoral and 'representative' processes, or in fact by engaging in more directly participant structures of self-governance and 'developmental' hierarchies, as also through seeking positions in educational institutions, administrative units and economic and cultural entities. Much of this is at work – and it is going beyond mere wishes and aspirations! No doubt it is still more in the realm of aspirations and expectations; much of what is desired has not yet been realised, not at any rate in full measure.

The status quo is still very much intact. Cracks that are emerging in it are still of a transitional type; they are yet to indicate a clear direction with a lasting imprint. Yet the 'transitions' – at least that – have begun to make themselves felt. Something 'new' seems to be in the offing. Of this there can be no denying. It is as yet not certain, yet it cannot be easily put down as mere dreams and utopias. We are at least at the crossroads even if the path on which we are likely to traverse is as yet uncertain.

### **Era of uncertainty**

It is this condition of 'uncertainty' that above everything else characterises the age and era through which we seem to be passing. In much of my recent writings I have tried to bring this out – from my work on the political process to essays on globalisation and the neoliberal framework of ideas to specific dimensions of reality impinging on these, political economy on the one hand the aura of security (and the growth of national security states, in turn getting intertwined with chauvinist conceptions of both the nation-state and the international order) on the other. I have argued that the two together are producing a model of secular fundamentalism of the 'modernist' type (to be distinguished from the fundamentalism of the communal, religious and so-called 'casteist' varieties). I am no great believer in the anti-modernist or post-modernist remodelling of the human predicament. I see a lot of value in aspects of tradition and indigenous roots of our existence as peoples, civil societies and 'states.' But I am not inclined to be overtaken by the myth of moving (switching) from an undefined and undifferentiated modernity to some sweeping idea of an equally undefined and undifferentiated tradition. This for me is myth, a myth that is not rooted in social, ethnic and ecological

mores (myths, when so rooted, can indeed be highly creative), a passing myth, in a way more undefined and undifferentiated than either 'tradition' or 'modernity.'

This is what makes the notion of 'uncertainty' so full of not just ambivalence and a series of ambiguities but in fact pitfalls, dilemmas and growing contradictions that we seem to be so unsure to face up to and deal with. For it is not just an era (or age) of uncertainty but an *aura* of uncertainty (threatening even to become a cult of uncertainty) that we need to get into and unravel. For it is precisely by unravelling this new aura that can lead us to come to grips with the most challenging of all intellectual issues that have faced us in the modern era. Let us try and see if we can indeed unravel it.

1. First of all, this is not the first time that the human race has been up against an aura of uncertainty. Quite often in the past too there have been perusals of acute uncertainty. When the 'age of empires' gave place to the rise to a world consisting of nation-states (following again a set of 'transitions') there was a growing period of uncertainty. It is not by any means true that the Treaty of Westphalia ushered in the nation-state phenomenon; this is too technocratic and militaristic an interpretation of modern history. In some ways far more important was a combination of
  - (a) the growth of linguistic nationalism following the end of the Napoleonic era,
  - (b) the rise of German (in fact Prussian) 'nation' on the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian empire and the diplomacy of Metternich,
  - (c) the imperialist expansion following the successful growth of the Industrial Revolution, and
  - (d) neo-imperial translations of Franco-German, Franco-British and Franco-Russian rivalries and still later, following the Congress of Vienna, the rise of aggressive German nationalism ending in two major wars, and resulting therefrom in the rise of new nationalisms in the hitherto non-politicised and non-militarised continents of the world.

The story of the rise and decline of nationalism worldwide needs to be imaginatively grasped if we are to understand and then overcome the 'uncertainty' that the world faced at that moment of time.

2. Next in line – in chronological time – comes not an uncertainty born out of geopolitics but instead out of leaving geopolitics behind, even denyings its rationale and moving into the realm of ideas, not ideas in some static academic sense but ideas in action, in short a succession

of revolutionary upsurges. Starting no doubt with the French Revolution, proceeding with the American Revolution and after a lapse of more than a century, the Russian and not long after that the Chinese, the Vietnamese and a whole series of in part nationalist but also in part socio-economic upsurges of human emancipation – most of them located in the current jargon in the ‘South’. Ending in the emerging coalition of socialist and nationalist formations, together mounting a comprehensive revulsion against the global status quo, imperial hegemonies and in many of these countries, authoritarian and neo-fascist regimes, centralised governments and anti-people syndromes of policies, development models and structures of governance. Over the centuries but particularly the way revolutions have sprung up in the twentieth century and produced if anything massive anti-climaxes and highly frustrating degenerations and major erosions in the very heart of the human spirit though still somehow keeping it alive through periodic infusions of optimism and ‘hope’ point to perhaps the gravest instance of what appeared at one time as certainty turning into massive uncertainties. A realisation that becomes more galling if we add to the end of revolutionary illusions the end also of national sovereignty, of the once inspiring coalition of socialist and Third Worldist ideals, the ‘collapse’ of the Soviet alternative, later still the post-cold war, Gorbachev-inspired era of peace and disarmament (at least de-escalation of the arms race), and within ‘mixed’ economies and politics the erosion of the ‘Left.’ And through these various erosions, the rise of the neo-liberal offshoot of the American, unipolar, hegemonic reality, both in respect of the play of power and in respect of the impact of ideologies.

So much for the graphic details of a series of global uncertainties (presented in the form of empirical description). But there is need to get deeper into what in reality is a dialectic of ‘certainty’ and ‘uncertainty.’ For in point of fact in each of the historical moments where the ‘aura of uncertainty’ has finally emerged, there was, and that too for a long time, a belief in *certainty*.

Let us examine this in short before concluding this section on the growth of uncertainty in human affairs. Whether it was steady undermining of the medieval order of princelings and feudal lords and the entry of the modern age of technologies and nation-states, or the growth of industries after the enclosures of vast hinterlands of agriculture and rural crafts, or the gradual crystallisation of geopolitical entities backed by military strategic power. Or arising out of inevitable conflicts between

rival centres of power that emerged from the very logic of geopolitics, the whole reality of power politics, wielded at both local/regional and trans-regional (hence global) levels, a reality that coloured the whole edifice of modern politics. Or the rise of the early architecture of political economy in the form of the spread of the powerful thrust of the Industrial Revolution, and later its imperialist spread worldwide, and the gradual intermeshing of the political and techno-economic arms of the 'modern' system in producing the modern imperial era. Resulting in wars and revolutions, each emerging from the diverse 'stages' in world history, and there on to simultaneous processes of 'degeneration' of one set of statehood and nationhood and 'regeneration' of another set of societies, producing fresh stirrings in the human edifice, ending in our time in an era of growing ambiguities, dilemmas, contradictions and – uncertainties. At no point was there an inevitable growth of uncertainty. If anything at each stage there was a feeling of confidence and certainty among the principal actors on the scene. But at every point new tendencies were surfacing, new actors emerging, new churnings of socio-political structures rising and producing, first in the realm of consciousness and then of action, the latest of these taking place in our own time, producing in our minds a growing sense of 'uncertainty.'

This then is the trajectory of diverse strands of fairly confident periods and structures of 'reality' leading ultimately to a series of dialectics which, because the dialectics were not permitted to smoothly work themselves out, has produced in our minds a sense of growing 'uncertainty.' There is nothing more to it all than just this. But all of it did take place. And have brought us to the current reality at various levels, in diverse regions, and indeed worldwide, or in the latest jargon, 'globally.'

But surely shall we just accept the fate of the human race in such a passive, *de facto*, almost defeatist manner? That the human species, the so-called *homo sapiens* faces a set of uncertainties, on that there is little doubt. But it is one thing to have to face a certain situation, even when this is presumed as a given prospect or a likely future. But it is quite another to not just face it and have to deal with it but simply, almost meekly, accept it and do nothing to resist the same, even try to reverse a likely prospect or a presumed future. No doubt a state of uncertainty does not necessarily amount to a state of despair, an end to all hope and the acceptance of a pessimistic future. A state of uncertainty only pronounces a lack of clear affirmation of hope and a positive view of emerging prospects for humanity and its future. I would in fact go further. A state of uncertainty could be taken up as a challenge to once again turn things around and regain a feeling of hope, of recreating it, of reaffirming an optimistic state



of affairs. Uncertainty only indicates an absence of certitude, not an entirely negative outlook. It could well be seen as a challenge to both imagination and praxis, indeed even conceiving an even better prospect for both humanity and the planet as a whole than was the case before things began to become uncertain or even ambivalent. In fact, an era of uncertainty ought not to be taken as one of despair and disappointment. It could well indicate a kind of 'crossroads' from where new beginnings could be initiated. If the march of history is full of uncertainty it is equally full of new initiatives towards new openings of the historical process. It could indeed well lead to an opening out towards a new and positive reality, towards a real alternative, an alternative to both the present and the past, a truly new and more promising *future*. Put that way, a state of uncertainty could well prove to be a catalytic moment, a stepping stone towards a genuinely new utopia, moving forward, conceiving something that has never existed before, even in periods of great confidence and hope. After all, something did happen that reversed fortunes and potentialities. Things did call for a fundamental change – and may be this is precisely what the dawn of uncertainty made possible.

### **Implications for 'emancipation and democracy'**

If I dwell at some length on the phenomenon of uncertainty in dealing with the human predicament it was only to bring out the import of the underlying reality for the larger theme of emancipation and democracy, issues and challenges that have emerged, contradictions and failures as of now, and the possible ways out of the broader crisis of transformative politics vis-à-vis civil society at home and the global context thereof. The inadequacy of democracy as it has operated thus far, the resulting crises and ambivalences that have impinged on the larger phenomena of socio-political liberation and cultural emancipation, and the emerging upsurge thereafter of the mass of the people – diverse segments thereof – in making democracy a real instrument of emancipation. The coexistence of and correlation of the two is what makes the future appear uncertain though, as presented herein, that very uncertainty could well become a catalyst of new initiatives and completely new and 'alternative' thrusts of the social order and its deeper psycho-cultural and ecological – and of course political – underpinnings. It is precisely this situation of opposite tendencies and possibilities that makes it incumbent on the still ambivalent and drifting intelligentsia to rise to the occasion and engage in a new 'movement' for democratic resurgence – emerging out of a comprehensive engagement in social and ethical transformation. Without the latter the former is well

nigh impossible to achieve.

The challenge before the latter is to keep alive this flame of hope and resurgence and to continue to offer ideological streams to the stirring and struggling segments of the mass public. While the latter consists of segments – the dalits, the tribals, the women, the aspiring youth – that are no doubt to be the principal authors of the slowly emergent ‘movement’ for democracy and to ground it in the still larger movement for Emancipation, there will still be need for democratic and human rights ‘movements’ consisting of activists, intellectuals and a whole array of individuals and communities that are beginning to experience a new spurge of catharsis, producing in the process a variety of changes that will lead in course of time both to a ‘crisis of change’ and a ‘challenge of change.’ An ideology of collective resurgence. A long way to go no doubt but the beginnings of the same are there for us all to see. Drawing all the time on the micro and intermediate thresholds of which one notices several thousand at work and taking off from there towards a ‘macro’ systemic change. Taking us beyond both ‘development’ and ‘democracy,’ into a whole new era of liberation, both in the socio-political arena and in the psycho-cultural and civilisational contours which must ultimately be the antennas of emancipation.





In Search  
of Human  
Security



# The Making and Unmaking of a Terrorist

KUMAR DAVID

## **The making...**

### **Reality and belief**

Anarchist – revolutionary – terrorist: these words, as terms of political abuse, have resonated across the last two centuries to describe rebellious individuals from, or inspired by, the subaltern classes who have risen up against the oppression of their fellow denizens. The true contemporary definition of the term political terrorist, therefore, should neither be that offered by the ruling establishment and media, nor that understood in old-fashioned schools of Marxism. No, we need to redefine the term in the context of the experiences of the late 20th- early 21st century transitional world. These days, therefore, members of political movements called 'terrorist' by the establishment are usually better described as follows:

A social rebel who strikes out against the poverty and/or social oppression of his/her people using armed force and violence in a manner that the established value system of the dominant social order finds abhorrent, unconscionable or morally evil.

The first point to note in this description is that it rules out the criminal and the purely individual by using the relationship to the struggles of a people or a community as a necessary reference point, and by using the term 'social rebel' as a precondition. Organisational participation is therefore implied. The term terrorist is interchangeable, most often depending on one's point of view, with the term armed political movement (APM), and can be used for a wide spectrum – from CIA-financed 1980s-

Afghan or Latin American terrorist organisations, to ethnic separatists, national liberation movements, communist insurgents in Nepal or Andhra Pradesh in India.

The second point to note in the suggested definition is that the rejection of the dominant social value system implies the existence of another, alternative, value system to which the rebel conforms. Some examples of movements which neatly fit this definition include: radical Islam, the Tamil Tigers, several intifada grouping, the Algerian revolutionaries of the 60s, the Kenyan Mau-Mau of the 50s, not to mention the American revolutionaries of the 18th century and Yugoslav, Italian, Greek and French partisans in World War II.

The existence of another value system in antithesis to the dominant paradigm, Western imperialism, the Sinhala state, the American-Israeli agenda and French or British colonialism, in the first four of these examples, defines an identity. In radical Islam, for example, a fundamentalist vision is in the evocations of al-Qaeda: 'The Islamic nation has been groaning in pain for more than 80 years under the yoke of the joint Jewish-Crusader aggression. Palestine is living under the yoke of the Jewish occupation and its people groan from this repression and persecution while no one lifts a finger. The Arabian Peninsula is being defiled by the feet of those who came to occupy these lands, usurp these holy places, and plunder these resources.'

On the LTTE website you will read 'We are standing on a strong moral foundation. We are fighting for a just cause. Our political objectives conform with international norms and principles. Our people are eligible for the right to self-determination. They have the right to statehood. Under international law this right cannot be denied. We must be firm in the cause of our struggle because truth and justice are on our side. Only when a people are firmly and resolutely committed to their cause can they win their freedom.'

Without this sense of outrage and the moral foundation of a belief in a just cause, the modern-day armed insurgent does not, cannot, exist. This then is my first response to the question that asks; 'What goes into the making of a modern day terrorist?' The perception of just cause must exist. It is not necessary to recount half a century of US foreign policy in the Middle East, in view of the profusion of such discussions in the last few weeks, or adumbrate the ethnic history of Sri Lanka, or deal specifically with other examples. The point simply is that there is justifiable *casus belli*, there is in the mind of the rebel a vast and compelling reason and justification. The ruthlessness of conquering armies in ancient times ensured that whole populations were decimated or enslaved and lands

wholly occupied. The freedom fighter, sans terrorist, who may have survived Caesar, Pizarro or the convict-immigrants to Australia, is unknown and unsung today. One of the virtues of modernisation is that conquest in this way is no longer possible. Hence the freedom fighter now merges into the terrorist and lives to ferment an uprising through the medium of an APM.

### **Efficacy as a paradigm**

The definition of a terrorist advanced in this paper, and the discussion in the above paragraphs does raise the concern of moral relativism. The reader may well ask; 'So, is murder, mayhem, inflicting sorrow on non-combatants, economic sabotage, and the like, justified in the pursuit of the said struggle for liberation?' This is truly a difficult question at first glance. When the Tamil Tigers say that only because they brought the Sinhala state and army to its knees did that state take notice of the plight of the Tamil people and begin even a façade of consultation, they are right. Possibly the future historian may record that after the 9-11 events the US was forced to modify its duplicitous Middle East policy. History often teaches that only force counts – the barrel of Mao's gun or Machiavelli's remark that 'only armed prophets have conquered.' If force succeeds in achieving objectives it is unlikely that an APM (or for that matter a state or a CIA) will be moved by appeals to a sense of humanity or by exclusively moral arguments. This argument from efficacy is a compelling one and collateral damage is already psychologically factored in.

An example of a state-sponsored terrorist, in this perspective, is Madeline Albright who replied, when asked about the half million Iraqi children said to have died due to the US-led embargo, that '[I]t is a hard choice, but we think it is worth it.' If the 9-11 events eventually prove efficacious in altering US Middle East policy it is to be expected that the perpetrators would make much the same response. Apart from assuming moral high ground, how does one debate with an Albright or a hijacker if an act of terror can be seen to yield a visible dividend? Old-style Leninism held that terrorism always led to disproportionate reprisals from the state and abhorrence from the populace, a net negative return. However, from the experience of the last few decades this can no longer be taken as given. Hence these concerns of moral relativism raise difficult issues. This apart from the quantitative moral relativism of how many dead Iraqi children are worth one airline passenger, or how many mujahideen to slaughter as reprisal for an investment banker.



## **Pathology of violence (which terrorist?)**

It is necessary to make some comments on the pathology of terrorism. Does modern-day political terrorism (the focus in this subsection is on a much narrower category than an APC, (armed people's cadre) which in general, is not coterminous with terrorism) imply that the agent-activist who perpetrates a gross act of terror is pathological and afflicted with a morbid or disordered mind? If one recognises that this 'disease' is quite widespread it is necessary to reply in the affirmative. But how widespread? 'Ah! There's the rub!' The most ghoulis agents of torment and persecution are to be found in the torture chambers of military dictatorships – the Argentine variety is one of the better known, but the CIA has many accomplished alumni. Some police departments of 'civilised' countries have earned their laurels too – think LAPD. The state, across the world, has brutalised the populace. In societies reeking of crisis and grinding poverty (the legacy of global capitalism in the periphery and in the metropolis) the state cannot hold the mess of pottage together without such rapacity and tyranny. The state is the principal agent of terror – ever present, ever active, a colossus compared to any APM or individual terrorist. [The Appendix is an extract from an illuminating interview with Chomsky on state terrorism].

Militarised organisations devoted to ethnic, subaltern class and anti-imperialist activities often display a similar pathology. Typical are deliberate attacks on civilian locations (bombs on aircraft or shopping malls), ethnic cleansing, kidnapping and internal 'cannibalism.' (The last term is used to describe the settlement of factional and leadership struggles by internal bloodletting). Highly politicised and relatively less militarised movements such as the underground ANC or Guevara's focos were largely (ANC) or entirely (Guevara) free of terrorist traits such as these. The distinction between the armed struggle and terrorism is quite valid in these cases.

## **The unmaking ...**

### **Transformation by magnification**

Freedom fighters and terrorists are unmade, unmasked or prove victorious. This short paper will not have much to say of the last category – the likes of Ben-Gurion, Castro or Mandela – since fate and the establishment contrive to rewrite history and sometimes canonise the incumbent.

How are APCs unmade, when do they wither or drift away, how do they become irrelevant and lose their mass base? The experience appears

to be that ethnic (racial, religious, linguistic) do not disappear until the problem is 'solved' or a compromise is reached. In the case of political and class-based movements defeat and annihilation seem to be possible. This suggests that biological variations or material-cultural differences of great longevity are not as easily dispensed with as class conflicts which pertain to a relatively briefer period and to more labial experiences. However, when both ethnic and social crisis coincide, the consequences are incendiary. This is the tiger that the Americans have caught by the tail – the nexus of Islam and the history of repression in the Middle East has got commentators talking about the third world war. Paul Johnson, writing in the *Wall Street Journal* of 9 October says,

America and her allies may find themselves, temporarily at least, not just occupying with troops but administering obdurate terrorist states. These may eventually include not only Afghanistan but Iraq, Sudan, Libya, Iran and Syria. Democratic regimes willing to abide by international law will be implanted where possible, but a Western political presence seems unavoidable in some cases.

I suspect the best medium-term solution will be to revive the old League of Nations mandate system, which served well as a 'respectable' form of colonialism between the wars. Syria and Iraq were once highly successful mandates. Sudan, Libya and Iran have likewise been placed under special regimes by international treaty. Countries that cannot live at peace with their neighbours and wage covert war against the international community cannot expect total independence. With all the permanent members of the Security Council now backing, in varying degrees, the American-led initiative, it should not be difficult to devise a new form of United Nations mandate that places terrorist states under responsible supervision.

This train of thought goes beyond all notions of terrorism and counter-terrorism. It envisages an apocalyptic clash of civilisations, a struggle in which no holds are barred. Terrorism is a concept that can be meaningful in a stand-off between humans and humans, not between man and beast. The point is that triumph or transcendence will thus project an APM, or an erstwhile terrorist, into another dimension – in the extreme cases of a Mohammed or a Lenin, even into another version of civilisation.

### **The unmasking**

And when does an APM become unmasked, debased in the eyes of its own constituency, rejected as nihilistic? This happens when defeats and prolonged setbacks lead to anarchy and turmoil in the constituency,

persuading the constituents themselves that generalised ruin will be the outcome.

This, however, raises some troubling concerns at this time. It would be reasonable to surmise that the onward march of global capitalism has suffered a serious reverse post-9-11. Whatever the short-term outcome of the Anglo-American assault on Afghanistan and other 'rogue' Islamic states, notwithstanding efforts of the ruling global elite to contain the negative fallout, the new world capitalist order is in the international dock. Social and political opposition in the third world, criticism in the West and impact of the global recession have contributed to globalisation's loss of the moral high-ground – think Argentina for example

Does this guarantee a new sunrise to banish the 'false dawn'? Does the rebuttal of capitalist globalisation mean a better world for the majority of the world's population? Well, things may not be that simple. We have read that '... oppressor and oppressed stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden now open struggle, a struggle that ended, either in the revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes' – emphasis added. The fearful bit, for us at this moment in history, is this final proviso. If global capitalism collapses what will take its place – a new rational social and economic world order, or widespread chaos and anarchy? The fall of Rome did not lead to the Renaissance but to a thousand-year Dark Age. The collapse of the global capitalist order can issue in a 'the revolutionary reconstitution of society at large' or in global economic collapse and worldwide depression, famine, anarchy and war. The choice is ours – 'The fault, dear Brutus, lies not in our stars but in ourselves, that we are underlings.'

### **The revolutionary reconstitution of society**

A rather long route has finally led us to the unmaking of a terrorist – that is the unmaking of a world that breeds terrorists, a world that needs terrorism. However, to eliminate the perverse world of global economic inequity and iniquity with nothing to put in its place will only substitute anarchy for terrorism and injustice. It is simply beyond the scope of this simple paper to begin a discussion of 'alternatives' to the existing world order. Some of the basic elements have been much discussed, devolution and decentralisation of power to communities, making the greatest use of technology, productivity and a knowledge economy (that is, 'no' to neo-Ludditism), concern for the environment and making man not market the centre of society. But all that is another story.

# Plural Identities

## Indonesian Women's Redefinition of Democracy in Post-Reformasi Era

MELANI BUDIANTA

### Introduction

The construction of gender roles during Soeharto's New Order has laid a not-easily-uprooted foundation for generations of Indonesian women. The gendered ideology of 'State-ibuisism' and the paradigm of 'women for Development' have for three decades served as gendered norms and model for behaviour.<sup>1</sup> The collapse of the old regime and the dawning of a new era in the making, gives rise to the following questions: what are the emerging new formulations of identity for Indonesian women? What spaces are available for Indonesian women in this unstable and belligerent transitional phase of the post-Soeharto era?

In answering the above questions, this essay challenges the assumption that the New Order paradigms completely and overwhelmingly contained women's everyday praxis. In fact, resistance and critical questioning of the dominant ideology have for the three decades occurred in the very sites of the New Order's ideological apparatus. Without such processes, it would not have been possible for women to have initiated a number of earliest challenges, and become one of the major force of the Reformasi movement to topple down Soeharto.

For three decades the state-sponsored organisation of civil servants' wives called Dharma Wanita was one of the foremost flag carriers of the New Order's model of womanhood, one which prioritises women's roles as supporter of her husband's career, as procreator and educator over her

citizenship in the nation-state. But it was the Dharma Wanita unit of the Gajah Mada University that launched one of the first political statements to urge President Soeharto to step down, using the Kartini Day celebration to mark women's subversion. It was also the 'mothers' who called themselves *Suara Ibu Peduli* – the Voice of Concerned Mothers – that initiated the earliest street demonstration to draw public attention to government mismanagement of the economy and its impact on mothers and children. In the chaotic days following the mid-May riot, women volunteers organised by the Violence Against Women division of the Voluntary Team for Humanity (TRKP) formed fact-finding missions and provided humanitarian care for riot victims.<sup>2</sup>

Women's activism in the Reformasi movement points not to a radical break between Indonesian women's 'old selves' and 'new selves,' but rather, to the upsurge of undercurrent processes of resistance, strategies of evasion and negotiation that have been going on within the existing structures. These praxis of resistance and reformulation of identities outside and within the dominant paradigm of State-ibuisism occurs in daily, personal, grassroots domains, which are now becoming the very sites of Indonesian women's actualisation of their diverse aspirations.

These processes of alternative gender construction have not been adequately observed before as they did not occur in the formal structural level – such as in formal political institutions, in the election of political representatives or in the hustle-bustle of party politics – which are most visible. The seeming absence of women in the formal political structures has often led to the assumption that the new democratic structures in Indonesia contribute little to change the existing gender relations. While it is valid to argue for this case, it is crucial to examine how women in Indonesia at this particular historical juncture struggle to redefine democracy in the realm of cultural politics and in socio-political arenas other than that of party politics.

In this essay I am going to show how, through grassroots activism, women in diverse places in Indonesia define what democracy mean to them by extending a remodelled concept of motherhood to the public sphere, by foregrounding the politics of peace and solidarity, by empowering victims of violence, by expanding the social base of women's activism and by establishing new axis of movements in the geopolitical peripheries. The emerging profile of Indonesian women in these processes are plural identities, with community based and humanitarian perspectives coupled with critical and political *'perempuan'* consciousness.

## Democratic spaces and identity politics

It is important here to contextualise Indonesian women's effort in redefining their gendered roles within the highly volatile transitional climate of post-Reformasi. When the repressive blanket of uniformity fell off with the descent of Soeharto, the ground was suddenly cleared for the eruption of one of the most raucous identity politics in Indonesian history.<sup>3</sup> In the dominant version of the New Order history the bloodshed of 1965 was portrayed as the result of the worst clashes of ideology to be avoided ever. This construction justifies the necessity for washing out of diversity (suppressing communist ideology, imposing control over beliefs and censorship on democratic expressions), a cultural policy which in the demise of the New Order backfires in violent expressions of diversity. The New Order censorship on 'sensitive issues' of ethnicity-race-religion-class differences since the mid-80s has effectively robbed the means for citizens to learn how to manage conflict and to address suppressed communal spite, rendering the general public to be highly susceptible to provocations of violence. As a result Indonesia at the turn of the century witnesses spreading ethnic, religious and communal strife in Maluku, Kalimantan and Sulawesi. The pendulum has also swung from centralistic orientation imposed by the militaristic state to de-centring forces that range from the demand for regional autonomy to civilian armed struggle for separatism. Javanese cultural hegemony under Soeharto's rule, real or imagined, rebound in anti-Java/anti-Jakarta feeling in other islands, flagged by awakening of regional cultural identities.

The hustle-bustle of identity politics in the re-emerging and yet unstable democratic space of post-Reformasi provides opportunity as well as threat for women to redefine their public roles. As early as December 1998, 500 women from then 26 provinces in Indonesia gathered in Yogya to convene in the first Women's Congress ever held after the independence and the fifth since its initial inception in the pre-Independence time.<sup>4</sup> For the first time since the rule of the New Order regime, women came out to the public forum, proudly asserting their identities and rights as sex worker, lesbian, transvestite and the urban poor. The congress created public controversy when the opening seminar presented Sulami, a member of Gerwani (a women's wing of the Communist Party that was abolished and persecuted during the New Order era). Such daring ventures speak of new spaces for actualising women's diverse selves.

On the other hand, the congress could not free itself from the atmosphere of suspicion and class or inter-group tension of its social political surrounding, making it difficult for the women to arrive at a

common platform. Another more serious problem that women have to face regarding their identities occurs when a question of loyalty is raised between two competing and overlapping cultural/political boundaries. Acclaiming a 'wrong' identity or affiliation can mean death for women in military operation areas where the Indonesian State is fighting armed separatist movements, i.e. in Aceh and in the border zone between Indonesian West Timor and Timor Lorosae. The 450 women who convened in the All Aceh Women's Conference (Duek Pakat Inong Aceh) in February 2000 suffered from intimidating threats on their lives by the warring parties. The Aceh separatist movement considered this conference, that avoided the issue of referendum, of being engineered by the 'Jakarta forces,' while the Indonesian government was wary of the inclusion of women representatives from separatist groups in the conference.<sup>5</sup>

The rise of religious and extreme rightwing fanaticism poses another serious threat that can limit women's freedom to shape their own identities. Examples are the assault by a rightwing Muslim group (Front Pembela Islam) to an AIDS conference held by homosexuals and lesbians and the recent book burning by the Alliance for Anti-Communism.

For both supporters of separatism and regional autonomy, the de-centring move of state power is the rise of regional cultural identity. But Indonesian women in the 21st century are yet to see whether the shift towards local culture also means the return of patriarchal traditional customs, that is more often than not justified by religious norms. The prospect does not seem too bright. At the moment the West Sumatra provincial legislature is in the process of passing a bill that imposes a curfew between 10 pm to 6 am on women, unless she is accompanied by her *muhrim*, the Islamic term for husband.<sup>6</sup> The bill also prohibit women's attires that can 'arouse male sexual desire.' Aimed at 'curbing immoral activities,' the bill not only discriminates against women but also justifies control over women's body.

Imposition of Islamic law is an impending future for many provinces. Aceh was the forerunner in adopting the Syariah officially. Other provinces such as South Sulawesi, Riau, Ambon and Cianjur have shown strong indication for doing so. A simple but clear material manifestation of such law is the requirement for wearing *jilbab* (the headscarves) for women.<sup>7</sup>

Women activists have responded critically over the issue and further delineated the potential disadvantages of regional autonomy on women.<sup>8</sup> Certain regulation in the provinces, including in Jakarta, clearly specifies that only the head of family can be elected as community representatives. In a system where husband/father is designated as the head of family (with the exception of widows), this regulation will certainly exclude

women from the public realm. In West Sumatra, regional autonomy brings the possibility of readopting a traditional institution for political representation called *Nagari*. But again, this pre-Independence traditional body had historically been an exclusively male institution.

The democratic space that opens up in the aftermath of Reformasi indeed promises opportunity for redefining one's political, social and cultural identities. At the same time, this space is highly unstable and fraught with identity politics that might in turn infringe upon women's freedom in defining and actualising their 'selves.' In this conflict-ridden period the immediate threat upon women's chance for shaping their own destiny is physical as well as cultural violence that comes both from the State and the civil society.

### **Women's politics**

In this explosive moment in Indonesian history, violence does not come only from inter-group conflict and identity politics, but also from the formal political arena. The recent controversy over the impeachment of the president and succession of the vice-president caused riots and rising tension between the religious and party organisations which support differing parties.

Since the beginning of the Reformasi, women activists seem to refrain themselves from engaging directly with day-to-day political controversy raised by party politics. To Kamala Chandrakirana,<sup>9</sup> the tug-of-war between the presidency and the house of representatives represents 'the cyclone of party politics' which she thinks not worth entering into as it is 'fraud with corruption, abuse of power and self-interest, a whirlpool where one has no control over the rule of games and directions.' Women's decision to stay out of party politics, in this perspective, is a conscious choice, an effort to 'redefine the dominant construction of what is called 'democratisation' and 'civil society.'<sup>10</sup> This redefinition constitutes what Nunuk Muniarti believes to be the principle of women's politics: 'We want to spread the understanding that politics is not all the barking and howling that we have now. Politics is not merely concerned with power but with social education and changing basic social system. The paradigm is based on women's lived realities, connected with their identity as a woman.'<sup>11</sup>

One most immediate concern that seems to connect directly to daily realities of women in this period is to stop violence. Women politics, as it is played by the National Committee on Violence Against Women, and dozens of mushrooming women's crisis centres and peace-solidarity groups, is strongly marked by the 'stop violence' message. In facing the



day-to-day increase of inter-group violence and the repressive enforcement of conservative patriarchal control over women, women politics cannot separate itself from the concern over human and individual rights. Hence, a democratic system is one of its most important stake. Only in a democratic space can women be empowered as subjects who have choices and a voice of her own. The decision of the Deuk Pakat Inong Aceh to say no to both the warring parties by making the All Aceh Women's Conference inclusive of women from opposite fronts clearly shows this democratic stance, albeit at the cost of being unpopular and unsupported by the media and the dominant political forces of both sides.

Democracy in women's politics also means diversification and plurality, the realisation that women in different places might have different needs, problems, and thereby their own agenda and strategies. The National Committee on Violence Against Women, for example, identifies and maps different forms of violence against women in different regions of Indonesia. Acknowledging the needs towards decentralisation, most women organisations look at local, grassroots communities as the arena where the real game of 'changing basic social system' will be played in the long run.

Pluralism of women's movement in this period also means diversification of strategies and approaches. While women's activism in the New Order period was often characterised with the dichotomy between State vs. NGO activism, the forms of organising in post-Reformasi is more fluid and mixed. The structural form of National Committee on Violence against Women and the cooperation of women police corps and women's groups to establish women's shelters are examples of such flexibility. For the purposes of immediate struggle, women often use loosely formed, short-term alliances represented by 'disposable' names such as 'Seruan Perempuan Indonesia' or 'Masyarakat Anti Kekerasan.' Other groups such as the many 'Perempuan Peduli' organisations are voluntary groups that have no permanent organisational structures. Sometimes these groups solidify into a more formal structure. While in the previous era, non-governmental activities generally took the form of *yayasan*, women at present are more versatile in finding different forms that suit their different needs, such as association, union or federation. But many groups do not bother with formal structures.

The emphasis on lived realities of women, non-violence message, the efforts in empowering of subjects in grassroots/local communities, and pluralism constitute the overall pattern of women's social and political actualisation in this period termed by Saparinah Sadli as 'The pluralisation of Indonesian Women's Movement.'<sup>12</sup>

### a. Redefining motherhood

For majority of women in overpopulated Indonesia, being a mother is a lived reality that is central to women's identity. Precisely because of that for three decades motherhood had been a site that is strategically managed by the New Order government for perpetuating its dominance, especially through the organisation of PKK and Dharma Wanita and through the control of reproduction in the family planning programme. As discussed by Suryakusuma (1996), Dharma Wanita's five principles constitutes what is termed as State-ibuism, the foregrounding of women's role as wife, supporter of husband's careers, as mothers and procreators of the nation, coming with it the role as educators of children. Only in the fifth and the last principle is her citizenship mentioned.

Yet, when a dozen women activists who called themselves the Voice of the Concerned Mothers (SIP) marched in the streets in February 1998 to protest economic mismanagement that victimised children, they were not perpetuating the same construction of motherhood, but making use of its power for completely different purposes. Consciously referring to the success of mothers of Plaza de Mayo, women activists had discussed the strategic way of opposing the masculine and repressive violence of the military with the nonviolent, 'unthreatening' rhetoric of motherhood which, whether it diverts or invites military repression, can potentially attract public support. In the ensuing women's rallies against violence and militarism throughout and after Reformasi, the rhetoric of motherhood is continuously highlighted in pointing to the atrocities of military violence.

The role of the SIP march in the fall of Soeharto might be debatable, but what is unmistakably clear is the effective call of motherhood in empowering women of diverse backgrounds into social and political activism during and after Reformasi. The lower middle-class women coming from all over Jakarta who subscribed to cheap milk distributed by SIP, for example, not only organised themselves under SIP but later claimed it for themselves, directing and forming it into an organisation that met their local, community-based needs. The space offered in this motherhood activism differs in many ways from the previous one provided under State-ibuism. Ari Sukirman, the present head of SIP coop who used to be the chair of a PKK programme, summarises the difference: 'The PKK policy is always top down, we women merely following what is prescribed by the local district governments; whereas SIP comes from the people's needs, giving women roles to help the community find solutions to their own problems.'<sup>13</sup> Many SIP leaders admit that previously as women their roles in their respective communities – where decisions are made by males as

the head of household – were limited to domestic, nurturing services (preparing logistic for meetings). As SIP branch leaders, they claimed that now their existence is recognised as an important social group that have insights and influence into community affairs. With this realisation is the dawning of critical consciousness of gender politics in the personal as well as social and political realm.<sup>14</sup>

### **b. Empowering victims of violence**

One of the crucial moments in the 1998 upheaval was the shocking disclosure of the May 13-14 rapes of Indonesian-Chinese women, which opened up for public discourse the closely guarded gate to the issues of State and military, and other forms of violence against women. Following the heatedly refuted disclosure of the May rapes was the revealing of similar patterns of violence in military operations and conflict areas from Aceh to then East Timor.

The appalling facts on the victimisation of women has drawn largescale voluntary activism in the form of fact-finding missions, mapping of violence, witness protection, legal reform, and victim support. One of the most significant structural breakthrough in this arena was the founding of the National Committee on Violence Against Women, a state-sponsored but independent body that is given national mandate to deal with the issue. Another new phenomenon in the post-Reformasi era was the establishment of dozens of women's crisis centres all over the country (27 of which were organised by the Fattayat NU, the women's wing of one of the biggest Muslim organisations). The cooperation of the Women Police and local NGOs in establishing women's crisis centres in police headquarters or hospitals is a noteworthy trend.

The entrance of violence against women and other gender issues into the public discourse has provided for women opportunities in discussing delicate issues which previously were considered taboo, such as domestic violence and the sexist dimension of certain religious decrees. What is most significant, however, is the creation of conducive atmosphere for victims of violence, not only to come forward in order to testify and to seek legal or professional support, but to transform their experience into healing processes that made them survivors and humanitarian activists. Many women victims of domestic violence served as volunteers for humanitarian and women's advocacy activism. Victims' mothers, such as the mother of Wawan and Yun Hap, students killed during student and army confrontation in 1999, and Ruminah, mother of a lower middle-class boy who were among hundreds of casualties of the May riots, became significant motivators in the organising of victims of state violence.

Formerly bound in domestic spheres, the middle-aged women join student demonstrations and give politically informed speeches in peace and pro-democracy forums. The launching of a new edition of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's translation of Maxim Gorky's *Mother* on January 30, 2001 by Kalyanamitra, a feminist NGO, is a timely reaffirmation of this process of empowerment of women victims to be active agents of social change.

### c. Forming interfaith network

In response to escalating inter-group conflict and violence in the wake of the 1998 upheaval, women in various places in Indonesia initiated interfaith activities, the most popular of which is interfaith prayers. Women consciously use symbolic tokens of religious difference (the Muslim jilbab and the nun's habit) to foreground messages of solidarity and tolerance. New interfaith forums such as MADYA (The Society for Interfaith Dialogue) are springing up after 1998.

Such forums look considerably meek compared to the recent aggressive rebound of extreme rightwing groups discussed earlier. At the same time the rise of conservatism makes such trans-border networking more urgent and valuable. Significant in this matter is the contribution of Islamic groups who continuously send out messages of tolerance in their reinterpretation of religious texts (such as P3M and Rahima). Also noteworthy is women's activism in conflict areas, such as that of Gerakan Perempuan Peduli (The Movement of Concerned Women) in Ambon, a group consisting of women of various religious backgrounds, including conflicting ones, which despite threat of their respective communities, managed to cross the vehemently demarcated borders to do peace and solidarity missions.<sup>15</sup>

### d. Redefining women's role in tribal, regional communities

The empowerment of women in tribal and regional communities during the shift of power to regional autonomy is one of the most urgent agenda for many women's organisations, especially since women activists have realised the precarious position of women vis-a-vis the resurgence of conservative patriarchal norms and tradition.

There are indications that women in many regions are seizing the momentum to claim their public roles. Despite bureaucratic obstacles from the military, and security officials, women in Papua managed to hold a pre-conference to prepare for the All Papua Women's Conference in July 2002. In many conflicts between local communities with private companies, the military or the state, women were actively involved, e.g. in the people's struggle against Indo Muro Kencana /Aurora Gold mining companies in West Kalimantan, sometimes using their bodies to literally barricade the land they are protecting.

The rise of woman leadership in communal affairs and the use of women's identity as a means of struggle is exemplified by Mama Yosepha, a woman from Amungme tribe in Papua, who was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize 2001 for her struggle against Freeport MacMoran Gold and Copper mining company in Papua. Since 1974 she has defended her people's land rights and gone further by legally persecuting the company in the US.

In her speech in front of her communities on May 9, 2001, Mama Yosepha refers to motherhood and being a woman as the source not only of her identity but also of her strength and power over her adversaries (the private company which collaborated with the military and the Indonesian government):

I am a woman, Freeport people come from women, the military people were born out of women's wombs. I am not afraid of Freeport, not afraid of the military nor the State, cause they were all born by women, too!<sup>16</sup>

Mama Yosefa's speech is not only filled with figurative plea, but is also highly political and critical. She mentioned that there are 25 countries benefiting from Freeport's ventures. She also refuted Freeport's claim that they have 'bought the land from the State.' 'Since when the State created soil, water, fish and karaka and give them to people so that they can take them back whenever they want?' Her sharp criticism of the company's strategies in 'buying' local leaders is phrased in gendered literary expressions:

Once Amungme had two leaders, one was a man called Thom Beanal, the other one a woman called Mama Yosefa. But Freeport took Thom Beanal and put Father Tom into the pipe together with the riches of the soil from Timika to be transported to America. Now Mama Yosepha raises Thom's bow and shoot the arrow to Freeport.<sup>17</sup>

In the confrontation between the local communities vs. bigger forces, such strategies by woman leaders generally receive public support. It becomes highly problematic when women have to voice their concerns vis-a-vis their own tribal communities. The All Aceh Women's Conference and all the threat and negative publicity that it got shows how risky it is for woman in tribal, regional communities to voice their own needs and concerns, apart from, and especially different or contrary from that of the bigger community.

### e. Building new axis of activism outside Jakarta

It has become increasingly clear that the future struggle in the women's movement will be fought in local, regional arenas. A new phenomenon that goes in line with the pull towards decentralisation is the emergence of new axis of women's activism outside and independent from Jakarta. JKPIIT (Eastern Indonesian Network for Women's Health) connects women from Papua to Kalimantan, who decide their agenda according to their specific needs. Similarly women in the North Sumatra Independent Women's Union answers the needs of women factory workers in urban areas, in rural mining areas as well as women working in informal sectors all over the North Sumatran region.

The regional diversification is accompanied by the recognition of women's perspective and needs in specific areas. Women's Working Group on Mining (TKPT) started as 'a joint effort to find solutions to conflicts regarding natural resources in mining issues by taking women as the central figure.'<sup>18</sup> Chandrakirana observes that in answering issues concerning women, many local organisations undergo the processes of politicisation. A women's Credit Union in Central Aceh started with specific economic concerns but ended up in raising awareness about violence against women. The Foundation for Women Micro-entrepreneurs finds that concern with economic condition could not be separated from efforts to secure political rights for women.<sup>19</sup>

The contribution of Indonesian women's movement in redefining democracy and strengthening civil society lies in this dispersion of activism across the regions and in the extension of social networking to connect women from heterogeneous background. Yet major efforts still need to be made to combine this 'democracy from below' with an effective political advocacy to change formal political structures, i.e. the electoral processes and political representation in local as well as national arenas, to secure women's rights to participate in the decision-making processes that will affect their lives.

## Conclusion

The era of Reformasi has opened up opportunities for women to redefine their identities. The emerging profile of the women's movement in this period is plural, grassroots/community-based groups in less structured organisations, working on basic humanitarian issues (land rights, human rights, economic rights) with a growing 'perempuan' consciousness. These women are not highly visible in the existing formal political structures, in the party politics or in the mass media. Yet the activism has been

continuously spreading, especially as there is a growing realisation that the post-Reformasi era is not only rife with new possibilities but also imminent with threats for women.

The most immediate threat that women in Indonesia in this period face takes the form of two kinds of violence. The combination of the culture of violence (militarism, inter-group conflict) with the violence of culture (conservatism, religious fanaticism) will render Indonesia a hostile place not only for gender equality but also for democracy. Whether Indonesian women could safely negotiate their ways out of and through these perilous traps in the times ahead is one of the biggest stakes of the Indonesian women's movement.

On the whole we have seen how women's activism in the post-Reformasi era use identities not as essentialist pigeonholes but as strategies, as cultural and political positioning. Be it in the name of 'women' or 'mothers,' women in diverse places in Indonesia have struggled to secure whatever space available to empower the powerless, to promote peace and solidarity, to distribute power, to appreciate difference and plurality, in short, to make Indonesia a safe place not only for a woman but for human beings to live with dignity.

#### NOTES

1. See Julia Suryakusuma, 'The State and Sexuality in New Order Indonesia' in Laurie J. Sears (ed), *Fantatising the Feminine in Indonesia*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996, pp 92-119.
2. See Melani Budianta, 'The Blessed Tragedy: The Making of Indonesian Women's Activism during the Reformasi Years' in *Challenging Authoritarianism: Connections and Comparisons between Indonesia and Malaysia* (Ariel Heryanto and Sumit Mandal, eds), forthcoming.
3. See Melani Budianta, 'Globalisation and Cultural Identity; the Case of Indonesia during the Monetary Crisis,' *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, vol 1, 2000, pp 109-28
4. The first Women's Congress was held in Yogyakarta in 1928, the second in 1935 in Jakarta, the third in 1938 in Bandung, and the fourth in 1941 in Semarang.
5. See Carla Bianpoen's thorough documentation of the conference in 'Aceh women show the road to peace: Reflection on International Women's Day' in *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, vol. 1 number 2, August 2000, pp. 363-6.
6. In West Java the informal imposition of the bill has victimised one woman, who was caught in the street as she went home too late from work. The masses took her and cut her hair until she was completely bald. See Kompas, 'Otonomi Daerah

- dan Rentannya Posisi Perempuan' (Regional Autonomy and the Precarious Position of Women), June 18, 2001, p.27.
7. See Devi Asmarani, 'West Sumatra Women Must be Home by 10pm' *The Strait Times*, May 20, 2001.
  8. See Kompas, 'Otonomi Daerah Bisa Merugikan Perempuan' (Regional Autonomy can Bring Disadvantages to Women'), 14 June 2001, page 10.
  9. Executive Director of the National Committee on Violence Against Women, interview, Jakarta, June 12, 2001.
  10. A quote from Ita F Nadia, from a roundtable discussion transcribed by Melani Budianta 'Reflections on the Indonesian Women's Movement After the Reformasi' in *Asian Exchange* vol.16, no.1, 2000: *Beyond Seattle: Challenges for the New Millennium*, ARENA, Hong Kong.
  11. Ibid.
  12. Ibid.
  13. Ari Sukirman, interview, 20 November 2001.
  14. SIP has also served as formal and informal forum for its members of diverse background to find peer support, to discuss strategies and map possibilities of change in gender relations in their homes and society. (Dini Yusuf, member of SIP board of advisor, interview, June 15, 2001). .
  15. See *Hidup*, 'Ketika Lentera Damai itu Telah Padam' (When the Peace Lantern is Extinguished ), 26 November 2000 p.18.
  16. 'Yosepha: Saya Panah Freeport Demi Kebenaran' (Yosepha: I shot Freeport in the Name of Truth') circulated to perempuan mail list group by Diskusi Bulan Purnama, 16 May 2001.
  17. Ibid.
  18. 'TKPT: A Breakthrough in Kalimantan Mining Advocacy for Women' from [www.jatam.org](http://www.jatam.org)
  19. Kamala Chandrakirana, in 'Reflections on the Indonesian Women's Movement After the Reformasi,' op.cit.



# Globalisation and International Security

ANURADHA CHENYO

A NEW SECURITY STRUCTURE for the world matching the interests of globalisation is being put together with amazing speed. The US is leading this effort under the mantle of fighting global terrorism supported by countries the world over. This reorganisation is marked by a new type of coalition of states; a tendency to bypass international organisations; changes in national security perceptions and laws; dismantling traditional strategic structures and more. This security structure seeks to provide a base for renewed globalisation and militarism and the hegemony of the promoters.

The September 11 attacks on the US were given an international construction and terrorism was depicted as an enemy without a fixed face or location and a global presence. To fight it the US and its allies arrogated the right to access all places at all times and by any means. For the first time all countries endorsed this kind of action. Just as globalisation changed international rules for the free flow of capital and technology, the rules of state sovereignty and security are also being changed. Countries welcomed US entry and they established new bases in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kandahar and Pakistan.

Another critical move for the new security structure was the creation of an international alliance against terrorism. States joined this alliance and used the opportunity as barter for human rights violations and regime based problems. The Russians were excused their human rights violations in Chechnya. Criticisms of Uzbekistan's, Turkmenistan's and Saudi Arabia's authoritarian regimes were dropped. The Pakistani dictator became friend

and ally as aid poured in and Jacobabad became a base for the US troops. Israel cited US actions for legitimising its military attacks on an unarmed people and targeting civilian Palestinian housing. The Indian home minister spoke of hot pursuit crossing the Line of Control, as acceptable international procedure. Preparations for an Indo-Pak showdown, after terrorist strikes on the Indian Parliament on December 13, was to follow the American and Israeli models.

In the second phase of this fight the Bush doctrine is turning the heat on Iraq, Iran and North Korea. They have been called the 'axis of evil' and preparations for strikes against Iraq for a purported regime change are being planned, with a view to increase controls on oil reserves from the recalcitrant Iraq. Countries like India, Russia and China who back the anti-terrorist coalition but also have alliances with Iran might be forced to sit back and watch while the US asserts its narrow agenda in this region in the name of the coalition.

This 'global' intervention differs from the historical variations of colonialism because of its international character and the support of leaders across the globe. The national leadership of Northern and embattled states legitimise such intervention. The inability of states to solve local and bilateral conflicts allows the handing over of international security to Western powers. In the process the US and its closest allies have created a global security network and market in their favour. The easy entry of oil multinationals like Unocal that is being facilitated by the new Afghanistan regime confirms this. The 'balance of power' if it exists is one between this globalised regime and ordinary people in the form of people's movements that oppose draconian measures, increased defence spending and national security states, as a threat to democracy and popular needs.

International institutions and legal instruments like the United Nations and Security Council resolution 1373 against terrorism provide for sanctions and even military action against nations that support any kind of terrorism. More such action-based resolutions can be passed and activated. But at the same time the US alliance acted outside the UN in the Afghan war. Members of the UN bodies allowed this to happen. This has set a precedent for international intervention on counts of combating terrorism and human rights violations and now regime change. With such internationally accepted yardsticks almost any state can be subjected to 'military-humanitarian' intervention.

These military-humanitarian interventions have increased at an unprecedented rate. The first testing ground was Somalia in 1993, when soldiers operating under UN humanitarian mandate fired on civilians. The Kosovo war was based on similar principles, and then Afghanistan. The

theory of 'humanitarian intervention' was born in late 19th century as a justification for European military interference in 'barbaric' societies. These theories have been recreated in terms like 'clash of civilisations,' 'crusades,' etc. which connect these security ideas to periods of colonisation and cold war.

In keeping with these international security norms many countries are refurbishing their internal security to construct stronger national security states. The US passed new emergency legislation on military tribunals for non-citizens that have virtually suspended the civil liberties of millions of people. This order defines a terrorist as one who the State believes has committed acts of terrorism, or conspired to commit acts 'that have caused or threaten to cause injuries or adverse effects on the US, its citizens, its national security, foreign policy or economy.' Anyone from European farmers agitating against MacDonald, a mob in Argentina that sets fire to an American shop, can qualify as terrorist suspects. Other countries like the UK and India, apart from the EU, want similar Acts in the name of national security.

Under globalisation, as the state gradually surrenders its traditional tasks there is an attempt to neutralise politics in the name of 'national interest' or 'national security.' In the process the state withdraws from its responsibilities in the social and economic sectors, and 'law and order' or militarist notion of security becomes the principal activity of the state. Many states give up looking after their own security to this international alliance, and the United States is willing to step into this sensitive area as the virtually undisputed world policeman. Thus for instance, after the December 13 attacks, President Bush offered India the assistance of the FBI and counter-terrorism teams to investigate. Pakistan and others continuously appeal for US intervention. The US has sent troops to the Philippines to fight the Abu Sayef, a local terrorist group.

The new security structure involves a massive upgradation of missile technology and a breakup of the old strategic structure. The United States' has announced a unilateral withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty, the cornerstone of the international strategic structure since 1972. The Russians have admitted that START II would also be undermined as a consequence. The US initiated the Nuclear Missile Defence (NMD) and President Bush believes that they need an entire generation of new missiles to 'protect America and her friends against all forms of terror, including the terror that could arrive on a missile.' Despite overwhelming evidence that the US and others would be more vulnerable to low-tech attacks rather than those from ballistic missiles, star wars has been authorised for more

than \$8 billion, an increase from the earlier budgetary plans for the programme.

The NMD would give the US an unprecedented technological superiority that would lead to a new kind of global militarism. History has shown that states cannot easily scale down wartime institutions and spending. US defence spending has gone up dramatically as threat perceptions rework into cold war legacies.

Year after year reports reveal the growing inequality between nations and peoples that globalisation has resulted in. This economic impoverishment has led to the breakup of traditional communities, deindustrialisation and marginalisation of the poor. Such injustice, intolerance and repression are the basis for fuelling terrorism and mercenaries. Instead of responding to these measures, unfortunately, it is regime security rather than people's security, that is the focus of state policy. People's security is a combination of economic and social goals based on equality, rights and societal pluralism. Without such goals any security regime is bound to fail or become authoritarian.

# Civil War and the Peace Process in Sri Lanka

JAYADEVA UYANGODA

## Introduction

A new attempt to bring about a negotiated settlement to Sri Lanka's two-decade old ethno-political conflict has been under way since December 2001. The immediate impetus for this peace initiative was provided by the political context of regime change that occurred as a result of the Parliamentary election held on December 5, that year. Soon after the parliamentary election, the new United National Front (UNF) government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Tamil insurgent entity, launched a joint initiative for an informal ceasefire.<sup>1</sup> While the LTTE's unilateral and informal ceasefire came into effect on December 25, the government also reciprocated with a similar informal ceasefire announcement. In February 21, 2002, the two sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) formalising that informal cessation of hostilities process. Then the two sides began preparations for direct negotiations to be held in Bangkok, Thailand. A key feature of this negotiation attempt is the facilitator-mediator role actively played by the Norwegian government. It is also quite obvious that Norway's third party role in Sri Lanka's conflict is strongly backed by the international community – notably the US, European Union, Japan, Great Britain, Canada as well as India.

Sri Lanka's past experiences in negotiation to end the ethnic conflict are not very encouraging.<sup>2</sup> The shadow of that negative past of failed peace attempts is cast over the present peace process as well. There have been three failed and exceedingly costly experiences in negotiation to end the

ethnic war. In July 1987, the Indian government brokered the first settlement effort through an inter-state treaty between India and Sri Lanka. The Indo-Lanka Accord of July 1987 envisaged the termination of war through a political accommodation between the Sri Lankan government and Tamil nationalist groups. The political mechanism proposed by the Indian government was the setting up of a system of devolution, granting a measure of regional autonomy to the Tamil majority provinces of the North and the East. The political mechanism for power-sharing was institutionalised through a constitutional amendment and most Tamil militant groups accepted the settlement as an initiative worth experimenting. But there was one guerilla group, the LTTE, that rejected the Indian-mediated settlement and continued the military campaign for independence. Amidst a crisis that brought the Indian army and the LTTE into direct confrontation, the Indian peace sattempt failed in the resurgent war.

The second attempt at a negotiated settlement to the ethnic conflict was initiated by Sri Lanka's President Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1989. Talks between the government and the LTTE continued for nearly a year. However, the entire process collapsed in June 1990 when the LTTE unilaterally terminated the unofficial ceasefire understanding. The third effort was in 1994-95 when the new government of People's Alliance initiated peace negotiations with the LTTE. After about six months of talks, the PA-LTTE peace process also came to an abrupt end in April 1995 when the LTTE resumed hostilities. A fourth attempt at negotiation was made in 2000 with Norwegian government's assistance.<sup>3</sup> Against the background of deep mistrust and hostility between the government and the LTTE as well as a history of costly negotiation failures, the PA government did not pursue the Norwegian brokered negotiation offer with any measure of confidence. The present peace initiative between the leadership of the newly-elected UNF government and the LTTE is taking place against a history of repeated failures in negotiation between the two sides. Can this attempt for peace be different from the previous ones? If so, why? These are two questions that encapsulate the hopes, anxieties and fears generated by the UNF-LTTE peace initiative of 2002.

### **Context of negotiation**

Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict can be characterised as a protracted ethno-political conflict that has remained militarised for almost two decades. Protracted internal conflicts are not easily amenable to negotiated settlement and this point has been made in numerous empirical studies

on contemporary intrastate conflicts.<sup>4</sup> There are profoundly daunting reasons for this difficulty. Contemporary theories of conflict resolution/settlement are also replete with insights that can provide useful perspectives on the future trajectories of Sri Lanka's conflict. One point that has become repeatedly visible in Sri Lanka's conflict is that political space favourable for the settlement and termination of protracted conflict is usually produced by conjunctures of processes that are quite rare. Sri Lanka's present peace initiative should also be viewed as a consequence of a rare configuration of political and military processes. The last time such an opportunity for peace opened up was eight years ago, in 1994. When that attempt failed, the two sides went back to all-out war which went on unabated for seven years. Indeed, the return to war in 1995 after breakdown of peace negotiations was a repetition of two previous instances of similar dimensions, the first in 1987 and the second in 1990. These indicate the presence of a fundamental and recurring challenge which Sri Lanka faces in moments of transitory peace; it concerns the task of establishing enduring peace through a sustainable negotiation process.

Has Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict reached the stage of its resolution, in the sense of weakening or breaking up the conflict's reproductive dynamics? Although there is no clear answer to this question too, what appeared to be evident at present is that the two main protagonists, the government and the LTTE, have a mutual interest in working out a framework in order to de-escalate the intensity of the war. Their willingness to enter into a formal ceasefire agreement giving the impression that the ceasefire condition might last for an extended period suggested that there had emerged a shared perception concerning the conflict: a political course of action was needed, leaving the military process to the background. In this context, there were two short-term political possibilities when the government and the LTTE signed the Memorandum of Understanding formalising the informal ceasefire. The first was the direct political engagement between the two sides through formal negotiations. The second was the working out of an interim arrangement, during or after negotiations, enabling the LTTE, or its representatives, to take over the administration in the Northern and Eastern provinces which the Tamil nationalists claim to be the traditional homeland of the Tamil nation.

In theory in its narrow sense, and in ideal situations, negotiation in a conflict suggests that the two parties to the conflict are ready to explore bilateral, joint solutions, in place of unilateral action and outcomes. A negotiated settlement to a conflict should mean it to be a joint and shared outcome, often worked out by the parties together. It is this element of

bilaterality that gives importance to negotiation in a conflict. In militarised political conflicts it may mean that the parties in war are beginning to jointly explore non-military, political options. Against these assumptions, a question that needs some exploration is: Are the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE at present actually committed to exploring joint political outcomes? Simply put, are the two sides ready for a negotiated settlement to the conflict?

In the political debate on Sri Lanka's present peace process, many critics make the argument that while the Sri Lankan government may be genuinely, and even naively, committed to a negotiated political solution to the ethnic conflict, the LTTE is certainly not.<sup>5</sup> On the question of negotiation, compromise and peace, the LTTE indeed has a great credibility deficit, primarily because of its past record of unilateral termination of the negotiation option. The LTTE's relentless commitment to a military strategy to achieve a separate state, as demonstrated throughout a continuous period of two decades, and its specialisation of violence as a means of political conduct, constitute a record that gives little or no credence to any declaration by the movement's leader that he is seriously pursuing a political solution and peace. In contrast to the LTTE, Sri Lanka's governments – both of the People's Alliance (PA) and United National Party (UNP) – have a better record of pursuing political options through negotiation. A popular perception of Sri Lanka's governments in this regard is that the government leaders who have initiated negotiation with the LTTE have been simply deceived by the LTTE's political cunning and treachery.

From the Tamil nationalist side too, there is a distinctly demonised understanding of the goals, strategies and intentions of the Sinhalese political leadership in Colombo. The LTTE's explanations of past negotiation failures point to the belief held by the Tamil insurgents that governments in Colombo have not been sincere about resolving the Tamil national question in a manner that would satisfy the political aspirations of the Tamil nation. They would also point out that during past negotiations, the Sinhalese political leaders were merely using the negotiation option to destroy the LTTE by politically isolating them from the Tamil people. This 'hidden agenda' and 'grand design' theory – a conspiracy theory of peace negotiation – to some extent explains why the LTTE has been the first party to break off the negotiation and resort to the first-strike option, as happened in June 1990 and April 1995. Even then, the point is that the LTTE leadership had not demonstrated much political trust towards Colombo governments, although they had engaged the government in talks.



When deep mistrust and mutual hostility had defined the government-LTTE relations for two decades of war, what has made it different this time around, enabling the two sides to engage in an exercise in peace and negotiations? An answer to this question becomes all the more complex when we take note of the fact that there are many, convincing arguments to debunk the belief that the two sides might not have any compelling inclination to resolve the conflict. As for the leadership of the present United National Front government, their record of blocking a political settlement during the previous People's Alliance government is a particularly dismal one. By not supporting President Chandrika Kumaratunga's constitutional reform initiative, present Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe, then the Leader of the Opposition, simply ensured the ultimate collapse of the PA government's peace project. What has made him now to be converted to a peace initiative? A dissimilar, yet profoundly more intricate, scepticism arises with regard to the LTTE's commitment to a negotiated settlement when we take into account the fact that the Tamil nationalist rebels remain militarily unvanquished by the Sri Lankan state. Indeed, the LTTE has been achieving spectacular military victories against the state since 1998. In a series of extremely costly military campaigns in 1998-2000, the Sri Lankan government lost to the LTTE territory, camps, troops and weapons in such a way that the LTTE leader could claim in late-2000 that his movement had achieved 'military parity' with the Sri Lankan state. The general experience of many anti-state guerilla movements is that the decision to negotiate with the state for a compromise is largely contingent on serious military defeats, grave political emergencies or an impending catastrophe. Rarely have militarily successful guerilla movements shown willingness to pursue a negotiated outcome, unless perhaps there are unendurable political costs involved in the military success itself.

### **Reasons for the negotiation option**

In Sri Lanka's political debate on the peace process, the question as to why the government has initiated a peace process with the LTTE is generally viewed as unproblematic. Since 1987, all Sri Lankan governments have pursued the negotiation option with the LTTE and, therefore, the general belief in the country is to treat government initiatives for negotiation as a part of normal politics. Since 1989, it has also been the case that either a regime change, or a change in the political leadership, has prompted peace initiatives with positive responses from the LTTE. Meanwhile, ruling parties, when they were in the opposition, have also had a tendency to take up

pro-negotiation positions. Such political conversions have mostly occurred in anticipation of parliamentary or presidential elections. As happened in 1994 and 2001, the governing parties, who earlier held negotiations with the LTTE, tended to be conservative, rigid and rejectionist in their stand towards the LTTE. In contrast, the main opposition party, anticipating electoral victories and seeking alliances with Tamil parties and voters, has been quite open to negotiation. Since 1994, inauguration of a peace process has thus become one of the first celebrative tasks of new regimes.

Besides the compulsions of parliamentary politics, the worsening economic crisis has provided a compelling context for the UNF regime to pursue the strategy of negotiation. In the year 2000, Sri Lanka's overall economic crisis has been characterised by negative economic growth. In the general background of global economic recession, Sri Lanka's economy suffered unprecedented setbacks in 2000-01 against continuing drought, rapid decline in foreign investment due to war, collapse of tourism industry and continuing macro-economic mismanagement. The continuation of the war could have pushed the economy to a state of collapse. Or, to put it differently, it would have been exceedingly difficult for the government to finance the war which consumes about 40 percent of government's annual budgetary allocations.

The reasons for the LTTE to enter into negotiations are obviously different. The explanation offered by ardent critics of the LTTE is that this time too, the LTTE leaders have merely deceived a gullible Sinhalese political leadership that was in search of Tamil votes at the election. According to this school of thought, the LTTE will merely use the conditions of ceasefire to rearm, regroup and reorganise themselves. This influential school of thought also argues that it would merely be a matter of time for the LTTE to unilaterally terminate the ceasefire agreement and launch a devastating attack on the government. The difficulty with this theory is that it totally rejects the possibility and utility of any political engagement with the LTTE. Characterising the LTTE as a fascist entity, it treats the LTTE as inherently incapable of politically engaging itself with the government.

A widely-held and popular explanation is that the changes in the global situation after September 11 have compelled the LTTE to change its strategy and pursue the ceasefire and negotiation path. The main focus of this explanation is on the possibility of the LTTE being treated as an international terrorist entity and eventually becoming a target of the global offensive against 'terrorism.' The LTTE, as the argument goes, does not want to run the risk of being hunted by the international community. In this theory, the best option available for the LTTE to survive abroad is to change tactics at home. Hence, according to this popular school of thought,

its 'opportunistic' move to appear to be interested in negotiation. However, on closer analysis, one would argue that the impact of September 11 on the LTTE politics is more complex than this easily comprehensible explanation.

Nonetheless, there are two levels at which the post-September 11 world is likely to have influenced the LTTE's strategic thinking: diaspora politics and the role of non-state actors in global politics. The LTTE's continuing commitment to a military strategy alone to serve what they call the political aspirations of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka would have reinforced the argument that the LTTE was essentially a terroristic entity, that has been operating not only in Sri Lanka, but also in a large number of Western cities. The harsh, anti-terrorist moves by the Western governments, if directed against the LTTE too, would have criminalised vast networks of Tamil diaspora politics, spread throughout the globe and controlled by the LTTE. This is where the LTTE leadership was probably compelled to protect the interests of the Tamil diaspora abroad, by opening up a political front at home. The second point of closing up the space for non-state actors in global politics was clearly demonstrated by the US military offensive and eventual destruction of the al Qa'ida as well as Taliban movements. The Anglo-American handling of the post-September 11 world very clearly demonstrated that the period in which non-state political movements with counter-state military agendas could operate freely and globally had effectively come to an end. The destruction of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, brought into power and sustained by the pro-American Pakistani military-political elites, was in a way a decisive turning point in the post-cold war global political order. What it indicated is that there is an American commitment, especially under Republican rule, to reconstituting and managing the global nation-state system as defined in the worldview of the American Rightwing. In this particular scheme of things, 'terrorists' are primarily those non-state actors engaged in threatening or breaking up of existing states locked into the US-led global system of nation-states. It is quite possible that the LTTE leadership understood these changing dynamics of global politics and responded with a remarkable sense of political sharpness of which their critics in Sri Lanka can only feel envious.

Other than global factors, there is a crucial domestic factor that needs to be brought into a discussion of why the LTTE has opted for negotiation. It relates to the contradiction between the LTTE's strategy of protracted war and the appallingly subhuman and unbearably harsh living conditions under which have Tamil people have been living for many years in areas that are under the LTTE's direct political, military and administrative control.

The standards of living among the Tamil people in the so-called 'uncleared areas' held by the LTTE have been constantly deteriorating due to the continuing ravages of the war. The tragic human dialectic of the LTTE's achievements as a counter-state insurgent movement has been that greater the military successes they have won, the harsher have been the conditions of life for the Tamil people living in the conflict zone. The continuing deprivations and material suffering of their own civilian populace should be a compelling reason for the LTTE to rethink their military strategy, despite the spectacular military gains they made in 1999-2001 against the government armed forces. The LTTE's dilemma at present is a profoundly serious one to be confronted by a politico-military movement engaged in a protracted armed conflict with the state on the premise that it represented the aspirations of a population, of an ethnic community. It is one thing for the LTTE to have been able to demonstrate to its own people and to the world outside that it had acquired a status of parity with the state in terms of military capability. But, it is an entirely different proposition for that movement and its leadership – the self-styled liberators – not to be able to provide even the bare necessities of a normal, regular life to the people under their military-administrative control. Against the backdrop of extremely severe material conditions of life for the Tamil people, it is not implausible to argue that The LTTE has been compelled to redefine its relationship with its own people in Vanni and the Northeast in terms of improving their life conditions. The LTTE's constant emphasis on the notion of 'normalising the day-to-day life conditions of the Tamil people in the Northeast' needs to be understood in this context.

### **Interim processes and limited peace**

A key implication of the above discussion of the current political engagement between the LTTE and the Government in Sri Lanka is that the two sides have developed a somewhat shared conception of 'peace' that is both pragmatic and limited. It entails political engagement to achieve what is possible, leaving aside contentious and intractable issues as constitutional reform or modes of power sharing. In other words, their negotiation agenda may not include the difficult theme of resolving the ethnic conflict, but mechanisms to manage it in a manner that is acceptable to both parties. Since the sides are in need of a 'no-war' situation for some time to come, they were quick to formalise the unilateral ceasefire with mechanisms for international monitoring. After the Memorandum of Understanding signed by Prime Minister Wickramasinghe and LTTE leader Prabhakaran on February 21, an international monitoring mission was

indeed set up to monitor violations. It is also likely that the ceasefire, once formalised, may last for even more than a year. One possibility is that both the government and the LTTE have a commitment to a ceasefire over a fairly extended period of time.

If the extended ceasefire is an immediate objective of the LTTE's political engagement with the government, what would it actually want to achieve during and through a period without war? As we have already noted, critics have been arguing that the LTTE will merely use the ceasefire as a cover to rearm the movement, recruit and retrain the cadres and consolidate its control over the Northeast. There is, however, another domain of possibilities that seems to escape the attention of the critics. It entails the LTTE moving towards using the space opened up by the ceasefire to rebuild and develop the Northeast economically. There are signals to indicate that a whole series of new activities in the Northeast, directed towards 'normalisation of civilian life' is likely to begin soon. This time around, the meaning of the phrase 'normalisation of civilian life' would mean more than lifting the embargo on goods or fishing rights and facilitating the movement of civilians. The fact that the main access roads are demined and opened up for traffic by the LTTE itself is an indication that a government-LTTE joint programme for rehabilitation, resettlement, reconstruction and development is feasible in the Northern and Eastern provinces. The LTTE's conception of an interim administration in the Northern and Eastern provinces is to a considerable measure motivated by this long-term goal of economic development. It needs to be recognised that on the vision and strategies of economic development, the LTTE and the UNP government are likely to differ substantially. While the government might want to extend to the Northern and Eastern provinces the market forces for rapid economic development, the LTTE, with its economic nationalism and the ideology of welfarist self-sufficiency, is most likely to resist the government moves to link the 'Tamil homeland' to global market forces.

In any case, the recognition of the feasibility of an interim process as a prelude to conflict settlement is another area where the UNP-LTTE understanding of the trajectories of the ethnic conflict seems to coincide. The UNP's thinking for many years has been that in the highly fragmented Sri Lankan polity, solving the ethnic problem through political and constitutional means is simply not possible. The UNP's strategic line of thinking has been to manage the conflict in such a way that government efforts could be invested in the sphere of economic growth. In this argument, there is an economic assumption: consequences of rapid economic growth involving the Northeast would be more effective in

handling the ethnic conflict. This perspective finds its parallel in the LTTE's apparent shift from military strategy to a developmentalist strategy. If the LTTE is committed to economic and social development of the Northern and Eastern provinces – one of the most ruined regions in the world which Sri Lankan Tamils call as their homeland – it should in the present conjuncture halt the military campaign to achieve its separatist agenda. Gains on the military front have not enabled the LTTE leadership to feed their own people. Every military gain has indeed worsened the living conditions of the very people to whom the LTTE claims to give leadership. In a most interesting way, the perspectives of the UNP and LTTE leaderships on the options concerning the ethnic conflict appear to intersect.

### **LTTE's positions on negotiations**

On April 10, 2002, the LTTE leadership held a press conference in Vanni in order to explain its stand on the peace process. The LTTE's leader, who had remained elusive for many years, himself led the press conference to which local as well as international media were invited. It appeared that the LTTE had decided a major public relations campaign to gain international legitimacy for its new peace offensive. At the same time, the press conference is important because it enabled the top leadership of the rebel movement to set out their positions on a number of complex issues involved in the negotiation process. The LTTE leader emphasised at this media briefing that the de-proscription of the movement was a precondition for the LTTE's participation in any negotiations. In the proposed Bangkok talks, the LTTE's focus would be entirely on creating an interim administrative setup for the Northern and Eastern provinces. A crucial point made by the LTTE leader is that the theme of a political solution to the ethnic conflict would not be in the negotiation agenda. Prabhakaran also observed that the present Ranil Wickremasinghe administration did not have the political capacity to resolve the conflict as such. The LTTE, under new circumstances, was willing to reconsider its separatist goal as well as the armed struggle, yet it has not yet found suitable objective conditions to give up either. According to the LTTE leader, the task of offering to the Tamil people an alternative to the separate state was the responsibility of the Sri Lankan government. However, for such an alternative to be credible, it should be based on three 'core principles,' namely, Tamil nationhood, the concept of Tamil Homeland and the right of the Tamil people to self-determination.

The reaction in Colombo to Prabhakaran's press conference as well as the points he made was mixed. The only significant positive response

came from the Prime Minister who saw in the LTTE's message a willingness to accept a solution to the ethnic conflict within a framework of 'internal self-determination.' Other responses were largely negative and hostile. Indeed, this press conference provoked fears, expressed in apocalyptic terms, that the LTTE leader was out to play his usual game of deception on a much greater scale this time than he did in the past. The point the critics of the LTTE made was that the press conference merely proved the possibility that the LTTE, by means of peace talks and through the interim administration, had a grand design to achieve what the movement had so far failed militarily, namely establishing its absolute hegemony, both political and military, over the entire Northeast.

### **Limited peace as transformative peace**

The discussion above suggests that the most feasible outcome of Sri Lanka's present peace is likely to be de-escalation of the war. It is obviously a peace process with a limited agenda, limited scope and limited trajectories. For both sides, containment of war has become a politically desirable goal. How should the peace constituency that stands for lasting and sustainable peace, respond to a limited peace agenda of ethnic elites?

One way to respond to the above question is to recognise the contribution that can be made by limited, interim processes to transformatory dynamics of protracted conflicts. As contemporary research findings of many global conflicts tell us, protracted ethno-political conflicts, like the one we have in Sri Lanka, are 'unending conflicts.' There are marked by what Fen Osler Hampson (1996) has recently called 'self-sustaining patterns of hostility and violence.' Getting the parties to the negotiating table and building momentum towards an agreement are enormously difficult exercises in such conflicts. Even if one is lucky enough to secure an agreement, an even greater challenge is to translate the agreement into a concrete package of mutual commitments and undertakings aimed at ending violence while the political order is restored. This challenge is sharper and greater in ethnic conflicts where the question of state power is contested through a secessionist insurrection. Researchers now argue that 'separatist wars' are a special type of civil war that have no definite ending or termination as such. A feasible way to handle them is through interim processes, that entail trial and error, so that conflict is transformed into a political mode that requires no violence and war.

In this sense, a limited peace process has positive consequences. The most positive aspect of the present situation is that both the government and the LTTE have opened up a political front and both sides want to stay

in it for some time. Then, there is the international community, with its limited resources, to make the two sides accountable concerning their behaviour. If the present ceasefire extends for some time to come, with de-escalation of the war, it may generate new dynamics for conflict transformation. Normalisation of civilian life, the return of the refugees and the displaced, reconstruction and reintegration of the communities, people to people contacts – all these are possibilities under conditions of a sustainable ceasefire. These are possibilities that can transform the logic of the present conflict, making conflict resolution preferable to conflict management of the pragmatic kind.

### **Issues: LTTE's de-proscription**

Among the contentious issues that have come up in the present peace process is the question of the LTTE's de-proscription. In Sri Lanka, the LTTE is banned as a terrorist entity under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. It has been argued by the LTTE that de-proscription is necessary for it to come to the negotiation table. The LTTE's position is that it will not talk to the government as long as it is treated as an illegal, or criminal entity. Although the Ranil Wickramasinghe administration earlier appeared to be willing to lift the ban on the LTTE,, strong resistance from the opposition parties and the powerful Buddhist clergy has compelled the government to find an alternative. Hence talks about a temporary suspension of the ban when the talks begin.

The question of the LTTE's de-proscription runs deeper into the complexities of peace negotiations. For the LTTE, the ban has placed the movement in a state of inequality – a sort of structural asymmetry – vis-à-vis the government at negotiations. The LTTE's own approach to negotiations is to go to the negotiation table as an equal partner with the government, and not as a mere terrorist or guerilla group. This parity in status is a crucial precondition for the LTTE itself to politically accept the negotiation with the adversary – the Sri Lankan government – as a politically meaningful exercise. It is a belief emanating from the position that the LTTE represents the political aspirations of a nation with a right to sovereignty. For the LTTE, the Tamils are not an ethnic minority, but a nation. As the LTTE leaders have been very careful to say during the past so many years, what Sri Lanka has is not a minority problem or an ethnic question, but a national question – parties to which are two nations, the Sinhalese and the Tamils. The LTTE's recent strategy of forcing most of the Tamil parties and groups to form one political unit, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and act as some sort of a political mouthpiece of the LTTE



accepting the latter's dominance needs to be understood in this context. The LTTE's claim, and recent reiteration, to be the sole representative of the Tamil people is also linked to the objective of de-proscription and its conceptual foundation of parity at negotiations.

The Sinhalese nationalist opposition to the government's political engagement with the LTTE is also centred on this question of de-proscription. As its spokespersons have recently argued, not incorrectly, de-proscription would grant the LTTE the status of parity with the government. Some politically savvy Sinhalese nationalists argue that they are not opposed to government-LTTE talks as such. Rather, their opposition is to removing the ban on the LTTE as a precondition for talks. Interestingly, this argument also reveals a deepseated ideological position held by Sinhalese nationalists: since Tamils are not equals with the Sinhalese, why share political power with an inferior, unequal minority?

### **Government-opposition debate**

The political context in which Sri Lanka's present peace process has been unfolding is also defined by the hostile nature of government-opposition relations. It is virtually impossible for any ruling party to effectively address the ethnic conflict without the consensual cooperation of the main opposition party. During the previous People's Alliance administration, efforts made to reform the country's constitution as a step towards conflict resolution failed, mainly because the United National Party, then in the Opposition, refused to cooperate with the government. The government-opposition cooperation is crucial on two counts. Constitutional amendments that are necessary for any post-settlement political initiative require the combined strength of the ruling and opposition parties. More crucially, no peace initiative would stand to succeed, unless it receives political legitimacy as well as the active support of major Sinhalese political parties.

The parliamentary political equation in Sri Lanka at present constitutes a precarious balance between the UNF and the PA. The UNF runs the government, by virtue of its having a majority in parliament. Yet, the office of the all-powerful President remains with the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), whose ruling coalition, the People's Alliance, lost at the parliamentary election held in December 2001. Although this new political equation theoretically opened up the door for a French-style regime of cohabitation, it has not so far happened in Sri Lanka. In the context of growing rivalry between the UNF-SLFP, the direct support of the President to the peace process has become a distant possibility. This rivalry gets

expressed in a variety of ways. In the debate on the agenda for government-LTTE talks, the SLFP and President Kumaratunga have opted for a hardline approach, advocating that 'core' or 'substantial' issues should be brought to the negotiation table.

An SLFP statement issued in mid-April 2002 on the current peace process has urged the UNF government to bring the 'core issues' to the centre of agenda of talks with the LTTE. It has proposed that the President, the Prime Minister and the government should endeavour 'to persuade the LTTE to enter into talks on the core issues' in order to arrive at a lasting settlement to the ethnic conflict. While giving primacy to 'core issues' in the negotiation agenda, the SLFP statement has warned the government that they oppose talks on the formation of an interim administration before the 'core issues' are settled. 'An interim administration,' the statement continued, 'should be talked about and formed only after reaching a final settlement of the problem of the minorities.'

It appears that the UNF government's initial approach is not to bring what may be broadly termed as core issues to the immediate negotiation agenda. The LTTE's position was also a similar one. On this, the LTTE's position has been clear and consistent. Since 1995, it has been arguing that its talks with the government should focus not on the 'causes of the ethnic conflict,' but rather 'consequences of the conflict.' The objective of such talks, according to the LTTE, should be for working out the 'modalities for the normalisation of civilian life' in the Northern and Eastern provinces. The LTTE also argued in 1995 that once the 'consequences of the conflict' are addressed, there would be better conditions for dealing with complicated 'causes of the conflict.'

In this approach to talks, there seemed to be a confluence of understanding between government and the LTTE. They preferred talks on the resolution of the ethnic conflict to enter the agenda after some normalisation of life in conflict areas is restored and a credible degree of mutual trust built. They also seemed to believe that the trust-building process, spanning over some time and producing concrete results, was necessary before the core issues are brought to the table. This was a welcome development, although critics said that the postponement of political talks on the core political issues was an LTTE ploy to evade the resolution of the conflict.

This approach to talks initially opted for by the UNF and the LTTE constituted what could be described as a multi-phase approach to ethnic conflict settlement. The debate on core issues vs interim process goes on in Sri Lanka with no early resolution of it in sight. There are indeed good reasons as to why it is not a good idea to bring core issues to the immediate

negotiation agenda when the state and insurgents begin to engage with each other politically after years of war and failed negotiations in the past. To begin with, in a conflict like in Sri Lanka, the core issues are not all that clear. What the Colombo government, whose thinking is largely shaped by Sinhalese perceptions of the Tamil ethnic question, considers as 'core issues' may not necessarily be what the LTTE, or Tamil nationalists, would perceive as 'core issues.'

Just to give an example, many Sinhalese politicians, both in the UNF and PA, would consider the 'discrimination of the Tamil minority' as a core issue that has led to the present ethnic conflict. They are most likely to advocate the entrenchment of 'minority protection' clauses in the Constitution as constituting a 'core solution' to the ethnic conflict. But the Tamil nationalist response to such an understanding of the ethnic conflict would be entirely different. They are most likely to argue that the problem of Sri Lankan Tamils is no longer one of minority discrimination or their protection through legal safeguards alone, but a question of a 'minority nation' with a right to shared sovereignty with the majority nation. In the latter case, finding a political settlement would be more than an exercise in constitutional or institutional reform, but one of reconstituting the state, its constitutional order as well as the political structures.

As the above example indicates, when we look at the future trajectories of Sri Lanka's negotiation process from the perspective of the issues and the agenda, there is a point that should not be ignored at any cost. It concerns the fact that there has not been much dialogue between the Sinhalese and Tamil polities on the framework of a settlement. Actually, a mutually agreed settlement would require the accommodation of a militarily successful secessionist movement in the structure of the Sri Lankan state. That state cannot be the old, pre-existing one. In resolving ethno-political conflict through political means, there is absolutely no room to return to old politics. The conflict resolution exercise should be a joint march towards new politics. In fact, there exists a vast gulf between the Sinhalese and Tamil – or the government and insurgent – conceptualisations. Narrowing down of that gulf requires a great measure of flexibility and creativity in the way the Sinhalese polity and its ruling elites as well as the political class look at the state, its constitutional foundations and power structures. However, even amidst the protracted ethnic conflict, there has not been any significant move so far in Sri Lanka to find out what these core issues are and how a common ground could be forged. This observation applies to the majority Sinhalese polity too. There has not been any dialogue or consensus among major Sinhalese

political forces about the core issues of the conflict and their resolution. In fact, on the question of core issues of the ethnic conflict, the Sinhalese polity is also deeply divided. The SLFP and the radical nationalist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), who have built a coalition against talks with the LTTE, have no common approach to many issues concerning the ethnic conflict. In fact, the JVP's extreme Sinhalese nationalism is at odds with the moderate liberalism of the SLFP under Chandrika Kumaratunga. If the UNF government engages the LTTE on core issues without a firm bipartisan consensus in the Sinhalese polity on the core issues, the talks are most likely to end in failure. Against this backdrop, bringing them to the negotiation table in the present circumstances would not help the cause of conflict settlement. On the contrary, it would force the two sides to rediscover their differences, find new ones and engage in endless ideological polemics.

### **Human rights in 'illiberal' peace**

Another particularly complex problem of Sri Lanka's present peace process entered the centre of political debate as soon as the government and LTTE leaders signed the MOU in February. It centred on the question of democracy, human rights and pluralism in the Northern and Eastern provinces under a possible LTTE interim administration. Many human rights groups expressed serious doubts about the wisdom of the very idea of an interim administration under LTTE hegemony because of its likely disastrous consequences for human rights, democracy, pluralism, accountability and the rights of the regional minorities. The University Teachers for Human Rights (UTHR-Jaffna) in their latest report have dramatically highlighted these concerns by branding this negative trajectory as 'totalitarian peace.' At the heart of this debate is a profoundly complex issue: how should the Sri Lankan state in search of peace handle the militaristic LTTE, which has also joined the peace process on its own terms?

In the current debate on the peace process, many critics continue to characterise the LTTE as a 'fascist' entity with its own uniquely unreformable qualities. They do it with good reasons. The enduring commitment to the goal of a separate state, the unwavering belief in the efficacy of the military path to achieving that goal, subjugation of political options to military objectives, ruthlessness in the deployment of violence, terror and deception as means to power, and the calculated disregard for even elementary norms of democracy, human rights and pluralism are often posited to be some key characteristics of this unique movement called the LTTE. These certainly

are also some of the key features that have distinguished the LTTE from all other militant Tamil groups.

However, the question with which the Sri Lankan state is confronted at present concerns a difficult choice: continuing the war or making peace with an illiberal oppositional entity. The 'totalitarian peace' thesis describes a totally negative outcome of that peace for the people in the Northeast provinces once the LTTE gains control of the region under the proposed interim administrative body. The way in which many human rights activists problematise this peace dilemma also assumed that a totalitarian peace could be the inevitable outcome of an unequal political exchange between a 'weak liberal state' and a militarily strong and counter-state 'fascist' entity. It posited that the weak liberal state was on the way to capitulate before the regional fascist force and that that capitulation would mean the state abdicating its political responsibilities for the citizens living in the region.

A somewhat different trajectory might also be mapped out to theorise the outcome between the present political engagement between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE. In that reading, that exchange could be interpreted as one between a 'relatively illiberal state' and an 'essentially illiberal' regional entity. Its worst outcome is most likely to be some form of 'illiberal peace,' which may well be a transitional phase in Sri Lanka's emerging process of state formation. It also appears that there are no alternatives to this transitional phase unless there emerges a new political force in Tamil society that is not only democratic and pluralistic, but can also effectively replace the LTTE. But, there is hardly any space for such a change to occur in Sri Lankan Tamil politics as long as the Tamil society continues to be crushed under the weight of war and violence. This constitutes one aspect of Sri Lanka's present peace dilemma.

In order to contextualise the peace dilemma as outlined above, it is necessary to acknowledge that the LTTE's essentially illiberal character has been largely concretised under social and political conditions of protracted and deadly intrastate war. The war has destroyed the social foundations of the Tamil polity and they cannot be easily repaired. In class terms, the Sri Lankan Tamil society in the Northeast has been atomised and torn asunder. A total economic collapse, population displacement, out-migration and the absolute destruction of commerce, trade and manufacture have ravaged its class structure. At present, there is no class centre of gravity in that society. Nor is there a civil society as such. If at all, it exists underground, or abroad. As some anthropological studies on the Eastern province indicate, the only pockets of community autonomy remaining in the Northeastern society, even with a limited political space to function, are linked to the church, the *kovil* (hindu temple) and the

mosque. Amidst continuous destruction of social relations of community life in the Tamil society, the religious community has survived as the only functional form of civil society. The impact of all this on the political society of the Sri Lankan Tamil community has been quite harsh. Indeed, the Sri Lankan and Indian states as well as the LTTE have directly contributed to the collapse of the Tamil political society in the island's Northern and Eastern provinces.

Parallel with this continuing process of social dislocation for about two decades has also been an acute political crisis, as characterised by the collapse of the Sri Lankan state in the Northern and Eastern provinces. When the state there collapsed, the LTTE and a few other Tamil paramilitary groups began to run the bare, coercive functions of the state primarily through open violence. Professor Charles Tilly's classic characterisation of the early state as a protection racket has a remarkable application to these contemporary conditions of Sri Lanka's Northeast. As many recent examples from Africa, the ex-Soviet Union and Yugoslavia demonstrate, in the absence of the formal state as well as in the conditions of civil war and the collapsed state, predatory networks for taxation, extortion and protection come to replace the agencies of the state. It is quite interesting to note that the agencies of the state as well as guerilla groups, the latter claiming to represent the interests of the people, have been sharing these predatory functions, with a great deal of rivalry and competition for many years.

The above indeed presents a formidable challenge which any project of peace in Sri Lanka's Tamil society is certain to confront. Indeed, one infinitely complex task involved in a comprehensive peace project is the restoration of the formal Sri Lankan state in the two provinces while reintroducing liberal political institutions as well as practices. Such a journey from the collapsed state to a 'liberal state' is a profoundly difficult one. It requires the incorporation into the formal state structures of a range of competing agencies of power, violence, extortion and protection rackets. At one level, there already exist rudimentary structures of two competing states that are not 'liberal' by any means – the military-administrative structures of the collapsed Sri Lankan state in the region and the military-administrative structures of the LTTE-led *quasi* state. In a social sense, both are *quasi* states in the Northeast and their anticipated negotiations for coexistence and mutual accommodation would carry immense risks for both sides. At another level, there exists the less difficult task of dealing with the agencies run by the local and international donor NGOs as service delivery networks. They constitute a *quasi* civil society in the Northeast. The fear among many is that the LTTE would try to

incorporate this *quasi* civil society too into its political structures, leaving no room for social autonomy. These apprehensions clearly indicate that the post-MOU state formation process in Sri Lanka's Northeast is quite serious – more so than many of its supporters as well as critics might want to acknowledge.

Thirdly, the new political structures in a post-settlement process, if they are to be sustained as integral entities of the Sri Lankan state, need to locate themselves in some social-class foundations. Arrangements for post-civil war political power without a class supporting the new order may run the risk of being tenuous and transitory. For a post-conflict 'liberal' political order in the Northeast to sustain itself, it will need the backing of a Tamil regional bourgeoisie that is organically linked to the Sinhalese bourgeoisie and the Sri Lankan state. All these represent a historical agenda that is hard to fulfil in the short run for any society that is emerging from a protracted civil war. Indeed, historical conditions cannot be created overnight. This problem constitutes a key dilemma of the liberal peace agenda in post-civil war societies.

But, should the people in the Northeast and Sri Lanka endorse and tolerate an 'illiberal' peace? Opinion is divided among civil society groups on this issue. A constructive approach would be to conceptualise the post-civil war peace and state formation in transformatory terms. The idea of transformative peace can offer a creative way out from the divisive debate on 'liberal peace' vs 'totalitarian peace.' As already pointed out in this paper, a transformatory peace agenda can focus on a broad political programme for reconstituting the state not merely in the sense of restoring the state in the Northern and Eastern provinces, but also reforming the Sri Lankan state in general. This view could be easily anchored on the premise that a further democratised state in Sri Lanka would provide a greater impetus for post-conflict democratic state formation in the Tamil and Muslim polities as well.

Indeed, the existing proposal for an interim administration in the Northern and Eastern provinces can be linked to a broad process of transformatory peace and democratic state formation. Restoration of the state in the post-settlement Tamil society requires the setting up of non-coercive state structures that are to perform the so-called normal functions of the state – taxation, service delivery, law and order and so forth. In this sense, the interim administration should be seen as a major step towards creating civilian institutions in Sri Lanka's post-civil war North and East. But, there is the negative possibility of the LTTE subjecting it to its military-coercive apparatus and transforming it to suit its own authoritarian political objectives. An effective way to arrest that possibility is to engage the LTTE

in a series of agreements in the new process towards political institutional building in the Tamil polity. Human rights protection arrangements could be made integral to such institutional arrangements and agreement with the LTTE. In fact, if the LTTE is to perform civilian functions of the state through an interim council, that *transition* could be effected through a series of negotiated treaties between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE, if necessary, supervised by the international community.

## Conclusion

Sri Lanka's present peace process is facing a range of challenges that are not easy to overcome. Crucial among them is the absence of a political balance of forces favourable to war termination and a political settlement with the LTTE. Sri Lanka is a deeply divided society and the continuing war has reinforced relations of deep mistrust among communities. Against a backdrop of such divisions and mistrust, initiatives for peace have also generated fear, insecurity and anxieties concerning the outcomes of peace. The most prudent strategy to advance peace under such conditions is to link the negotiation process with efforts towards sustainable reconciliation. However, the way in which the peace process has been designed in Sri Lanka at present does not link the official negotiation exercise with community reconciliation. Both the government and the LTTE appear to view the eventual settlement they might work out as primarily an agreement between the leaders of the two sides. This is essentially an elitist approach to peace-making that has serious limitations.

The real potential for sustainable peace inherent in the present negotiation process in Sri Lanka may be found in its transformative capacity. If the two sides can continue their political engagement while turning the ceasefire into a protracted no-war condition, there will be greater possibilities for new objective conditions to emerge that might make war irrelevant to inter-ethnic relations in Sri Lanka. Thus, the most positive transformatory dynamic that could emerge in conditions of a protracted ceasefire is delinking of the Tamil national question from war and violence and relocating it in democratic politics.

## NOTES

1. The United National Front is a coalition led by the United National Party (UNP), which has been the leading Rightwing political party in Sri Lanka. The UNF was formed in mid-2001 by the UNP along with the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), the Ceylon Workers' Congress and a breakaway group from the People's Alliance



(PA). After the election, the UNF formed the government by virtue of its getting a majority seats in the parliament. Yet, the office of the Presidency continues to be held by Chandrika Kumaratunga, the head of the PA. This is an unusual situation that resembles the French experience of cohabitation between the Socialists and Christian Democrats. But in Sri Lanka, the cohabitation has not become a reality and deep differences between the two parties continue to keep the PA President and the UNF cabinet in a relationship of hostility.

2. Among the volumes that provide extensive discussions on Sri Lanka's past attempts at negotiation are Kodikara (1989), Loganathan (1996), Muni (1993) Rupasinghe (1998) and Rotberg (1999) .
3. For a discussion on the failed attempt to resume negotiations in 2000, see Uyangoda (2002:195:250).
4. Literature on protracted intrastate conflicts and complexities involved in their resolution is quite extensive. Some selected texts are Hampson (1996), Harris and Reily (1998), Mail et al (1999), Stedman (1991), Zartman (1989 and 1995).
5. In Sri Lanka, a passionate debate on the merits and demerits of the peace process has been progressing for months, primarily in the newspapers and television. Even Buddhist monks appear on television debates advocating continuous war against the 'terrorist' LTTE . The Fear of peace expressed in these debates is symptomatic of a deeprooted civilisational crisis sustained by conditions of protracted war and violence.

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**Making Sense  
of Human  
Security**



# Rethinking Human Security

VINOD RAINA

I AM NOT AN EXPERT on security studies or strategic studies at all. I must disclaim that completely. My introduction to writing something on this has to do with Prof. Kinhide Mushakoji, in fact to the time when he organised a conference on human security two years back at his university in Tokyo, where he was director of the International Peace Centre. Around that time I was involved with a group in India in writing a human development report, the first report outside an international body like the UNDP at the subnational level, for the state of Madhya Pradesh. It was during the course of writing that report, when there were many technical things like setting up human development indices for a subnational geographical region, that the linkages between security and development first started becoming more apparent or on the surface to me. And it was in that context that I got involved in writing something about rethinking human security.

Since then within ARENA we have been discussing the issue a lot. I must also say that though we are discussing the theme of rethinking human security, it is not as if there is a unique view to it, or views to it that everyone agrees to, or that it is an issue where there are no debates within the community of ARENA and its associated people. So what I am going to present is certainly one view, and the idea of this Congress is for many views to emerge as also some kind of a consensus, and also counter-views where we might see the notion of security in a wider context.

Now essentially the centre of discomfort for some persons with whom there has been an electronic exchange before the Congress stems from the

fact that security or strategic studies is a conservative rightwing agenda and should a progressive group engage itself with an issue like security. I think it is an important point and I am raising this because I hope we have a critical understanding of this rather than some kind of a single viewpoint, because it is true that most of the security studies or strategic studies are related to military establishments and many academic institutions involved in it are linked to basically strengthening a militaristic point of view. So when we say we want to rethink the notion of security in terms of human security, the danger that we might in some senses be legitimising a fairly pro-establishment concept is very much apparent. So I think it has to be done with care. But for reasons that I am going to elaborate, I think we need to reappropriate this term and that is why I am concerned with this: we can't leave the notion of security only to a militarist agenda. Because as in the case of development, it is not an agenda we can say we won't touch and it is not something we will engage with. The engagement with it is necessary. That's my viewpoint.

### **World's most dangerous flashpoint**

Within Asia the word security takes a particular connotation and has a certain heightened visibility when you travel to South Asia. In fact I would like to welcome my friends from East and Southeast Asia and use the words of Bill Clinton to say 'Welcome to the world's most dangerous flashpoint – South Asia.' These are the words Bill Clinton used on his visit to India [as US President in March 2000 – *ed.*]. So you are all welcome to that area. And being in Sri Lanka, I do not need to tell you that in terms of conflicts within countries and between countries what the notion of national security and subnational security means in these countries. And I suppose our friends from East Asia and Southeast Asia will get a feel of that in a couple of days. It already is there because Nimalka [Fernando] told you this morning that our Sri Lankan hosts have taken a risk in deciding to take you out of this nice setting for one evening to Colombo; and no more. You cannot go to Colombo as a group very often. It is a risk; so there is a security notion involved in it. So the notion of security in South Asia is a very visible and heightened term.

In South Asia security is linked to security of nations, security of the borders, security vis-à-vis the line of control, security of its political leaders who cannot move without security and you cannot approach them because of the security barriers; I mean it is not just what Bill Clinton's visit has done in terms of 'security for Bill Clinton' – that's a term in South Asia – but in democratic countries in South Asia – and many of them are

democratic countries – democratically elected persons cannot interact with the masses without the barrier of very, very stringent security. Sri Lanka is probably the best example of that – if you want to meet with people of the government. So security has many connotations in a South Asian context.

Within the last year or two it has taken on a particular connotation within South Asia with India and Pakistan deciding to become nuclear powers. And suddenly the dimension of the notion of national security has taken a quantum leap to a degree we are still grappling with. To make each country secure or the country wanting to secure its borders from another country has become a question which perhaps is a flashpoint in some sense, but whether it is a flashpoint in the Bill Clinton sense is open to question.

Therefore, what I am going to do at this point is read from a paper which appeared in an ARENA newsletter *Communiqué* some time ago before the nuclear question became so important and then I am going to supplement that from something written later. I'm going to start with this question of nuclearisation. There are better experts than me who are going to talk about these issues in detail in various panels over the next three days, so I am going to be only touching upon these issues.

As the outlines of an explicitly nuclear South Asia take shape, the only thinking that seems possible comes from the experience of the cold war. We see this in a manner of ways: recounting the similarities and differences between the India-Pakistan relationship and that of the United States and Soviet Union as a way of explaining why nuclear conflict is more or less likely in South Asia; borrowing strategies and ideas that are supposed to have reduced tensions between the superpowers; or, more insidious, the US replicating the unequal international structure of that period by offering incentives to India and Pakistan not to go farther down the nuclear road. But why is mimicking the cold war experience the correct path to take? Do we really want to end up where the US and Russia are now, with thousands of missiles still pointed at each other, with merely a small number of warheads removed from missiles in their silos, with nuclear weapons-armed submarines still cruising underwater, with arsenals stacked with nuclear-tipped artillery shells, with new subcritical and hydrodynamic testing facilities coming into being, with testing ranges still open and ready and open for use, with thousands of nuclear scientists still employed in nuclear weapons labs? How can an end like that be a solution? To which problem is it a solution?, we ask.

The seduction of the cold war and its 'end' lies behind the glee of Indian rightwingers who have now found their masculinity and the cold-blooded approval of the votaries of political realism both here and abroad.



The conclusions they draw from an uncritical acceptance of a particular understanding of the political history of the last half-century can be reduced to these. For the realists, nuclear weapons provide the ultimate security of the state that a stable condition can be achieved between nuclear rivals through the import of the logic of deterrence. Every country that has felt emasculated desires nuclear weapons because countries with nuclear weapons are the ones that count. India's destiny lies in possessing nuclear weapons because it is a great civilisation. Are these statements as self-evident as they are made out to be? And – we have to refute this – one of the most stupid and logical fallacies is to assume, for the realist of the Indian political system, that because all the present permanent members of the Security Council have nuclear weapons, possession of nuclear weapons will entitle any country to a permanent seat on the Council – something India has been hankering for, that to be recognised as a superpower it should get into the Security Council.

So what about the realists who want to copy the actions and rhetoric of the nuclear powers? The condition that is supposed to have prevented war between the US and the Soviet Union during the cold war is based on the horror of the destructive potential of these weapons. Whether for those who believe what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 was so terrible that it should never happen again, or for the nuclear strategists who believe that no government would be so irrational as to risk massive destruction of its own people in order to pursue belligerent aims against another country – the present system is built on the premise that nuclear weapons cannot be used. That simple hope is the basis of 'successful nuclear deterrence' between the US and the Soviet Union/Russia. But successful nuclear deterrence does not make conventional warfare less likely. And the last Kargil war that India and Pakistan fought was after they became nuclear. If anything historical record shows that the nuclear powers successfully deterred from dropping missiles on each other, fought each other through a variety of surrogates in Africa, in Latin America and Asia, for nearly half a century. The price for the cold war was paid with the lives of the black, brown and yellow people, not a sign of success if you lived anywhere other than in the US or the Soviet Union.

For India and Pakistan, there is nowhere else to go for having nuclear weapons on both sides says nothing about the likelihood of peace breaking out. Rather the presence of nuclear weapons may make policy-makers more sanguine about resorting to conventional and unconventional forms of warfare. This is exactly what happened. The moral sanction of not using nuclear weapons because of their destructive power is easily trumped up by the peculiar form of rationality that becomes the norm for strategic

discourse once nuclear weapons are in place. As nuclear war fighting plans are drawn up, policy-makers are rationally led to make calculations on the basis of the threat potential of relative destruction. Does a destroyed Karachi equate to a destroyed Bombay? Or should New Delhi be added in order to make the relative loss to each country the same, they ask each other.

Are nine million Indian dead the same as one million Pakistani dead, given the population differentials of each country? That even asking questions like these betrays a fundamentally immoral condition is soon forgotten once the rational game played by theorists and strategist thinkers takes over. Deterrence promises a condition in which an absurdly heightened state of fear is the only way to maintain the status quo. It normalises pathology. I think this is a description which I would say sums up in some sense a part of South Asia where such large populations today are being made to engage with a political process and to engage with people across the country, in the hope that fear will bring peace. Therefore, security is equated with fear and that is peace. Is this notion of security acceptable to people in general and do people see their security or insecurity of their lives exactly in these terms, the terms in which the governments of their nations would like them to see?

### **Postwar notion of security**

I would like to explore that question a bit and, therefore, let us go 50 or 55 years back and see how has the notion of security shaped in these 55 years since World War II. The notion of security in the latter half of the 20th century has been completely dominated by issues surrounding the war and the ensuing cold war phase of international politics. Briefly, the two terms, peace and security, have predominantly been used in the context of external aggression, implying thereby that avoiding war between nations is tantamount to sustaining peace, and the ability to avoid or stand up to external aggression implies defence of the nation, or security. From such a viewpoint, militarisation and war-preparedness are seen as an act of defence and security maintenance, rather than as an intent of being a potential aggressor, even though the two are clearly interchangeable, and have proven to be so. So, therefore, security very clearly in the conventional sense means to be a potential aggressor and that is what is meant all the time.

But it is interesting that the metaphor of security so established after the war was also institutionalised. The particular institutional mechanism that emerged for maintaining international peace and security of nations

from this perspective is of course the United Nations Organisation, in particular, its Security Council. Now it is very peculiar that whereas the United Nations came up as an institution of equal partnership between countries of the world and so reflected in its General Assembly, for one country one vote, the particular organ of the United Nations which is supposed to be the instrument for maintaining international peace, its Security Council, however, is a completely undemocratic institution consisting of a few nations with a power of veto. We find that the institutional mechanisms after the war for securing peace started with an undemocratic institutional base. But something that is interesting in the institutional mechanisms and to which one would spend some time on I hope in this conference is that the postwar institutional mechanisms were set up not only to maintain peace but also for peaceful reconstruction, and this phenomenon which happened as an institutional mechanism is a postwar phenomenon.

We have the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Bank and the IMF coming up in the post-war period ostensibly to help in the peace of the post-war conditions for development and reconstruction. These two systems have functioned in parallel, the UN system and the Fund-Bank system. The UN system was perhaps the more prominent immediately after the war, but now the IMF-WB system seems to have equalled or overtaken it in the recent past in determining global development and politics. So in a sense, therefore, what I would like to present here in the rethinking of security – if you want to make sense of security we have to see security and development together as two sides of a coin. One side has a certain notion of maintaining peace and the other side which says what do we do with that peace in terms of development? And the institutions of the UN and IMF-WB are two sides of that coin.

In many ways the Bank-Fund combine is determining the course of nations and the fate of their people in a much more substantial manner than the UN system today. The reason is somewhat obvious. From the predominant national economy model of earlier times, segregated into capitalist and socialist blocs till the breakup of Soviet Union, the world has been pushed into an all-encompassing neoliberal economic paradigm, demanding the integration of national economies with an international economic system, based on an increasingly aggressive form of free market capitalism, with increasing demand to break down national barriers to the free flow of capital, production and goods – not labour, though. Such a shakeup in the world system of production, consumption, trade, labour and technological interventions necessitate a critical rethinking of some of these earlier understood meanings of the terms peace and security.

## **Security in times of peace**

Therefore, if security is meant to keep wars away, that you do not have conditions of war, I think it becomes very necessary and interesting then to say what does security in peacetime mean? Suppose in conditions of peace when there is no war going, how do we look at the notions of security, how exactly must we understand peace? To see it as opposite of war would appear as too restricted a meaning. There is little doubt that conditions of war, be that in Iraq or Kashmir or Afghanistan or Bosnia or any part of the world, do create a great deal of insecurity in large populations and their everyday peace is replaced by constant worry regarding possible loss of life, property, injury. Peace amongst warring nations or communities does, obviously, bring in a sense of relief and security to the concerned populations.

But the question is, do communities or large populations necessarily live secure lives at times when they are not engulfed by war-like conditions? The answer has to be no. War is an extreme form of conflict and produces special conditions that we associate with the term war. Conflicts can and do exist without war-like conditions, producing varying degrees of insecurity and lack of peace in communities, continuously. It is, therefore, of essence to make sense of the terms, peace and security, in conditions where war is absent. Peace and security are essential conditions under which people and nations may improve their quality of life, live without fear, worry and stress, are secure from injury and loss of life, maintain good health, and can pursue vocations, both productive and cultural, in harmony with nature and other groups and communities. The *raison d'être* of 'development' is to pursue and achieve exactly these conditions of human life for large populations.

## **Development as metaphor for peace**

If the United Nations is the metaphor for ensuring peace amongst warring nations, development has been propagated as the metaphor to utilise such peaceful conditions to make the life of people more secure, from hunger, disease, back-breaking labour and general poverty and impoverishment. The postwar years have seen a tremendous amount of development, with, yes, many localised armed conflicts, but nothing like the second world war. But yet peace and security eludes large populations of the world. Security during peacetime is, therefore, much more elusive to deal with than in conditions of armed conflict. This is perhaps why the United Nations, cognisant of this fact, organised in the last decade such large

international conferences on Environment, Social Development, Gender, Human Rights – which is a recognition of the fact that in many of these areas, the kind of conditions that we thought peaceful times would lead us to, we have not been into them. It is an affirmation of the fact that human security involves all these aspects: environment, food, gender, human rights and basic needs like health, education and welfare that we should see as the background to these UN conferences.

Since these conditions were supposed to be met and fulfilled through development, it is therefore a tacit acceptance of the fact that world development as pursued in postwar years has not really ensured these securities for large populations, even though that is the claim of the all pervading neoliberal economic paradigm, pursued vigorously by the Fund-Bank and WTO. Hidden somewhere in the dense bureaucratic and diplomatic language which both the UN and the Fund-Bank utilise to write their documents, would appear to be a deep difference between these postwar institutions regarding the impact of development, though on the surface both pretend to be allies. And I would like to make this point that I see a difference in the approach of the UN today and the Fund-Bank-WTO today. Whereas the Fund-Bank employs a questionable methodology of neoliberal economics based on aggregates like the GNP and GDP to describe the state of the nations, a UN agency like the UNDP, has found it important to describe the same nations with a different set of indicators, hoping they would describe the human conditions better.

The question of lack of peace and security would, therefore, appear much more linked to the nature and form of development pursued in contemporary times than merely to conditions of armed conflict and war. The aggregate economic growth of a nation would appear to be completely inadequate, even wrong, as a criterion to evaluate the conditions of people in terms of peace and security. On the contrary, human development would need to be evaluated in terms of gender, human rights, environment, health, education, employment, food and similar other criteria to get a measure of the conditions of the people. The very notion that economic development in general is the harbinger of peace and security appears repudiated and requires serious re-examination.

### **Policy implications**

Now this has clear implications in terms of policies pursued by the government. Where the Indian and the Pakistan government would try to tell the people of their countries that deterrence and fear is the best weapon to maintain peace, it has policy implications. A couple of months

back, the Indian government for this year increased its military budget by nearly 30 percent, because when you pursue a policy where you say deterrence and fear would be peace, then you also make a framework for economic resources. And a 30 percent increase in the military budget of India is done at a time when, equally important, the Indian government has since 1992 effectively decreased its allocations to sectors like education and health. Therefore, it is a very peculiar policy formulation when you say that we will spend more and more money to maintain a nuclear arsenal to keep the lives of more uneducated and diseased people secure. It is an absurd obscenity to say that the security of the nation must be to secure the lives of people whose normal living conditions no one is bothered about.

Similarly, discussed in detail, in the countries of South Asia the livelihood security of a majority of people comes not through market-based food security but through what I would call subsistence agriculture-based food security. A security which comes from a certain kind of agricultural practice where you producing mostly for your own needs or for needs immediately around you. And systematically, this subsistence food security is meant to be broken down because now as a signatory to the WTO conventions this kind of subsistence agriculture no longer can be maintained as a world agricultural system and you must integrate with the world agricultural system which would effectively see dismantling these kinds of securities by opening all agriculture to markets. And, therefore, the question is that when we talk about making the nation secure and then it gets reflected in terms of policies and ultimately in implementation of those policies in terms of monetary allocations and bureaucratic control, we are now going towards a regime. And again I say most evident in South Asia where you are seeing that people have to be left on their own to fend for their health, for their education, and for food, and to be left to the vagaries of a fluctuating market because that is how the world economic regime must be determined; but at the same time the nation will keep them secure from wars with other nations or between ethnic groups or inter-wars within their own countries.

And it is in that regime we see security and development together operating over nations. So, therefore, my contention is that it is not enough to see the world development system as determined by the Fund-Bank-WTO unless you also see that there is a developmental paradigm to it which is security and militarisation operating together. And nor is it enough to see the world only in terms of militarisation without seeing what kind of development it is pushing and pursuing. They have to be seen together, as I said, two sides of a coin, and it is in that context we can

think of an alternative notion of human security where the security from an individual to a household to a community to a province and to a nation can be linked meaningfully into a system rather than merely be hijacked into the notion of national security based on deterrence.

# Militarisation and the South Asia Nuclear Crisis

ANURADHA M CHENYO

SOUTH ASIA has been undergoing rapid militarisation. The reasons for this are varied and go back into history. Like militarisation in other parts of the world, the reasons include external relations and domestic reasons. The nuclearisation of this region, especially after May 1999, and the increase in fundamentalist/sectarian movements, has hastened the pace of militarisation of South Asia.

Militarism was the ideological mainstay of the colonial state in South Asia. Militarisation was necessary for maintaining the colonial state and the communal, ethnic, caste divisions within these societies, that were used to strengthen colonial rule and give it legitimacy. The anti-colonial movement in India was led by a nationalist elite that sought the establishment of a modern state along the European model of democracy, secularism and capitalism. The attempt of the nationalist movements in South Asia was to construct a modern state, but at the same time there was an assertion of cultural identities that had been suppressed in the colonial state. Three aspects of the national movements and the formation of the postcolonial states show the roots of modern militarisation and the gender aspect of it. Primary among this is the formation of the national identity and nationalism, which at this point had certain progressive anticolonial characteristics. Second, while the national movement was by and large nonviolent, the very formation of the states of India and Pakistan were accompanied by communal mobilisation and largescale violence. Further, though women participated in these movements and some specific reforms for social change and education of women were introduced, the question of women's rights remained largely absent.



With the formation of India and Pakistan, the newly-independent states based much of their laws and policies on the experience of the colonial state. The militarism that they had inherited thus became an innate part of the state. The struggle over Kashmir and the fact that Kashmir became part of India, left a dissatisfied Pakistan. The perceptions the states in this region had of their external security and of their neighbours, especially India and Pakistan's hostility and fear of each other and their inability to agree on territorial issues, became a primary cause for militarisation in the subcontinent.

The perception of these states of their own image was either as regional leaders (India), or leaders of a group of states based on their religious identity (Pakistan), or the role these states envisage for themselves in international politics as geostrategic centres of power in regional conflicts (India and Pakistan). The China factor – the Sino-Indian war and Chinese assistance in Pakistan militarisation – has assisted in the process of militarisation of the region.

Nationalism, in its variations, has continued to be a *raison d'être* for the very existence of these states. This has in some instances degenerated into national chauvinism, whereby mobilisation by political parties is based on increasing threat perceptions of neighbouring states or different minority communities. This has happened in almost all South Asian states – India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka – which has in turn created new demands for national security, for upgradation of military technology and for nuclearisation.

The internal security policies and domestic politics by the governing regimes within these states has led to a lack of grassroots democratisation, and thus to increased inter-regional and inter-community tensions. The fusion and use of religion in politics in varying degrees in all South Asian states has led to increasing communal tension and conflict. These internal conflicts have been increasingly dealt with by the regime in power with the use of paramilitary forces or the direct use of the military.

A direct cause of militarisation in some of the South Asian states has been the direct rule of the military and the overthrow of civilian governments through military coups or political intervention by the military in ruling these states for long periods, such as in Pakistan and Bangladesh. The establishment of a civil-military bureaucratic nexus in some states of South Asia, has aided the military's ability to influence policies and laws of the state, and promote their own interest more effectively.

There has been an increasing militarisation of civil society in all of South Asia through various forces. These forces include anti-state,

secessionist movements, ethnic movements which have not been able to achieve success through the democratic process and have resorted to violence and counter-violence against agencies of the state or even against the civilian population. Fundamentalist and national chauvinist movements have decided to take to civil defence measures and use militarist tactics for their cadre, as a method in civil society. All these movements and organisations have and continue to assist the process of militarisation of civil society.

Within South Asia the conflict between India and Pakistan has dominated regional politics. The unchanging hostility, the constant cold war, and the phases of hot war have been the primary reasons for bringing the arms race into the subcontinent and militarising the societies. The impact of this militarisation on women is felt directly and indirectly.

The key reason for increasing militarisation in South Asia is, of course, the India-Pakistan relationship. A notion of mutually competitive security has been the unshakeable norm between the two. After the collapse of East-West rivalry and the decline of Arab-Israeli tensions in its traditional form, no other part of the world now suffers from as prolonged a cold war face-off between two rivals. The security perceptions in each country is based completely on how best to manage this tension-filled relationship. This has barely been offset by any larger goal or vision of how to transform India-Pakistan relations to which this otherwise unavoidable process of constant management could be linked.

In both Pakistan and India, there has been an attempt to insulate the institutions dealing with foreign policy/external security from domestic pressures. Elected and representative bodies such as Parliament which are accountable to people, have little or no influence in normal (and most) circumstances on the conduct of India-Pakistan relations. This is because the fundamental character of this relationship is one based on a strategic hostility which has remained unchanged since the birth of the two as independent countries. In fact questioning the form of this relationship and looking for alternatives is often construed as 'anti-national.'

We summarise 15 hypotheses on the reasons for the South Asian Nuclear Crisis:

1. The South Asian nuclear crisis has been based on the increasing militarisation of the region. This militarisation has increased in India since the 80s, and in Pakistan from the 50s as military regimes overtook and overturned democratic processes throughout its existence.
2. Militarisation in South Asia has been derived from both external and domestic policy choices and events. The external policy choices that

have promoted militarisation are the adherence by the regimes in the subcontinent, especially in India and Pakistan, to a militarist foreign policy based on national security doctrines that are state-centric. The notion of security is basically competitive, where each country has attempted to get an edge over the other and perpetuate unequal notions of power that are essentially based on a conception of military superiority. The inability to resolve the Kashmir crisis and the progressively worsening situation there has been aggravated because promises and commitments have been broken and not kept (the Shimla Accord, respect for the Line of Control, the Lahore declaration). This also includes the refusal to democratise the dialogue by including the Kashmiri people in it, and forming a national consensus on the issue that is not national chauvinist but recognises the reality. The increasing militancy abetted by Pakistan (officially termed as 'Jihad') which is leading to the Talibanisation of the region, has made the problem more intractable. The acceptance of a doctrine of nuclear ambiguity has proved unstable as both India and Pakistan continue to prepare the foundations for nuclear weapons. The continued use of the doctrine of deterrence, that has been rejected by many developed countries and has been showed as flawed has further exacerbated tensions.

3. Internal policy choices have been such where many institutions inherited from colonialism were retained. Despite India's long record of democracy, and period of mixed economy and public sector development, the basic choice in South Asian states has been of capitalist development. This has resulted in widening the income gap between people and increasing the number of people below the poverty line. This uneven development has led to the 'backwardness' of some regions compared to others. These policies fostered feelings of discrimination along ethnic lines and fuelled the alienation of certain regions and ethnic groups. Several movements along ethnic/sectarian lines were thus accentuated in these regions and took the form of self-determination or secessionist movements (in northeast India, Khalistan in Punjab, Azadi movement in Kashmir, Bangladesh in 1970-71, Pakhtoonistan and independent Baluchistan in Pakistan). The regimes in power responded to these movements by suppressing them and treating them as classic 'law and order problems.' This led to militarisation of the state and emergency measures along with substitution of civil control by army rule tended to change the nature of the movements into militant or terrorist-based ones. In these circumstances, the state response has hardened (statements like 'zero-

level tolerance' have been made) and these movements have invariably been classified as 'anti-national,' supported by 'outsiders' or 'enemy states.' In this situation, the state has imposed draconian laws like the Armed Forces [Special Powers] Act, TADA, etc. The tendency has been to increase central control rather than give autonomy. The regime in power has also attempted to divide factions within the movements and support one against the other (e.g. Kuki vs Naga; Longowal vs Bhindranwale; Sheikh Abdullah vs JKLF, etc.). This has pushed these movements to more hardline positions. The militarism of the regime versus the militarism of these movements has in most instances led to the imposition of emergency measures that substitute civilian rule by army rule. This has led to the violation of human and democratic rights where civilians are the worst effected. Studies of these situations show that women are the easiest targets and gendered assault and crimes against women increase.

4. The growing influence of fundamentalist movements is a major input into the overall militarisation of civil society and has been a major input into nuclearising these regimes. Fundamentalist movements are essentially patriarchal, based on the construction of an identity that sees itself in opposition to an enemy 'other.' They contest the secularisation of the state and civil society and appropriate for themselves the right of the masses to interpret themselves. The fundamentalists attempt to speak on behalf of a forcibly homogenised community. They aim to oppose plural traditions and substitute them with a singular/centralised authority. The control over the autonomy of women and support for a militant nationalism is the basis for these movements. These movements – whether the RSS/Shiv Sena in India or Jamaat-i-Islami in Pakistan and Bangladesh – have controlled part of the opposition space in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and are located in civil society that they seek to control. They have thus continually pressurised regimes to either move Right, (if they are centrist regimes) or compromise and have alliance on with them on key issues like family laws, civil codes, state religiosity, etc. These movements have consistently supported the nuclearisation of their respective countries. They are the natural allies of militarisation and are most comfortable with the ideology of militarism.
5. The decision for the May 1998 nuclear tests in India were in response to the domestic situation. The coming to power of the BJP as the major part of a coalition government was the immediate reason. This party had advocated and promised that India would acquire a nuclear weapon in its most recent manifesto and in its earlier incarnations. It

was clearly established that there had been no specific change in the perceived threat to national security which had remained stable for several years before. (Earlier prime ministers and ruling parties clearly stated that just till a few days before the tests, they had not perceived any change in the national security situation.) The reasons cited for the nuclear tests, like the Chinese deterrent, increasing instability in Kashmir, etc. were all matters that India had lived with for many years. Pakistan's response of carrying out its own tests was an expected one.

6. Both the Indian and Pakistani tests are fraught with the gravest of dangers. They have sharpened the contradictions and hostilities already present in these societies. They have increased the power of the military. They have led to an increase in defence expenditure, they have pushed back attempts at political negotiations and confidence-building. The Indo-Pak tensions have got nuclearised and provide an opening for the internationalisation of the conflict. A balance of terror (and mutually-assured destruction) has been put in place. Instead of diminishing the possibility of war as nuclear proponents claimed, it has instead actually increased the possibility of wars as was evident with the Kargil conflict, and the consequent rhetoric in both countries of the possibility of 'limited war.' They have destabilised the regimes in power as was evident by the overthrow of the Nawaz Sharif government.
7. Kargil exploded several myths that had been continuously touted by the security-making elite in both countries. These myths were that nuclear powers would shy away from actively engaging in a conflict and that nuclear weapons form a deterrent to wars. The belief that second strike capability ensures stability against a would-be aggressor and that nuclear weapons would stabilise the balance of power in the subcontinent, has now been set aside. Another favourite argument of the security analysts, that nuclear weapons would limit expenditure by cutting down expenditure on conventional armies and cut force strengths has also been wrong. The shibboleth that democracies do not go to war with each other has also been proved wrong.
8. On the contrary, the nuclear tests showed the instability inherent in the South Asian situation. India and Pakistan were engaged in a border conflict 'limited to one sector' in a matter of months. The democratic government in Pakistan was overthrown to be replaced by a military regime. The Lahore process that attempted confidence-building measures was reversed. After the tests, the national security paradigms of both countries have advocated further nuclearisation, with some experts in India, for instance, advocating up to 300 bombs. The

National Security Council in India released a draft nuclear doctrine that proposes a triadic structure that would nuclearise all three wings of defence. In the meanwhile, there has been a hardening of national security positions on both sides. A macho, national chauvinist language and belief systems accompanied the nuclear explosions. The emphasis on possible talks and need for negotiations has actually decreased. The defence budgets of both countries have seen an increase that will be matched by a decline in social sector spending.

9. The nuclear doctrines of both countries are inconsistent and vague. Though the Pakistan nuclear doctrine has not been formally stated, the strategic approach can be discerned from statements of its leadership. The Pakistan foreign minister and others have argued that nuclear weaponisation is for deterring India and has, therefore, to be constantly upgraded to match Indian capability. The numbers and composition of the Pakistan weaponisation programme thus, will remain flexible and will include vertical and horizontal proliferation. In view of Pakistan's inferior strength in conventional forces, the doctrine of no first-use has been rejected. The proposal of no first-use has been seen by the Pakistan policy-makers as incompatible with deterrence. Pakistan thus does not rule out a second strike nuclear response following any attack by India, especially if Pakistan perceives that attack as threatening its integrity or communications. In this scenario threat is also a flexible concept.
10. The Indian government's nuclear doctrine was criticised for its lack of clarity and was then retracted as a 'draft.' The DND visualises massive nuclear weaponisation, based on a triad of aircraft, land-based missiles and nuclear-powered submarines. The doctrine calls for maximum effectiveness, creditability and survivability. It implicitly includes a second strike capability even against the US and NATO. The civilian control, safety measures or costs are not adequately explained. No explanation is provided of how India with its current fissile materials reserves, missile and military capabilities, and uncertain economic situation, would build such an elaborate and ambitious nuclear system.
11. The strategic review that the Indian government had promised did not take place. With diverse opinions on the concept of building a triad, the government is locked in a nuclear maze of its own making. This makes the overall situation for South Asia inherently unstable.
12. The current situation in South Asia is thus a dangerous one, in which we have governments in power that are committed to an ideology of militarism and states based on a militaristic national security paradigm. Both India and Pakistan are making no effort to resolve their internal

conflicts or bilateral disputes. The attempts at confidence-building and disarmament are not on the immediate agenda. The subcontinent at one of its most unstable moments in history has been nuclearised. Theories that gave stability to the subcontinent during the long years of the cold war like nonalignment, South-South solidarity, etc. have been virtually discarded. (Though they were discarded in India on the grounds that the bipolar world had disappeared and Pakistan and China had never adhered to these theories.) Instead of readjusting theories of regional security and Southern solidarity, a more aggressive paradigm of national self-interest has taken its place. The intermediate attempt by Prime Minister Gujral to locate a South Asia doctrine was sidelined and a new national security and defence paradigm is now seeking to assert itself. This paradigm is based on a remix of the cold war method and paradigm to the subcontinent. For instance the use of concepts like 'limited war,' 'low intensity conflicts,' 'local wars,' 'proxy wars' are the dominant discourse. These doctrines are based on an aggressive militarist thinking. These doctrines have further narrowed the concept of security. National security and decisions on bilateral relations will thus get restricted to talks between hawks and conversation of the generals. The official release by the Indian defence minister of a document (*The Hindu*, 25 January 2000), that says India can fight and win a limited war, at a time and place chosen by the aggressor, is remarkable for its shortsightedness since it ignores the strategic realities of the region. In Pakistan even with civilian governments in power the strategic decisions are in military hands and civilian authorities may be kept in the dark. The military has been increasingly ideological in its gradual Islamisation and narrow position on security.

13. This new 'imported cold war paradigm' that has been adopted by India and Pakistan, unfortunately leaves out the safety nets that the opposing sides of the cold war had established like multiple hot lines, nuclear shields and shelters, theories of peaceful coexistence, détente, etc. Further, the two superpowers were almost allies when it came to strategic thinking. Together they had promoted the objective of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons to new states and maintained steps to prevent a nuclear war, even in their most antagonistic phases.
14. The consequences of a nuclear South Asia are fraught with multiple dangers. The possibility of conventional wars like Kargil cannot be ruled out. In a nuclear situation, it is not possible for the two countries now to fight a battle along the lines of the 1965 or 1971 type. Even a 'limited war,' as the Indian defence minister has advocated, will have

the high probability of crossing over to the nuclear threshold. The choice of keeping the war limited is not in Indian hands alone. A limited military success essentially means disaster for the entire region. The possibility of nuclear war or accident cannot be ruled out. The India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir has been internationalised. Both countries will now seek to further open their economies and give concessions in order to keep superpowers like the US on their side. The entry of powers like the US into the affairs of the subcontinent and a change in the balance of powers in South Asia is a distinct possibility. On the domestic front: further defence expenditure, exacerbation of anti-state movements, an increase in repression and increased militarisation can be the outcome.

15. The Indo-Pak confrontation has impacted all of South Asia, by holding back development of the entire region in several ways. Trade/travel/communication within the region is held hostage by this rivalry. Joint regional initiatives on issues that effect the region whether it is WTO, patents, unbridled entry of MNCs, import of power and technology, all receive a setback because of this rivalry. Moreover it makes the region a dangerous nuclear war-prone region.

Is there a way out? South Asian states more than anywhere else in the world need to rethink their national security paradigms. They need to bring back the marginalised communities to the mainstream. The states are not likely to do this without pressure from their people. It thus becomes imperative that the peace movements and people's movements are broadened and empowered. There is an urgent need for initiating regional and international disarmament, and disarmament and de-nuclearisation should be part of the South Asian agenda. There is a need for building linkages between the women's movement, people's movements and the peace movements; and furthering track two and people-to-people dialogues. These measures within individual South Asian states and collectively appear to be a method of pressurising governments that have brought South Asia to this nuclear crisis.



# Militarisation and the Okinawan People's Struggle

ICHIYO MUTO

I AM HERE TO DISCUSS security issues in reference to the people's struggle in Okinawa against military bases. But coming from Tokyo, I hope I will be able to do justice to the people in the women's movement and peace movement in Okinawa, the island where we have heavy concentration of American military bases and where a forceful and broad people's anti-base movement was rekindled in 1995 and shook the basis of the US military presence and exposed the Japanese government's '*semper fi*' position to Washington.

The movement since 1995 was triggered by the American soldiers' rape of a 12-year-old girl. By coincidence this crime was committed during the Beijing women's conference. Rape cases – US soldiers raping women in Okinawa – have been quite frequent throughout the postwar years, and this case could have been treated by the local press as yet another victimisation of an Okinawan female. In fact, the local newspapers did not prominently report it when it occurred. But it was women activists, among them Takazato Suzuyo – a prominent political personality and a leader of the Okinawa peace and women's movements – who sensed the vicious nature of this rape case, raised strong voices of protest, and made it a central issue. The incident occurred just when the Beijing conference was discussing girls' rights and violence against women. Takazato and others came back from Beijing and had a press conference at the airport, and the Okinawan people stood up in protest. This developed into an island-wide movement involving all sectors, and finally the Governor of Okinawa Prefecture joined it, demanding that the Tokyo government

negotiate a drastic cut in the sizes of US bases, and revise the Status of Force Agreement with the US.

This became a national political issue and also a touchy issue for the United States. President Clinton himself had to openly apologise, afraid that US military presence could be jeopardised by growing Okinawan protest. Washington and Tokyo hurriedly set up an emergency commission called SACO, promising certain downsizing of outmoded bases to appease Okinawans. But it was not a real concession, it was rather a deceptive scheme to modernise the base system to meet with the post-cold war US strategic requirements. Instead of a promise to close a base located in the midst of Futenma city, the US asked for the establishment of a brand new base at Nago city. The Nago city people went to a referendum and rejected this plan. The struggle of Okinawan people for a base-less status continues.

Certainly there is confrontation between the Okinawan people and the US bases, more precisely between the Okinawan people and the alliance of the US and the Japanese government. Probably many people in other Asian countries may know about this confrontation in newspapers and TV. But as I see it, the general regional perception may be that it is a matter between the US and Japan, or between the Japanese government and the Okinawan people who are living around the base and the Japanese government which keeps the base to comply with the US strategic behest. Anyway, we tend to understand local or national confrontation on the matter of US bases in one or another bilateral context.

But I think it is time for us to go beyond looking at seemingly local issues pertaining to the US military strategy simply as local or bilateral issues of conflicts. We now need to look at the American military strategy in its totality and situate what locally occurs, typically the Okinawa base issues, in the context of its relevance to the security of the people in Asia and the rest of the world. After the end of the cold war, most Asian governments, probably excepting the Chinese government, regard the American presence in the region as a sort of guarantee of their security (Singapore, Taiwan, Korea and Japan). To them the American presence is welcome as the ultimate custodian of peace and order in Asia. It is as though Asian countries had no ability to create peace and order for and among themselves. And as long as this assumption prevails, the Okinawan people as well as other people opposing US military presence are delegitimised as they are represented as ones undermining security and order of the region. They may be sympathised with for the suffering they undergo because of the bases but are told that they have to endure their suffering for the general good of the entire people. This is the logic used by the Japanese government to keep military bases imposed on Okinawa.

This assumption itself is false and we must shatter this perverted logic. It is possible only by grasping the US hegemony in its entirety in the post-cold war setting. The point is the nexus between the neoliberal globalisation drive or market-fundamentalism based on the Washington consensus, and the reformulated US military strategy. I am not going into the socio-economically and environmentally destructive nature of the neoliberal globalisation regime as all of us here seem to share the same critical view about it. Now we have rising voices against it in reference to financial, environmental, and social disasters it is bringing on to the people, and indeed we are witnessing transborder popular movements growing since Seattle. But in contrast, little voice is being raised critiquing US military strategy which is certainly the ultimate safeguard for the imposition of the globalisation regime on the people of this planet. The socioeconomic strategy of globalisation and the military strategies, centring on the monstrous US military, are deployed in tandem. But we centre our criticism on the former and fail to heed the latter's organic linkage with the former. We are still to establish our shared position vis-à-vis this socioeconomic, cultural, and military complex that constitutes the world power centre.

It was after 1995 that America began to develop its post-cold war strategy towards Asia and the Pacific, in which the military alliance with Japan was redefined as the lynchpin of the global US strategy. The US-Japan security relationship is fundamental to the pursuit of American security objectives both worldwide and within Asia as Kurt Campbell, Assistant Secretary of Defence and one of the main authors of the new East Asia and Pacific strategy, said. Why the need for a stronger military alliance when the hypothetical enemy, the Soviet Union, was gone? The general answer was that the enemy was uncertainty in the Asian-Pacific region, and specifically North Korea. The US-Japan security alliance was also instrumental in engaging China into the free market and thus preventing it from emerging as America's rival. The strategy was described as purporting to ensure free flow of American investment, goods, services and ideas throughout the region. Japan should collaborate more closely and increase its military commitment to serve this strategy. The Japanese conservative government bounced on this proposition as a golden opportunity to achieve their long-dreamed of programmatic goals – returning Japan to a full-fledged military power, an 'ordinary state,' as they say it, by getting rid of pacifist constitutional constraints. All rightwing forces were animated, clamouring for the reinstating of the 'glory of Imperial Japan.' The point is that this alliance, pivoted on the US bases in Okinawa, Korea, and Japan, should be seen in the context of a new type

of global domination which affects people not just in the Asia-Pacific but also the rest of the world.

How to deal with this? Perhaps here we need to rethink and redefine our notion of security, calling into question the still widespread assumption that the national military is there somehow to protect the security of the people. This is the second aspect we need to ask ourselves very seriously. In doing so, we can base ourselves on our own experience. I remember that some years ago, in the Philippines, where village people were talking about the military in a special context – the military is in the next village so you have to be careful. There the military represented to the villagers a source of danger – they may come and take chickens and so on. They were carrying M-16s and would threaten the villagers. That was largely the experience of the Philippine peasants with their own military. After Japan's invasion, the Philippines has never been invaded by another country. What then has the Philippines military being doing? Fighting against the people. What about Burma? Who is brutalising the people? The Burmese military in the name of national government. That is the major source of insecurity to the Burmese people. What about Indonesia, East Timor? But we still assume that the state military forces are there to protect the lives and interests of the people. Experiences call such an assumption into question. show that the military are not there for our interests, when we talk about people's security, we have to rethink all those things.

Back to Okinawa – it is a different place because in 1945, the Japanese military wanted to fight against the Americans and mobilised the Okinawan people, including children, in the fiercest battle in the Pacific war. The whole island was destroyed, 250,000 civilians died, they were killed not only by American bombing, shelling, flame throwers, but by Japanese soldiers who suspected Okinawans as potential spies or else nuisance to the combat operation. Many of them were forced to commit suicide by the Japanese military. The Japanese military had nothing to do with their security. On the contrary, they brought only death and destruction to the local people. Lessons from this experience were at the heart of the Okinawan people who were placed now under US military rule. The lessons are 'nothing is more precious than life' and the military is there to kill and had nothing to do with peace or security. Okinawan peace struggle, right from the beginning, in the 50s, was guided by this deeprooted pacifism.

The 1995 women's anti-base movement brought in the gender perspective into this pacifist movement, conceptualising it as 'women's security' which is incompatible with the military. On this basis Okinawa women's peace movement developed international linkages with North

America, Latin America, and Asian countries. The military intrinsically incorporates male values of violence, conquest, and subjugation. Takazato pointed out that the base is a body internalising sexual discrimination and racism, a mechanism aimed at threatening, dominating and conquering others, with a show of force of nuclear, chemical and other ultra-modern weaponry, instilling the mentality of violence into individual human beings through training, exercise and real war. This insight was shared broadly by the new movement of Okinawan women.

It is on the basis of these experiences and insights that we redefined security as 'people's security' as distinct from the UNDP's human security. I am not fully critiquing the idea of 'human security' here, but if you read UNDP reports, it does not direct its attention to the military aspects of the matter. Besides, it is being used by governments increasingly as another name for public security measures for the maintenance of the status quo by the police, military, and other state mechanisms. Japanese prime minister Obuchi uses it frequently, meaning anti-terrorist action, emergency legislation – the context, for instance, is that North Korea might send commandos into Japan to attack a nuclear power plant, or land spies secretly, and what to do to do away with them to protect human security. You could say that such is a distortion of the original idea of human security, and I do appreciate the idea of human security in a limited sense that it brought to the fore the socioeconomic aspects of security, away from the notion of national defence. Yet, the human security idea has fatal weaknesses by glossing over the danger of the military to the security of the people themselves. Besides, if you examine the concept carefully, the state is assumed to be the agency to protect human security. By people's security, we mean not only security of the people and for the people, but security by the people. This means that we as people should intervene to change the situation, change our mentality and culture, demystify the military, create substantive alliances of the people to paralyse the machinery of violence.

### **Ensuring people's security by the people**

Now, how we can create people's alliances to ensure people's security. I'm not in a position to say that this is the way. But I do believe there are many important ongoing processes we are involved in that give clues to it. It is important to exchange experiences and draw lessons. I'll give you a small example, small because, in view of the severe cases of Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan, this is perhaps lukewarm. In Okinawa, there is a US marine base in the midst of a town, Ginowan city, whose citizens have been

struggling for the removal of the base for a long time. Now it is proposed, as I explained earlier, to be closed in exchange for a new, better equipped base to be constructed in Nago city up north. And the Nago people opposed it. If the Nago people refuse to accept the new base, that would mean that the old base would stay on in Ginowan. This is the zero-sum formula being imposed by the US and the Japanese governments, obviously in an attempt to set the Ginowan citizens against the Nago citizens and vice versa. But what actually happened was that people in Ginowan city organised against the proposed Nago base and went massively to Nago to support the Nago citizens' struggle. I was greatly impressed. That is a new kind of alliance overcoming the barriers set up by the authorities to split the people. There certainly are many such cases if you examine the past and present of people's movements.

### **Will Japan go nuclear?**

Given the state of affairs, will Japan go nuclear? I do not deny that possibility but it is unlikely. Emergence of Japan as an independent nuclear power would be the last thing the United States can accept, nor will it fit the interest of Japan's ruling elite. But the Peace Constitution, the move to change it is in full swing – deletion of Article 9 prohibiting Japan's having military. In actual practice, Article 9 is patently violated to establish *fait accompli*.

In fact, US acceptance of Japanese policies dominates not only the military sphere but also Japan's own economic diplomacy in the region. For the past few years Japan has been circumspect in setting a foot on that track, but dared not venture to overset the boundary line set by the US. I mean, for instance, the Miyazawa idea of setting up an Asian Monetary Fund, which incurred Washington's anger and was retracted. But certain ideas of an Asian economic zone are lingering with the implication of a yen zone, and bilateral free trade arrangements being promoted with South Korea, Singapore, etc. are considered instrumental to it. You can use human security if you like, but you should critically examine the role of the military. I prefer people's security but of course just using a new word doesn't guarantee that it would not be tainted again. It should anyway be made clear that demilitarisation of societies and states, not just disarmament in terms of reduction of arms, is what we must make for.

How do we achieve such an aim? We've heard of a recent conference on alternative security in south Asia; that is the kind of thing we have to do. This may be misleading and probably an unnecessary addendum, but nowadays I recall Lenin in a new context. Lenin's slogan, 'Turn the

imperialist war into civil war' and his another 'fatherland defeatism' slogan sound pacifist. He urged proletarians in warring countries to refuse to fight each other on behalf of their state even at the risk of their respective governments' defeat to the enemy governments. It is a historical analogy, we are not organising violent revolution, but the old word 'fraternalisation' on the war front sounds singularly up-to-date, far better than 'we will do something for you' approach of 'conflict resolution.'

# Global Governance and Anti-Hegemonic Alliance

## Why Reimagine Human Security and Alternative Development?

KINHIDE MUSHAKOJI

I WILL APPROACH the question of 'global governance' in connection with the necessity for us at ARENA to 'Reimagine' a few more or less established concepts such as 'human security' and 'alternative development.' First, let me define my position on 'Global Governance.' As a 'neutral(?)' concept, 'governance' refers to the political and administrative process where the power struggle between social formations holding different interests and ideas are canalised so that they can arrive at a mutually agreed set of policies on a certain issue area. 'global' means the issue area created by globalisation, i.e. the economic, political, and socio-cultural issues created by the present process of worldwide economic transactions, political coordination, and socio-cultural interactions.

To be less obscure, global governance is a hegemonic process accompanying the neoliberal global economy. For the mega-competition among MNCs and States to sustain itself, it needs to get a sufficiently broad support from the international public opinion, or from the 'civil societies' composing it. It needs to develop a set of 'stable' universal values in the name of which it can exercise its 'governance.' It has to build a security system of surveillance, control, and punishment not only of the states, hegemony and allies, but of the global economy and of the civil societies. It needs to create enough room for the 'dissidents' in the civil society not to revolt.

To use a discourse some of the ARENA members may share with the author of these lines, i.e. a neo-Gramscian definition of the now prevailing global neo-fascist governance. The hegemonic forces, the United States



and the G7 (including my own country), are engaged in a 'passive revolution' to prevent the formation of an anti-hegemonic alliance. They use the discourse developed by these political forces, democracy and human rights, etc.. They co-opt their efforts to build alternatives, e.g. human development now adopted by the World Bank. They support 'human security' as if they were ready to renounce their inhuman national security approach.

Global governance involves, in this way, three sets of problems. Firstly, it supports and sustains the neoliberal global economy which is nothing but a global casino which absorbs and gambles with the surplus produced by the exploited and excluded majority of the people, both women and men but especially women, both in the North and in the South, but especially in the South.

Secondly, it is a hegemonic governance (in the Gramscian sense), based on an alliance not only of the big industries and big powers, but also of the smaller enterprises and States, who hope to survive and join in one day the mega-competition. Quite a number of the workers of the subcontracting firms of big industries hoping to survive harsh labour-cut by working for their companies, and quite a number of the civic leaders who hope to get concessions from governments useful for the people, support 'passively' the neoliberal 'new world order' for lack of alternatives.

Thirdly, the hegemonic global governance relies on a particularly discriminatory system of 'global security' governance. It profits from the fact that the industrialised nations have developed a high degree of interdependence so that the industrial states are no more able to fight with each other. This does not mean that there is no more conflict inside the rich world where more poverty and more ethnic competition is generated by the global mega-competition. It is only that they will not have interstate wars in the North.

The South, on its side sees the demise of state governance capacity due to the globalisation of the economy which turns these states into welfare state rather than welfare state. The different ethnic, religious and other security communities, i.e. communities whose members have a 'we' feeling, making exceptional the militarisation of conflicts among themselves, these communities serving the human security needs of their members oppose each other since they compete for survival in a world taking away their precious surpluses. The conflicts in the South, and the 'Peace' (doubtful but existing among states) in the North enables neocolonial myths such as *Pax Democratica* (peace through the propagation of 'democracy') a pretext for the hegemons to intervene militarily in some of the conflicts of the South which endanger the global economy. Their

intervention is highly selective and generates everywhere more insecurity than security. This is because the hegemonic security system they want to build is based on surveillance, preventive strike and punishment. What is needed is to build human security, not of the rich nor imposed by the outside powers, but human security of the most vulnerable peoples, gender-wise, class-wise and in ethnic terms. Human security which is the concern of each security community is a cause for conflict when the communities see in each other threats to their human security. This is why security governance should be based on 'common security,' common 'human security' between the different security communities. The rich hegemon can help such process of common security by defusing tension by reducing competitive economic pressures and transfer of goods, services, and by a genuine promotion of human security based on human development and human rights.

Fourthly, global governance involves a fight over universal values between the supporters of the hegemonic alliance and those who oppose it. The hegemon exercises their military and police power in the name of peace, human security, and 'democracy and human rights.' They fight not only against the transnational criminal organisations (which are gaining much from the casino mega-competition supported by the hegemonic alliance), but also against 'illegal migrants,' victims of human trafficking, political, economic and ecological refugees, who try to find more security and a more humane life by moving into the rich societies. They forbid them entry in the rich world in the name of the 'human security' of the citizens of the industrialised North, the core region of the global economy. The hegemonic alliance, through NATO bombed Serbia to punish Miloshovich in the name of human rights and democracy, leaving the Albanian Kosovar unprotected and hence not at all in support of their human rights and human security.

The anti-hegemonic bloc, on its side, does not include only allies of the peoples. There are States which oppose the hegemonic rule of the United States active in the UN. In the Security Council, we have Russia, China, and eventually France adopting anti-hegemonic discourse. Their nuclear power, is no use to guarantee the human security of the peoples of the world. In the General Assembly there are two nuclear States, who are not recognised as nuclear States by the hegemon, India and Pakistan. Their challenge to the Non-Proliferation Treaty is a welcome reminder to the world of the inequality built into this convention, but their nuclear armament increases rather the human insecurity than the human security of their people.

In regard to the neoliberal global economy, the anti-hegemonic camp includes not only the 'victory' of the civic movements against WTO in Seattle. It includes also the President of Malaysia and the Japanese candidate for the post of IMF Secretary General (Sakakibara who proposed the creation of an Asian Monetary Fund challenging the US/IMF global financial governance). Their anti-hegemonism does not make them defenders of human rights and of human development! We must also recognise the great 'progress' achieved by the World Bank which look into non-neoliberal development alternatives. Is this a true progress in the camp of hegemonic governance, when their basic approach to SAP remains fundamentally the same?

In face of this complex situation, how should we ARENA Fellows define our positions? What role should the organic intellectuals play in face of such complex political and intellectual situation?

This is a question we will have to discuss in our Colombo Congress. We will seek inspiration there for 'reimagining' security and development alternatives, away from the now prevailing trend for co-optation. The security of each individual citizen, especially of the women, is in constant danger, and hence we will certainly learn from our host how to reimagine true human security, as people security and gender security. South Asia has been recently actively involved in the development of alternative development models, some truly imaginative in terms of refusing to be co-opted by the forces of global economy and State hegemony.

## **Global governance for or of casino capitalism**

### **Global governance need an ethical ground**

Casino capitalism is irrational, led by fear and greed of a few, leading to insecurity and impoverishment of many. It is, therefore, basically antisocial and unethical. It profits a small group of financial agents who are engaged in the global 'mega-competition.' It intimidates States, who are unable even if they wanted, to be 'welfare states,' since they have to play the role of 'welcome states' inviting in foreign capital who agree to come in only when the will of the financial market support their investment. More generally, casino capitalism affects the state of mind of all who participate in it, or who live under its volatile rule. People are made insensitive to the loss of human security of all classes and social categories exploited by or excluded from the casino capitalist 'mega-competition.' Essential social justice is overlooked by the casino capitalism, while neoliberal belief justifies any 'bet' provided that it is profitable to the gambler.

Casino capitalism is turning the production economy into a speculative system of commodities which are treated as 'bets,' as 'guarantee' and as 'payment.' It affects production while 'fundamentals' do not limit the range of market fluctuation as it did before. It orients investment not where it promotes production but where the expected financial gain is maximised. The workers and the consumers involved in the production/consumption process live under constant threat of losing their jobs and their capacity to purchase subsistence goods, by the volatile financial process which changes, overnight, the patterns of the redistribution of the surplus in the global economy. The technocrats in banks, States and international institutions are unable to understand and control the turbulent casino capitalism since they cannot understand the irrational effects of greed and fear on the fluctuations of casino capitalism. This adds to the problem, both by letting loose the gamblers, and by leaving without any protective regulatory mechanism the citizens, whose means to survive is limited, and often force them to choose between joining the informal sectors, the criminal organisations, or the 'rebels.'

Casino capitalism is, thus, fundamentally unethical, both socially and psychologically. Socially, the above-mentioned maldistribution and insecurity accompanying it are unacceptable consequences of neoliberal 'economic development' on human development and human security. Psychologically, the speculative culture of the casinos is propagated by the global media, and creates a culture of fear and greed. This global casino culture, is in a sense, a counter-culture of the oppressive rational technocratic culture which tries to escape from the indoctrination and surveillance of the well-planned technocratic global order. For many of the citizens docile participants of the public and the corporate structures, it is a psychological necessity to find an outlet for their suppressed identities, and a free space where they can express freely their greed and their fear in the world casinos. This irrational casino culture allows everybody to seek wealth not through hard work but through gambling. This irrational reaction to technocratic regimentation takes often an antisocial form, easily linked to racism and other forms of discrimination as an escape from technocratic rationality. Such escape leads sometime to the transnational organised crime.

The casino culture is, in this way, an informal complement of the official technocratic culture. It is based on fear and greed, two 'irrational' and therefore 'illegitimate' factors constantly occluded by the formal technocratic culture. Fear and greed motivates the speculative activities of the 'hedge fund' actors, and spread over the casino. It spreads, further, to all the social strata influenced by the global media. In this way, fear and

greed are the cause and consequence of casino capitalism producing and reproducing the casino culture.

Casino capitalism generates a funny kind of democracy. The will of the people is faithfully reflected in the economic decisions and the political and social policies informed by these economic decisions. The will of the people, however, emanates from the casinos, not from the people of the country concerned. The casino democracy reflects faithfully the will of the people in the Wall Street, in the City, or in Kabuto-cho. The 'hedge fund' and their collaborators, rule the globe, not only by their 'bull' or 'bear' decisions, but also by forcing all States, big and small, to take measures not in terms of the will of their citizens, but of the casino players whose will affects their economic viability and, therefore, has to be constantly taken into account. As the faithful subjects of absolute monarch did, the States have to read the mood of the Monarch 'Casino' and prevent his will in any decision they take.

Casino capitalism integrates transnational criminals into its mega-competition. The official technocratic culture treats the casino capitalism as a legitimate legal and rational economic activity, and, therefore, misses completely its deep roots of fear and greed, which make the transnational criminal actors the hidden partners of political and business leaders, under the cover of anti-criminal regulations. Consequently, all the measures they take to combat crime are only band-aid measures without true effects. They take apparently drastic policies to fight transnational organised crime which is becoming a strong competitor for the welcome States. They take anti-criminal measures while welcoming them informally, in view of mutual services including bribery and financial transaction of laundered money. Their interaction with the criminal sector of the casino economy is not based on any criminal intention. It is only a rational move to increase their competitive power. To control transnational criminal agents so that they do not become too strong competitors, but treat them as competing partners in the global game of mega-competition is not at all a contradictory policy. The global sex industry, regulated but tolerated, is a good case of this ambivalent connivance.

Casino capitalism generates as its complement a global military/police security system, often in the name of 'human security.' Casino capitalism needs to minimise investment risks and maximise global financial security. The financial market is fond of democracy and human rights. This is not because of its ethical preference but because the various conflicts and interventions in the name of democracy and human rights, and now in the name of 'human security,' publicised by global media intensifying global opinion fluctuations, bring to the global financial markets an ideal

pretext for speculative activities. Democracy and human rights, human development and human security and other such values supported by the international civil society is in this way co-opted, commercialised and made into objects on which to bet. The recent cases of such commodification of human rights can be found in the financial market quick reactions to Kosovo and East Timor. To be fair, however, we must admit the fact that the casino capitalism is not only commodifying these values. It needs to promote democracy and human rights, human security and human development, as well as other civil values to the extent that they help reduce the 'country risks' in different 'undemocratic' countries where casino capitalism operates. This is the reason that a 'new constitutionalism' is supported by the 'industrial democracies' under US hegemony. More generally, all forms of terrorism, illegal migration, and other factor of disturbance to the Global casino order are made the object of tight surveillance, control and punishment.

In spite of this pseudo-ethical aspect of the casino capitalism which uses ethical values as objects of their greed and tool for their fear reduction, This capitalism is devoid of any genuine ethical concern, since the global speculative competition is based on unethical principle that winning justifies anything. It is crucial for humankind to develop a countervailing force which fights against the unethical commodification of ethics by the casino capitalism. Otherwise, this capitalism will develop further this unethical global civilisation based on fear and greed, and whose birth has been accompanied by the Asian Financial Crisis.

This is why it is essential, at this turn of the century, to build a broadbased alliance of all the social forces which want to fight back against the unethical and demoralising forces backing the casino economy, and to reaffirm the true nature of democracy, human rights, human security and human development, and all other values co-opted and distorted by the gamblers in the global casino. A common front based on shared interests in not being commodified, exploited or excluded, and on shared values of democratisation, human rights, human security and human development, should be organised. Such common front requires that the labour unions and the civil movements join hands with all the peoples' movements organised by the social categories victimised by the casino capitalism, the feminist movements, the movements of the 'poor,' the indigenous peoples' movements, the movements against Dalit, Buraku and other status discriminations, the migrant workers' movements, the ethnic self-determination movements, the religious minority movements, and so many other movements of the excluded peoples. Such alliance has to be global since casino capitalism is supported by a global hegemonic

alliance. It has to be based on an ethical resolution to change the course of history towards a more just and equitable world. Human rights, human security, and human development should be unambiguously interpreted 'for the last child walking on this Earth' as Gandhiji has stated, not for the affluent gamblers who make unbearable misuse of these values.

Faced with casino capitalism, we must also be ready to gamble. Our gamble, however, should not commodify others. We must gamble on the possibility to build an alternative global governance system, a new world order which does not commodify women and men, nature, and money. The different social forces joining the global alliance fighting casino capitalism will be composed by a variety of groups with different interests and experiences. Each will have a different vision on the preferable alternative future. The search for a common vision about an alternative to neoliberal casino capitalism will not be easy. Only a strong ethical sense of urgency supported by a common sense about the present historical crisis will enable us to surmount our short-term divergences between unions and NGOs, organised and unorganised minorities, etc..

To define the targets of our immediate common action is easier. We want to oppose the greed and fear which animate casino capitalism. We must agree, to begin with, on a common platform about the regulation mechanisms against 'greed' which must be established on the national, regional and international levels. Such mechanisms will have to include restrictions on capital mobility, taxation on speculative earnings, guidelines on business practices, etc..

Against the 'fear' as the basis of the casino capitalism, our common platform should try to regulate the media and cyber-communication whose selective transmission of distorted reports cause unrealistic hopes and fears in the financial markets and among the general public. It is necessary to build an ethics of accountability and transparency among the agents of government and of the corporate sectors. It is especially important to reduce the fear of the great majority of humankind which is used as bargaining chips, and whose sense of insecurity causes so many military conflicts, intensifying market fluctuations. The States' claim to protect human security by exercising their power is an additional threat to human security, so long as it is exercised by welcome States under the influence of greed and fear, and incapable to understand the true sources of the insecurity of their citizens. These States try to prevent any disturbance of law and order through the tightening of surveillance, control and punishment. This approach to human security, which is only a justification of the States' attempt to guarantee casino security, multiplies the sense of insecurity of those who are excluded from casino capitalism, and are often

on the black list of the States as potential disturbers. An alternative way to guarantee the security of the peoples, especially those vulnerable to the effects of the casino economy, must be supported by all the social forces who join the anti-casino global alliance. This is why a radical alternative to the use of the military and police forces of the welcome States must be part of the common platform.

The common platform has to be based on a commonly agreed set of ethical principles. We must conclude this paper by proposing with more precision what we mean by 'ethical.' We do not give to this term a Confucian meaning of moral precepts given by 'heaven.' We rather use this term in the sense that capitalism which had originally some ethical sense, a 'sense of sympathy' has lost it now that it reached its 'casino' stage.

The States which had an ethical sense when they were aiming at becoming a 'welfare state' or a 'social state' lost it when they became 'welcome states.' Now is the time when the old social movements like the trade unions, the new social movements, the civic movements, and the emerging social movements representing the social categories most exploited and excluded from the profits generated by casino capitalism have to realise that they are the only hope for humankind to regain some amount of ethical commitment. Not the lip-service to democracy and human rights which covers the game of the hegemony playing the game of casino capitalism, but an authentic commitment to the security, rights and the development of all the peoples of the world, especially of whoever is victim of commodification by casino capitalism.

Such an ethical commitment can become the tie linking different movements alerting them to the fact that they form a common historical bloc. Such ethical common front is now emerging in different parts of the world. The new alliance of the 'poor' from Thailand to Brazil receive a broad support from the working classes and intellectuals. The People's Tribunals provide a place where the common ethical concern of different social interests is manifested.

International movements like the CCC (Clean Cloth Campaign) are proposing a Code of Conduct to regulate the transnational corporate sector. An international campaign opposing MAI has shown the capacity of the international civil society to mobilise opinion.

In brief, casino capitalism calls for a radical ethical response from the concerned peoples of the world. To respond to its demoralising effects requires that a remoralising campaign be organised. The campaign should build a Peoples' Tribunal against the unethical practices of casino capitalism. Alternatives proposed by different exploited and excluded



groups should be the object of a global dialogue forum. A radical answer to casino capitalism must be given – radical, in the sense that goes to the roots of the casino world order, that take the point of view of all women and men who call for justice around the world against casino capitalism.

## **Global governance and human security for whom?**

### **Global Governance cannot be left to the Hegemons**

The global hegemonic security maintenance system is a highly developed system of surveillance, preventive measures, and suppression. It is effective under certain conditions which include a systematisation of information-gathering through advanced technological means, institutionalised surveillance and control through policing force concentration at strategic points, and the securing of public support for policing activities. Such capacities are most effective in highly industrialised and bureaucratised urban settings, but less adjusted to the less industrial communities, developing regions, village communities, slums, and urban leisure centres. The security of the global economy, of the upper-middle class servicing it, of the technocratic agencies and agents, are well-protected by the hegemonic security institutions, from police to private guards, from computerised surveillance to private automatic alarm systems. The peripheral sectors of societies, not only developing but also industrialised, are not protected well by the hegemonic security systems. They have often developed their own informal security institutions which seek crisis management through coexistence with the 'criminal' groups who are often found more trustworthy than the State formal security system which is perceived as external and exogenous to the local security communities.

It is within this global context that an interesting global governance problem exists under the form of the suppression/promotion dilemma faced by the global hegemons. They want to suppress crime to justify their role as guarantors of human security, but they want to profit from the gain they get out of the prospering global sex industry (GSI). Global hegemonic governance is based on official and hidden motivations and calculations.

Our contention is that these hidden motivations and calculations are closely related to the values and interests sustaining the present hegemonic order while neoliberalism affects its discourse, with its internal contradictions. The issue area of trafficking in women and children which constitutes an integral part of the global sex industry will shed light on other less 'criminal' sectors of the global neoliberal competition within and among industries, thanks to the especially ambiguous and ambivalent

nature of this sector where double standards play an important role in maintaining gender and racist discrimination as a lucrative source of profit maximisation. We hope that this example will shed light on the criminal aspects of the neoliberal hegemonic security regime.

The global sex industry is defined as the sum-total of the activities of the transnational commercial operations of the various institutions selling sexual services and of the networks of agents providing women and children to work in these institutions. The globalisation of the world economy developing a global competition commodifying everything has not left out the leisure economy sector, including the sex industry which competes in the commodification of women and children.

It is self-evident that the commodification of women and children is in itself an abuse of their fundamental rights which forbids anybody to turn them into commodities depriving them of their human dignity. It is, however, equally evident that such a criminalisation would put into question the legality of the GSI which cannot be denied to it as a bona fide agent engaged in the macro-competition of the neoliberal global economy. Since this economy tends to commodify everything it touches, the commodification of women and children must be accepted as a legal practice.

This commodification mechanism maximises profits by a skilful combination of legality and illegality. The GSI determines the allocation of the 'legal' and 'illegal' profits to the transnational criminal organisations and to the different agents cooperating with them. The 'illegal payment' is the only concept which refers to a minimal part of this exploitative and discriminatory economic system of profiting and profit distribution which cannot be criminalised by the neoliberal hegemons who support such profit-making and distribution, provided that they are 'fair' in terms of competition. Once this principle is observed their legality cannot be questioned by the State. The 'unfair' black market profits made by the GSI in the hidden 'informal' sector is from the beginning out of the reach of State surveillance and control.

The legal/illegal aspects of the GSI and the criminalisation of trafficking of women and children gives rise to an interesting contradiction. The neoliberal hegemons need to promote the sex industry which is one of the competitors engaged in the global macro-competition. For reasons of public legitimacy and of human security maintenance, it should prevent, suppress and punish the 'criminal' activities of the sex industry. This 'industry' provides all forms of sexual services, to customers mainly male. This includes both legally and illegally performed services such as prostitution but not limited to it. The globalisation of the economy has

developed a global market for this industry commodifying women and children of the poorer regions and countries for the competitive satisfaction of the customers in the wealthier regions and countries.

The flow of human merchandise is directed by the transnational criminal organisations controlling the GSI according to the shifts in risk and benefit in different parts of the global, regional, and national markets. The tightening of police control in North America in the 90s was followed by the introduction of Colombian women in the Japanese sex industry market. The trafficking routes within each world region are conducted through local mafias using local-specific techniques. So the GSI is composed of quite different types of trafficking and exploitation mechanisms. There are, however, many common characteristics to the different regional and local manifestations of the GSI. It always maximises benefits by the skilful combination of legal and illegal means, and by a racist division of labour between national and expatriate women and children.

The 'legal' aspects of the GSI differs from State to State, but has in common two factors; it puts the legal sex industry within the category of 'leisure industries' whose prosperity contributes to the overall competitiveness of the State through the various spillover effects on other economic sectors, from tourism to local transportation. The legal sex industry is also an important source of income through the taxation of legal services and of the remittance sent back home by the victims.

This is why this taxable sector is made legal and exempt from criminalisation. This is natural for the neoliberal hegemons and other States.

The illegal and criminalised sector of the GSI is always 'informal' in the sense that it involves different forms of informal transfer of money from the customers to the industry, and from the industry to the criminal organisation and to their different agents, transfers which are conducted in the informal and black market sector because they all do not conform to the rules of the neoliberal market or of the hegemonic security regime. Such informal and illegal transactions cannot be controlled economically or politically and have to be the object of prevention, suppression and punishment by States through different agencies for domestic and international security maintenance which compose the hegemonic security regime.

The global hegemonic security maintenance system is a highly-developed system of surveillance, preventive measures, and suppression. It is effective under certain conditions which include a systematisation of information gathering through advanced technological means, institutionalised surveillance and control through policing force

concentration at strategic gate points, and the securing of public support to policing activities. Such capacities are most effective in highly industrialised and bureaucratised urban settings, but less adjusted to the less industrial communities, developing regions, village communities, slums, and urban leisure centres. The security of the global economy, of the upper-middle class servicing it, of the technocratic agencies and agents, are well protected by the hegemonic security institutions, from police to private guards, from computerised surveillance to private automatic alarm systems. The peripheral sectors of the societies, not only developing but also industrialised, are not protected well by the hegemonic security systems. They have often developed their own informal security institutions which seek crisis management through coexistence with the 'criminal' groups who are often found more trustworthy than the State formal security system which is perceived as external and exogenous to the local security communities.

The GSI is, in this way, a modern global industry which sustains itself thanks to its local communal ties with security communities where the globalised public security system operates with considerable difficulty. It is still a global industry engaged in the global mega-competition with other leisure industries. It is global, that is to say, not only in its global mobilisation chains, but also in terms of the global network of money laundering and transfer which enable it to participate in the global financial competition. It distributes, the laundered money to all the agents and supporters constituting the chain of replenishment, a part of the money received from the clients. The transnational criminal organisations, who supervise the legal and illegal operations of the GSI, keep for themselves an enormous surplus. This money, after having been laundered, is invested in the global market and serves to develop further the GSI as well as other transnational criminal activities, including drug trafficking, arms trafficking, and corruption politics.

The GSI is thus, a legal sector of the global leisure industry, which is also a sector of the illegal transnational organisations engaged in different forms of transnational criminal activities, of which the trafficking of women and children, and the exploitation of their prostitution constitutes an integral part, out of which these organisations draw an important proportion of their funds.

It is imperative to develop a global strategy to fight against the global forces who support and replenish the GSI, not only from the point of view of the global hegemon whose interest lies in the protection of the global market and the security of their civil societies. The GSI is, before being singled out by the neoliberal hegemonic security system, an object of

criminalisation, a system of global exploitation of women and children, which must be criminalised from the point of view of human rights and of the elimination of sexism and racism.

The rights of the victims of transnational criminal organisations are not necessarily protected by the neoliberal hegemonic security. Their rights to migrate, and their rights as migrants, are then violated by the immigration authorities who implement the policy of hegemonic security which wants to limit possible insecurity created by the 'illegal' migrants, especially women migrants.

The GSI is in general terms an industry whose profit is based on sexist and racist discrimination. It is racist in that it profits from the commodification of women and children of certain ethnic and national origin. Different from the national sex industries which was exploiting women and children from a single country, in that it maximises its total income by a differential exploitation which is based on racial discrimination. As a matter of fact, a racist hierarchy of women and children is formed on top of which are the nationals who, generally, are not under bondage. The bottom layers are composed by the bonded women and children coming from poor countries, who are often 'illegal' migrants. This hierarchy of the 'commodity' enables the GSI to push up the price of the merchandise on the top, and to reduce, to the extreme, the cost to sustain the commodified victims at the bottom.

The GSI profits from its double status of legality and illegality. The global mega-competition common to all global industries, demands that each unit increase their competitive power by a combination of a reduction of the cost with a maximisation of unit price multiplied by the number of transactions. The GSI uses its illegal sector to minimise unit cost by using bonded slaves. It maximises its price by providing to its customers merchandise of different price. The legal sector helps in increasing the number of customers, and the illegal to increase the price customers pay to illegal goods.

The GSI has a specific way to exploit its victims in such a way that it can get from the customers maximum profit. The clients are ready to pay an exorbitant sum in return to the sexual 'services' provided by women and children from their own country as well as from different 'exotic' countries. Wealthier customers pay generally more for women and children from their own country, and the less affluent clients pay less for the women and children trafficked from the poorer countries. To obtain more profit from the trafficked victims, the GSI minimise expenses on them by exploiting them under bondage, avoiding paying them on the ground that they have to repay their debts.

The GSI as a commercial player engaged in the mega-competition of the global economy plays on the advantage given to it by a very simple demand and supply structure. If there were no rich customers ready to pay an exorbitant sum of money in return to sexual services, and if there were no poor women and children who are forced or incited to be trafficked and to affluent centres of the GSI where they offer these services to the rich clients, no GSI could survive.

The root of the problem lies in this combination of a political/economic factor, i.e. the wide gap between rich and poor regions. And a psychological/cultural factor, i.e. the customer's psychological readiness to buy sexual services and the cultural background motivating to accept the terms of the recruiter by the community and/or the family or the women and children themselves. This poses another set of issues of an extra-legal nature which is insignificant in terms of hegemonic security but becomes crucial once we base our judgement on the principles of human rights and human security of the victims themselves.

If we choose to prefer human rights and human security of the victims to the hegemonic security, the States will be asked to realise their responsibility in eliminating such sexism and racism, since it is only the State which can create an institutional change sufficiently broad and coordinated to cope with the problem of the demands and supplies of the criminal exploitation of women and children by the GSI.

Under these circumstances, it is extremely important to challenge the States receiving the victims to renounce to side with hegemonic security and agree to respect the human rights and human security of the victims exploited by the GSI. They should adopt a general strategy to fight against the GSI from a human rights point of view, putting before other concerns, the respect of the rights and dignity of the women and children exploited by the GSI and their empowerment. In this attempt to propose a strategy to fight the human rights violations of the GSI, we need to take into consideration the following three aspects of this 'global' industry.

It is feared that the general tendency to accept the sex industry as a mainly masculine leisure industry while stigmatising and penalising the women exploited by this industry may be further enhanced by this new effort to fight organised crime supporting the GSI, unless a regime combining the criminalisation of the global criminals with the decriminalisation of their victims is established in full respect of the rights and dignity of the women and children concerned.

Even under hegemonic security, any attempt to criminalise transnational organised crime should not give an easy life to the bosses of these organisations by ignoring the defensive strategies of the criminal

organisations. The GSI has developed a skilful technique to survive by using the women and children as a shield. They let the immigration authorities and the police arrest the victims in their place. Many campaigns against organised crime, national or transnational, end up with the arrest of the victims or at best some of the lesser actors and supporters like pimps and mama-sans. The technique is simple: it consists of erasing any evidence linking what is happening on the site of operation/exploitation and the GSI bosses operating behind the scene.

In fighting with the criminals under these circumstances, a human rights and human security approach would take an entirely different position to the neoliberal hegemonic security approach. It would stress the following principles:

- The investigation should not treat the victims as if they were the criminals.
- The investigation, which cannot be conducted without the cooperation of the bosses of the security communities, should not end with the arrest of some recruiters and transporters – a token from the bosses of the security communities to representatives of public security – but should seek to get to the bosses of the criminal organisations who have hired them.

This involves not only an increase in the capacity of surveillance and investigation of the transnational police and of the immigration authorities, but also an effort on the part of the hegemonic security to build bridges with the local security communities which tend to be discriminated against by the neoliberal security which is not interested in the low-productivity sectors comprising these communities.

On a procedural level, the different procedures of surveillance and interrogation of the victims themselves which, under hegemonic security, tends to be conducted without any concern for their basic rights and human security, should be radically reformulated. The victims, who are treated more as criminals or accomplices and as 'illegal' migrants, should be treated not only as victims to support but as citizens whose testimony constitute the base for a democratic security system.

For the hegemons the 'trafficking in women and children' is an object of criminalisation just as the 'smuggling of migrants by land, air and sea' is. The public security, law and order, which is the main concern of the hegemons, rejects not only the smugglers but also the 'illegal' migrants. It criminalises trafficking but protects the sex industry. It treats the victims as violators of immigration laws and regulations while tolerating their

racist and sexist exploitation by the sex industry. In opposition to this approach, domestic legislation and international conventions should focus their legislative efforts on the protection of the rights of the victims and to their empowerment irrespective of the regime of prohibition, abolition, or regulation.

The above analysis has shown that the neoliberal hegemonic security does not guarantee the human rights and human security of the victims exploited by the GSI. The Draft Protocol refers to the need to protect the victims of the transnational organised crime. This can be interpreted as a logical consequence of the need of hegemony to be assured of a wide support from the leading sectors of civil society which wants to protect the victims of any human rights violation.

This is important for the 'good conscience' of civil society and for the legitimacy of hegemonic rule. The lack of genuine concern for the rights and dignity of the victims is clear, in the sense that when neoliberal principles of competitiveness and the hegemonic arguments about public security are at stake, the rights and dignity of the victims are ignored, as is the case of the rights to migrate, the rights of migrants, and the security of the women and children in bonded-slavery.

The efforts of the neoliberal hegemony to prevent, suppress, and punish the transnational criminal organisations engaged in trafficking is simply a 'match-pump' attempt, to use a Japanese expression, which means to set ablaze and then pump water to extinguish the fire you yourself have ignited. The exploitation and discrimination of women and children from poorer countries by the masculine citizens of richer countries is a consequence of the unregulated neoliberal competition which motivates women and children from the poorer countries to accept bonded slavery, and for the masculine population of mass consumption societies to want to exploit sexually the women and children from the poorer countries. The global hegemon who wants to suppress trafficking does not want to transform the fundamental human insecurity built into the global structures.

This is why the replacement of the hegemonic security regime by a human rights and human security regime is essential to democratise global governance. Yet it is impossible to achieve this goal unless the civil society assumes its role in the democratisation of the security system. The difficulty faced by the civil society is considerable. Especially in relation to the issues relating prostitution and trafficking in women, the civil society is incapacitated by a debate between the feminist movements interested in this issue.



## **Global governance in face of neocolonialism**

### **The smallest person walking on the earth**

We have tried to look at three facets of global governance, in terms of the global alliance, global gambling and global commodification structures. We saw that the hegemons were assuming the task of 'overseeing' all aspects of global governance. Their interests and designs are quite different from their discourse. They not only speak in the name of human rights, they also bomb in the name of democracy.

Their interest is definitely human. They are for human security. Yet, human for them means human relations and human capital. They are interested in building an alliance as broad as possible to support their hegemony. Their governance is leaving out all those who are not good at competitive human relations, those who cannot become human capital, except as slaves.

Hegemonic governance does divide the world into those humans who belong to their world and those who are excluded from it. One or two centuries ago, colonies were the geographical location where such excluded people lived. They were called uncivilised, ignorant, and un-democratic. Nowadays, the colonies still exist in the global south. The colonised people are found also in the north, where they constitute pockets of exploitation and exclusion. We do not want any global governance if they force upon us global colonialism, a system of global discrimination, with the haves on one side and the havenots on the other – a system where the North Atlantic region constitutes a semi-global security community, which closes itself to 'intruders' from the south, and sends expeditionary troops to pacify local conflicts in the south.

We have to build an alternative global governance system, guaranteeing human security, human development and human rights, not only to the rich but to the smallest child walking on this Earth.

# **Gender, Culture and Security**

## **Old Legacies, New Visions: The Indonesian Context**

MELANI BUDIANTA

### **Introduction**

In 'Rethinking Human Security: Environmental Security in a Globalised Regime,' Vinor Raina (1999) looks critically at the dominant notions of security adopted and implemented by the UN, i.e. the concept of international peace and economic developmentalism. Raina points out the inequality of the power distribution, which creates unfairness and biases in administering these concepts globally, and shows the shortcomings of using the perspectives of international security and developmentalism. Instead, Raina proposes that the notion of human security should be reevaluated in terms of gender, human rights, environment, health, education and welfare.

Using Raina's essay as a starting point, this paper will discuss the concept of security in the present Indonesia in its relations to the issues of gender and culture. I will focus on one aspect of security, i.e. the legacy of the New Order concept of internal security and its implications on gender relations, by highlighting the efforts – especially amongst women – in redefining them. This paper suggests that reevaluating the notion of security should include the unpacking of the underlying gender ideology.

### **The legacy of the New Order concept of internal control**

On March 8, 2000, the Indonesian government announced the decision to dissolve two institutions which had functioned as Repressive State Apparatus – the Agency for Coordinating National Stability (Bakorstanas)

and the Special Investigation (Litsus). The first institution was established in the 1988 to replace a much feared military agency (Kopkamtib) that oversaw internal security after the 1965 civil war; whereas the Special Investigation was founded in 1990 in order to screen people applying for posts of civil servants or to investigate people suspected to be ideologically 'unclean' (Kompas, 13 March 2000).

This decision raises the hope that the present Indonesian government is changing the older paradigm of internal or national security. While the terms of peace and security in the global scene, as described by Raina 'have predominantly been used in the context of external aggression,' the notion of security in a third world country under a totalitarian regime like Indonesia during Soeharto's 32 years of leadership was characterised by fears of internal disintegration. Yet this notion of internal security shares similar traits with the global security concept, which came out of the 'cold war phase of international politics,' namely 'militarism and war preparedness.' (Raina, 1999:2).

### **Anti communist vigilance**

The New Order notion of security was a spinoff of the 1965 civil war, which had caused the death of thousands of people accused as communists. The 1965 incidents, officially termed as Gestapu PKI (meaning the September 30th movement of the Indonesian Communist Party), have until now remained a historical mystery. The New Order version was written largely by General Soeharto, who took over the presidency from an ailing Soekarno and proclaimed the beginning of the New Order. He emerged from the massive bloodshed as the hero who saved the country from a communist coup d'état. Another version, such as the one known as the Cornell Papers, claimed that all the commotion originated from internal conflicts within the body of the Indonesian military that scapegoated the communist party and a great number of innocent civilians.

Whatever happened in the last days of September 1965, the dark page in Indonesian history was used as a justification for the establishment of a tighter system of internal control, which benefits the New Order regime. A military institution called Kopkamtib was founded to oversee national security and order, an institution which grew to be an effective means for limiting civilian space for creativity and critical aspirations, including literary and artistic expressions (Kompas, 13 March 2000). A model for the indoctrination of anti-communist ideology that includes the propaganda of the New Order's legitimacy was introduced in the education system, from elementary to university, and in the late-80s and early-90s

was adapted for the business communities as well. The government also established a rigid system for 'screening' individuals from any communist influence in the 90s and watch over any 'ideologically unclean' forces coming from foreign countries. This includes banning books on Marxism, refusing to give visa to foreign scholars who were critical of the New Order regime. A cultural manifestation of this repression was the banning of any use of written Chinese characters, and the public display or observance of Chinese rituals. The latter policy came out of the allegation that the Indonesian Communist Party had been supported by overseas Chinese or from the communist forces from Mainland China. With such allegation, the Indonesian Chinese were discouraged from entering into the realm of politics and bureaucracy.

### **Fear of disintegration: Cultural homogenisation**

Another problem that haunts the multicultural nation of Indonesia is regional schism or separatism. Since the revolutionary wars, the young nation of Indonesia had suffered from several secessionist attempts. Thus the meaning of national security is heavily coloured by this alertness against any separatist or regional awakenings. The New Order's approach towards this 'latent' problem was to emphasise unity over cultural diversity by imposing ways of homogenising the nation. One way of doing so was centralisation of power through the structure of bureaucracy. Since everything was decided from the centre of power located in Jakarta in the Java island, the cultural biases of the metropolis and Javanese ethnocentrism colours the models that are implemented uniformly across the whole region.

On the other hand, insecurity over the strength of the national unity brought up more repressive measures towards any signals of discontent. In 1984 the government issued a policy that identified four 'sensitive' topics of discussion that could ignite social and political unrest, namely the issues of ethnicity, religion, race and inter-group conflict. This policy (called SARA as abbreviation of the four issues) was later used as a censorship of any critical views against the way the government managed its affairs. A number of studies have pointed out at the problems of the New Order ethnic and racial policy, besides the obvious Javanese ethnocentric biases. Among some of these problems is the exploitation of the Indonesian-Chinese businesses as 'milked cow' and buffer, a continuation of the Dutch colonial policy, a practice that worsen the practices of corruption, collusion and nepotism within the bureaucracy and the ruling circles.

### **The monetary crisis: Fall of illusionary security**

What comes out of this concept of security is an emphasis on militarism and security vigilance over civilians that represses freedom of thoughts and expressions, a centralistic system that gives little space for pluralism and democratic learning experience of conflict management. When the totalitarian regime had the upper hand, the iron fist system was able to maintain this illusionary security. But in the period of crisis, when the economic crash grew speedily to be a crisis of political faith towards the ruling power, the false security crumbles down with the fall of the regime. The monetary crisis showed that security imposed by repressing people's voices turned out to be a fragile one. The last years of the 20th century witness the eruption of prolonged ethnic and group conflicts in Indonesia. Without ample experience for managing difference and conflict democratically, the multicultural society of Indonesia is susceptible to provocations that invoked racial, ethnic and religious prejudices.

### **Security and gender: While men fight, women are crushed in between<sup>1</sup>**

The concept of security based on militarism carries with it the values of masculinism. War-preparedness against any possible enemies and the significance of physical strength in such atmosphere are often separated by a thin line from machismo and the culture of violence. Recourse to violent measures such as kidnapping, rape and torture and even killing in the name of security was not uncommon in conflict-ridden regions. Some of these areas were officially declared to be 'areas of military operation' (DOM – regions considered to be highly insecure politically, for example Aceh, and previously East Timor).

Many human rights and NGO activists have reported the victimisation of women and children in the DOM areas.<sup>2</sup> The May rapes of 1998 in Jakarta and other cities of Indonesia are the tragic manifestations of the militaristic culture. Women's bodies in these incidents and other similar incidents in West Irian, Aceh and East Timor served as targets of violence in order to terrorise and demoralise the social/ethnic group to which the women belong.

The aggressors in this case were not limited to the military or the militias. There have been reports that violation of women's bodies occurred in civilian conflicts, for example in ethnic and religious conflicts in Ambon and other Maluku Islands. Committed by the military or civilians, these crimes suggested the prevalence of a sexist, militaristic ideology, in which

women are seen not as a subject but an object or instruments to be used in defeating the enemy.

The condition of women and children in the time and areas of social unrest is highly volatile. The degree of violence in Aceh was reflected in the existence of a village that is called the Widow's village (Kampung Janda), because it had lost most of its male members. Women in such conflict-ridden area have to survive economic as well as psychological hardship of continuing life and family in the face of day-to-day terrors. The impact of witnessing violence done to close members on small children is paramount. Reports have been written on the grave condition of women and children in refugee's camp, with poor sanitary condition and nutrition. To add, violence in the very location where they have least power for resistance, the displaced women and children are often subjected to terror and violence.

## Responses

### *Women's peace rallies during the Reformasi years (1998-99)*<sup>3</sup>

Indonesia at the turn of the millennium faces not an external enemy, but a threat of internal disintegration. Violent ethnic, religious, regional and inter-group conflict exploded and spread from Aceh in North Sumatra, Jawa, Kalimantan and Maluku. Realising that women are among the most vulnerable victims of the violence, women activists in Indonesia mobilised a strategy of refusing to go with the dominant discourse of partisanship, and initiated movements that stresses instead the ecumenical messages of peace and tolerance. In response to these atrocities done by one group to another in the name of religion, ethnicity or regional nationalism, women in many places organised peace rallies and interfaith prayers that foregrounded solidarity. In spite of the embedded structural and regional divisions, Indonesian women activists tried to work together with other women in conflict regions and managed to organise several simultaneous peace rallies all over Indonesia. They used symbol of religious and ethnic differences in a way that stressed togetherness in difference, for example by having women in the Muslim *jilbab* walking hand in hand with Catholic nuns in their habit. The women's interfaith prayers became a forum of solidarity of peoples of all faith, including the believers of religions which had been classified as 'illegal' by the New Order government (which officially acknowledged only five religions).

These peace rallies offered an alternative discourse to counter the New Order version of security which represses cultural difference. Interfaith prayer is most important because especially since the late-80s, the

government had supported practices that worked against religious tolerance. The organisation of peace events required great effort in reaching across class, ethnic, religious, regional and even professional boundaries, resulting in networking and the formation of new alliances among people of different backgrounds.

#### *Duek Pakat Inong Aceh (2000)<sup>4</sup>*

During February 20-22, 2000, around 450 Acehnese women participated in the All-Aceh Women's Conference in Banda Aceh (Duek Pakat Inong Aceh – DPIA). According to Carla Bianpoen, a Jakarta women's activist and reporter who was invited to cover the event, this was 'a historic event, not only because it was the first in 400 years that women [in Aceh] spoke about their concerns and rights in public sphere, but also because they did so despite intimidating threats on their lives' (Bianpoen, 2000).

The congress was also significant because it managed to gather representatives of various parties engaged in the prolonged and bloody conflicts in Aceh, including students, women who supported the Free Aceh Movements, women in government institutions, and various NGOs, a democratic effort that had never successfully been done before. Bianpoen quoted Dr Gde Ismail, a historian of the Syah Kuala University in Banda Aceh: 'Women have given us, men, an example of how to solve differing opinions in a democratic manner' (Bianpoen, 2000).

It was not an easy task, given the worsening social and political conditions in Aceh, where the region had become a killing field for the warring sides – the people who fight for the free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian military. According to Naimah Hasan, initiator of the congress, the situation was such that five or six people were killed every day, reaching up to 145 victims in the month of February alone. Many widows with five to seven children had to live on hard-to-find daily wage of Rp 5,000, which is less than one dollar (*Jakarta Post*, 13 March 2000). Children suffered from mental trauma and severe malnutrition and could not go to school. There were many refugees who moved out of their villages out of fear of both the warring parties (*Kompas*, 3 March 2000). The congress was also held at the peak of the crisis, when 'Aceh was on the brink of deciding the province's future (Bianpoen 2000).' A great number of Acehnese had demanded that the government hold a referendum in Aceh to decide the status of the province. But there were also many voices that did not agree to have the referendum as a means to find peaceful solution to the Aceh problem.

Naimah Hasan testified to the terrors and threats that she and the women faced in holding the congress. Some threats insisted that the

outcome of the congress should be pro-referendum and others against it (Bianpoen 2000). There were allegations that the congress was the Indonesian government's tool to undermine the free Aceh movement. Three days before the congress, Naimah Hasan found a poster stuck to the door of her house, misspelling the title of the congress to mean that it is an occasion for 'selling the Acehese women.' (*Kompas*, 3 March 2000). In fact, Hasan said that in the tense atmosphere of the conflict, women, who made up 52 percent of the 4.5 million Acehese population, had been intimidated from voicing their own opinions (*Kompas*, 3 March 2000).

By trying to make the congress inclusive and democratic, the women had actually said 'no to both of the warring parties (Bianpoen 2000).' The actual process of producing a resolution told of the difficulties of choosing a democratic path. They had to spend seven hours to decide whether or not they would put a pro-referendum issue on the resolution. Twenty participants, led by pro-referendum supporter Cut Nur Asikin, walked out of the congress. Most of the participants finally decided to drop the issue of referendum as they did not want 'to be trapped by the dilemma' (*Kompas*, 3 March 2000).

Instead, the 22-point resolution puts justice and peace as the main concern (Bianpoen, 2000). It believes that 'the future of Aceh depended on the application of the Islamic law that give ample space for women's participation in making social change in a peaceful atmosphere.' (DPIA, 2000). The resolution demanded at least 30 percent participation in all political and institutional decision-making and proposed 22 recommendations in the field of Islamic law, politics, social change, economy, and peaceful solution in Aceh. They include demands that the government stop military violence, conduct fair trials for rights abusers, and respect Acehese decision to observe Islamic law. They also proposed specific figures of what they consider as fair economic distribution of local resources. They demand equal rights for women in traditional institution and women's access in the economy. The resolution ended by urging people not to dwell on revenge, to 'break the chain of violence and hatred' and to continue doing nonviolence activities in achieving peace (DPIA, 2000).

### **Strategic and problematic alliances**

The preparation and processes of the women's peace rallies discussed earlier address the difficulties in building solidarity across racial, ethnic, religious and regional differences. Cross-regional networking was difficult to sustain as many women activists who live outside Java had less access to



communication technologies, such as telephone, fax, e-mail. Moreover women's activism in the New Order era is fractured along the lines of interest groups, party and mass organisations, many of which do not have interest in women's issues and have little contact with one another. The coordination of cross-regional events depended very much on individual effort in keeping in touch with various NGOs and its structural channels in the regions, and when these links were not continuously reinforced, the networking slackened.

The processes of holding the All-Aceh Women's Congress shows the importance as well as problems of such cross-regional alliances in a multicultural society. The plan to hold this congress came out from a meeting held by 2000 women of 68 organisations in Aceh. Two Jakarta women from a group called PeKa (Women for Peace and Justice) were invited to give their views in the meeting, and participated in formulating the basic ideas for the All-Aceh Women's Congress.

The emergence of PeKa, on the other hand, was a response to a plea from an activist from an Aceh women's NGO called Flower Aceh, that 'all women want is peace' (Bianpoen 2000).

Besides this apparent synergy of cross-regional activism, however, lurks a number of problems. The presence of the Jakarta women during the December meeting invited criticism and negative responses from many Acehnese participants. Living in the legacy of Jakarta centralistic hegemony, the ethnocentrism of Javanese politicians in the ruling elite, and the wounds inflicted by the Indonesian military, strong anti-Jakarta/anti-Javanese sentiments rose not only in Aceh but in many regions in Indonesia. The presence of the Jakarta women was also used by those who do not like the women's congress to take place to insinuate that the congress is a Jakarta-made ploy.

Alliances across national boundaries are also significant in supporting local movements. The women's peace activities discussed earlier made strategic use of International Women's days as a momentum to hold their rallies. The visit of the UN representative, and visit of women's activists from other countries helped to strengthen the women's morale. E-mail communications also helped to disseminate information worldwide, especially when international pressure is needed to push a certain issue locally. Like the case of the Acehnese women above, however, such alliances risk at times being used to instigate nationalistic concerns, causing allegations that such and such activism were 'funded by foreign capital' or serving foreign interests.

Another problem that complicates the struggle of the Aceh women is male chauvinism that goes hand in hand with patriarchy. Most of the

media, and the social and political forces in the region are hesitant in acknowledging the contribution of the women. In the subsequent attempts of peace-making by the central government as well as the local communities, the suggestions of the Aceh women were not very much headed. Only one among the many women leaders who convened in the All-Aceh Women's Conference was invited to be in the peace commission set up by the government.

The All-Aceh Women's Conference formed an institution called the Balai Syura, a body that will maintain the networking among women and implement the resolutions of the conference through community programmes. Yet it is obvious that in order to make the story of the Aceh women a success story, more strategic alliances must be built in order to break through the patriarchal barriers that minimises the women's contribution.

### **Conclusion: Towards a gender-sensitive conception of security**

One basic flaw of the New Order concept of human security discussed above is the tendency to sacrifice human rights for the sake of security. This is the consequence of the militaristic, war-preparedness nature of many nationalist versions of security, which are most insensitive to issues of gender. The case of the Acehnese women discussed above also suggests that in conflict areas, the safety of women and children are often not considered when the warring parties stick to their own definition of 'national' security. In places where sexism and violence against women is still prevalent, the concept of security should include security against violence that is strengthened by assurance of gender-sensitive legal protection. In the words of Debra Yatim, coordinator of PeKa, a women's group which advocates Peace and Justice: 'Peace ... is not only a state, but also a culture that needs to be developed in time. A culture of peace includes the concept of human rights, democracy, social justice, protection for the weak, solidarity and last but not least gender equality' (Bianpoen, 2000).

Both women's activism discussed above show that the notion of security that forgets human's rights is no security, that securing human's right should be the underlying principle of any definition of security. The Indonesian women's peace rallies discussed above uphold an alternative notion of security as the tolerance of differences and the ability of living together in a multicultural society. While militaristic security always emphasises vigilance over boundaries, the women's notion of security emphasises inclusiveness and the crossing of boundaries.

By accepting and appreciating difference, both women activism

discussed above correct the New Order notion of security that imposes uniformity over cultural diversity. In the time where cultural differences are highlighted, as in the case of Aceh, Ambon, and other conflict-ridden areas recently, the position of women could be precarious. To opt for peace the women could be considered a traitor to their own culture, religious or ethnic group. The Aceh women's activism discussed above suggested that their commitment to peace does not mean forgoing cultural values. In fact they underline the importance of respecting other people's values in securing peace. Here the notion of security as the ability of living together in difference is highly pertinent.

The Acehnese women put their lives at stake in order to hold a meeting to discuss their views of what security means. Their courage speaks of their firm belief that women's equal participation in democracy is essential to peace and security. To listen to those voices, which in many places are still forgotten or silenced, is most important in redefining ways to secure life. Despite all the risk and problems, international and cross-boundary networking and alliances must be maintained to keep these voices from being silenced.

#### NOTES

1. Inspired by Aditjondro's title 'While the Elephants Fight, the People of Maluku are Crushed in Between,' (1999)
2. For reports on these cases, read papers presented in a seminar on 'State Violence against Women' held by the Voice of Concerned Mothers (sip), 30 October 1998, among others ones written by Karel Phil Erari, 'Kekerasan Atas Wanita di Irian (Violence against Irianese Women);' Ivete de Oliveira, 'Kekerasan Negara terhadap Perempuan Timor Timor (State Violence against East Timorese Women);' Ita F Nadia, 'Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan di Jakarta 13, 14, 15 Mei 1998 (Violence against Women in Jakarta on 13, 14 and 15 May 1998);' Hasballah M Saad, 'Kekerasan terhadap Perempuan di Aceh (Violence against Women in Aceh).'
3. A fuller account of the strategies and discourses of women's activism during the Reformasi period will appear in a collected volume provisionally entitled *Reformasi: Challenges to Authoritarianism in Malaysia and Indonesia*, to be coedited by Ariel Heryanto and Sumit K Mandal.
4. This section is based on secondary readings, especially Carla Bianpoen's 'Aceh's Women Show the Road to Peace' (*The Indonesian Observer*, Sunday 12 March 2000).

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# Commitment at a Time of Disorientation

## The Philippine Left and Indonesian Choices

JOEL ROCAMORA

My business is words. Words are like labels,  
or coins, or better, like swarming bees...  
I must always forget how one word is able to pick  
out another, to manner another, until I have got  
something I might have said  
but did not.

*Ann Sexton, Said the Poet to the Analyst*

...I want to be able to love my own movement, to believe that we can do more than admit that we made 'errors,' as if our mistakes were merely technical problems. I want us to change, and to honor the memory of the fallen by listening to, knowing, and making room inside our organisations for the living. I want us to respect our people – with their differences and desire, their stubborn opinions, their fears, their courage, their intelligence.

*Sarah Miles, 'Sleeping with Communists,' Debate, No.7 (August 1993), p.13*

My PhD thesis was on Indonesian politics. It was entitled 'Nationalism in Search of Ideology – The Indonesian Nationalist Party, 1945-1965.' My thesis adviser, Ben Anderson, said the title should instead be 'Joel Rocamora in Search of Ideology.' A profoundly perceptive and sympathetic man, as many of you know, Ben Anderson was, of course, correct. Together with my own country, Indonesia has provided the intense politics which are at once, the inspiration from courageous actors and the elements of analysis which have been the guideposts for the development of my personal politics over the course of the last 30 or so years.

Today, after being kept out of my second homeland for 29 years, I am here again, to listen. Despite the title of my talk in the programme, I cannot possibly dare to say much about the Left in Indonesia because I just have not been around enough to know what is going on. One of the few things I do know provides yet another reason for silence. The distance between 1965 and 1998, between the murder of PKI members and the triumph of the pro-democracy movement, has created such a wide gulf of consciousness. Traversing this gulf is a task that Indonesian leftists have to undertake before even sympathetic outsiders such as I am, can begin to grapple seriously your reality.

I was supposed to come to Indonesia with Bill Liddle to study the 1971 elections. It was at that time that I learned that I was on the Suharto government's blacklist. From 1964, when I first came to Indonesia and became friends with people such as Gunawan Muhamad and Arief Budiman, to learning in 1971 that I could not return to Indonesia as long as Suharto was in power, Indonesia was a more powerful presence in my consciousness than my own country. I suppose I should thank Pak Harto because, since I could not go to Indonesia in 1971, I returned instead to teaching in Manila and reconnected with my own country.

Although I had lost touch with the Left in the Philippines while I was in graduate school and preoccupied with Indonesian politics, the Philippine military included me on a list of so-called 'top subversives' that was headlined in Manila newspapers the week I returned to Manila. The following year, in September 1972, I was arrested the night Marcos declared martial law. I have never been able to figure out why the military is interested in me, though I suspect it is because of the restricted meaning of 'intelligence' applied to the military.

I had not, in fact, established a connection with the armed underground when I was arrested in 1972. But, I said to myself, if I am arrested anyway without having done anything to deserve it, I might as well do something. So, for the next 20 years, my life was organised around the requirements of the Philippine struggle. Before any of you begin to romanticise my role, I should tell you that I was never in the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). I hold the record in the party for being a candidate member for 20 years without ever being promoted to full membership.

Years later, in the midst of the bitter split in the party in 1993-94, a good friend, at one point a member of the Executive Committee of the Politburo, asked me why, when he and other friends were suffering terrible bouts of uncertainty and generalised angst, I seemed to be immune. The reason, I told him, is that 'When we all took Marxism-Leninism 101, you

guys topped the class while I almost flunked.' It is not really that the split did not cause me many moments of emotional turmoil. More that because I joined the party when I was in my thirties and already had a PhD, I had an intellectual vantage point considerably different from those who, like my friend, joined the party when they were teenage university undergraduates.

## Theory and practice

I risk boring you with all these personal details because I think you deserve to know my vantage point. This is not just a stylistic conceit. I believe that events in the last decade or so of the 20th century have destroyed much of the theoretical base of the Left. Under conditions of theoretical disorientation, with so much of our theoretical legacy wiped out by history, we have to start with real people and their struggles, their attempts to make sense of their confusing social and political reality, their often stumbling struggle to devise new progressive strategy and tactics under very difficult conditions.

I am not talking only about myself. As I said on the last page of my book on the split in the CPP, '...I want to be able to love my own movement, to believe that we can do more than admit that we made 'errors,' as if our mistakes were merely technical problems. *I want us to change*, and to honour the memory of the fallen by listening to, knowing, and making room inside our organisations for the living. I want us to respect our people – with their differences and desire, their stubborn opinions, their fears, their courage, their intelligence.'<sup>1</sup>

This admonition does not mean that I want us to go into battle without any theoretical weapons. I remain a Marxist. I believe that Marxism continues to be a useful theoretical tool for understanding capitalism. I believe that understanding capitalism remains the primary task of progressives because for all of its still unmatched capacity to generate economic growth, capitalism also retains its prodigious appetite for victims. Marxist economic analysis will not enable us to understand the victims of sexism and patriarchy, of ecological destruction, so we have to incorporate feminist theory, ecological analysis, and the less theoretically atavistic segments of post modernism.

This is not an occasion for a detailed review of the theoretical legacy of the Left. I will pick out a set of interrelated ideas not just because I believe they are crucial for understanding the collapse of 'actually existing socialism' – of the USSR and the Eastern European socialist states – but also because they are relevant to new forms of progressive action that we

in the Philippines are experimenting with. These ideas – dictatorship of the proletariat, vanguard party, one-party state, mass organisations as ‘transmission belts’ from the party to the people – are all related to issues of democracy.

The socialist states in Europe collapsed because of mass movements which fought against their dictatorial governments. No amount of ‘false consciousness’ theorising can hide this embarrassment. It is not just governments or states that collapsed. It is a particular way of looking at states and governments, and their relationship with their citizens that collapsed. If you posit socialist states as ‘dictatorships of the proletariat,’ then it follows that the party of the proletariat would be the one and only ruling party. If you do not put limits on the power of the socialist state, and there are no other centres of autonomous political power allowed, then it follows that mass organisations are only instruments of the state.

These ideas are at the core of the theoretical foundations of the Stalinist state. While variations were devised in other countries in later times, what Stalin set up in the USSR was the characteristic state form of socialism. Does a socialist economy require this kind of state? The forced pace of capital accumulation under Stalin led to forms of exploitation of workers found only in earlier stages of capitalism. Does socialist accumulation require forced labour camps? The death of millions of people? Does it matter whether they were deliberately killed or died as a result of decisions made by an omnipotent state?

The will to power grows out of our rage at the powerlessness of our people, the abundance of power of our enemies. Organising poor peasants to fight despotic landlords, workers against management goons are the early sources of progressives’ will to power. Problems arise only after we have begun to accumulate power. Dilemmas are particularly intense in those movements which are engaged in armed struggle. It is one thing using (fire) power against our enemies. What limits do we place on our power over party members, members of mass organisations, allies? After we seize state power, over our citizens?

This is not idle theoretical musing. Millions of people have lived and died serving these ideas. Political parties have been founded, grown large and powerful, seized state power, grown fat and flabby, in the end, were thrown out of power by their own people because they were not able to learn new ideas. These same ideas have been critical in shaping the history of the Philippine Left. It is from my vantage point as a kind of ‘ethnographer’ – participant observer – of the Philippine Left that I want to reflect on the Indonesian experience.



## Rich practice, rigid theory

The contemporary Philippine progressive movement traces back to the 're-founding' of the Communist Party of the Philippines in 1968, and the dynamic student movement that preceded it. The CPP has not been the only progressive force around. But throughout most of the 70s and the first half of the 80s, the CPP was a hegemonic force on the Left. By the early 80s the CPP had become so strong that it forced all other progressive groups including anti-communist groups to relate their ideological and organisational life to the CPP, to measure themselves by the standards set by the CPP.

Born at the height of the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' in China in the second half of the 1960s, the CPP's analysis of Philippine society,<sup>2</sup> its programme for a 'national democratic revolution' and its strategy and tactics were classic Maoist. Debates on CPP founding chairman Jose Ma. Sison's framework for analysing Philippine society continue to this day. In party history, the most important debates, however, were over the CPP's strategy and tactics. It was the party leadership's failure to adjust its strategy and tactics that led to its decline and split in the 90s.

CPP strategy emphasised rural over urban, armed over unarmed, clandestine over open organising. It was this strategy that enabled the party to, not just survive, but actually benefit from the conditions of martial law and dictatorship from 1972 onwards. It was so successful that even areas of work that it de-emphasised developed forcefully. Open, unarmed, urban mass movements under the leadership of party cadre rapidly built up in the first half of the 80s. During this time, key party leaders pushed for a re-evaluation of party strategy to take advantage of the decline in the dictatorship's repressive capabilities, the explosion of mass movements especially after the murder of opposition leader 'Ninoy' Aquino in 1983, and the restoration of constitutional democracy after the fall of Marcos.

Instead, the party leadership chose to boycott the February 1986 'snap election' for president which became the pivotal struggle which led directly to the downfall of Marcos. In the famous 'EDSA revolution' which followed the election, the CPP and its followers were on the sidelines. An internal CPP critique said it best: '...when the aroused and militant masses moved spontaneously but resolutely to oust the hated regime last February 22-25, the Party and its forces were not there to lead them. In large measure, the Party and its forces were on the sidelines, unable to lead or influence the hundreds of thousands of people who moved with amazing speed and decisiveness to overthrow the regime.' (Rocamora:1994, p.69)

As it turned out, this 'tactical error' led to a strategic decline of the

CPP. In 1986, it provoked a veritable avalanche of polemics within the party and outside that examined many different aspects of party life. What did not get carefully enough examined are the ramifications of being 'unable to lead or influence' the people. The problem is not just what happened at EDSA in February but the way the party abandoned hundreds of thousands of people it 'aroused, mobilised and organised' into political action because it later decided that their particular political action did not after all fit the party's strategic framework.

Issues related to political leadership will always be debated because social conditions are constantly changing. On the part of those who would presume to lead, there are matters of choice. Leading means being some distance from the people you want to lead. How far ahead is the first choice. Marxist-Leninists attach names to these distances, short ones are 'reformist,' farther distances 'revolutionary.' We used to get all worked up over the finer details of the difference. At this time what is important for me is what kind of 'social costs' we ask the people we lead to bear. The more 'revolutionary,' the greater the social cost. If there is consultation about 'costs,' 'how much' is a matter of negotiation.

The problem is that the more 'revolutionary' the goal, the greater the need for being underground, the more difficult 'negotiation' is. When you are engaged in armed struggle, there is a premium on discipline. When bullets are flying, you do not consult. But it is precisely under these conditions that you ask the greatest sacrifice. Being underground means extremely difficult living conditions, risking capture, being jailed and possibly tortured. Guerrillas are asked to make the ultimate sacrifice. The communities where guerrillas operate also pay the cost of military operations and the disruption of carefully worked out strategies for survival.

Armed struggle generates a terrible strain on the social fabric of communities where guerrillas operate. When guerrillas begin their work, everything is kept quiet and discreet. When the community is won over to the struggle, the existence of the party and its mass organisations moves more and more into the open. Maintaining strict military security then becomes the responsibility of the whole community. In effect, the community becomes militarised. Family, economic and other social relations outside the community become more and more difficult. Contact with relatives in the military have to be cut off.

The strain of maintaining tight military security often results in members of the community being punished for breaking security rules. I remember a very sad episode in a documentary about the New People's Army (NPA) where a 17-year-old boy was executed for talking to an uncle

who happened to be a military man. It was not made clear in the movie whether he had actually become a spy for his uncle. The military, in fact, often tried to infiltrate spies into the party. How much damage information collected by these spies actually had would be difficult to estimate. What is clear is that the paranoia generated by so-called 'deep penetration agents' (DPA) resulted in massive damage to the party.

In 1985, after a series of setbacks in party work in the southern island of Mindanao that the leadership could not explain, a campaign to root out the presumptive explanation, DPA, was launched. Party and mass organisation members and allies of the party were hauled into makeshift camps for interrogation that quickly slid into torture. When it was over, as many as 900 people had been executed or died during torture. Because the party never recognised this 'campaign' for what it was, an abomination, it was repeated three years later in a different part of the country. Less than a hundred people were killed at this time, but because the killing fields were closer to Manila, the political impact was greater.

In its aftermath, the party leadership summed up the experience as an outbreak of 'insanity' in party ranks. The damage to the party and its public image was incalculable. Comradeship in a party engaged in armed struggle demands that you trust your comrade with your life. Because what should have been a discreet counter-intelligence operation was turned into an anti-DPA mass campaign, party members were obliged to mistrust each other and the people they worked with. Because the killings became widely known, an implicit social compact with the people that the party would only use violence judiciously was broken.

The CPP reached its highest point of development in 1986 and 1987, precisely at the transition from dictatorship to elite democracy. It declined slowly thereafter then went into a steep dive starting in 1990 and culminating in the split of 1993 and 1994. In 1986, the party had 35,000 members and some 25,000 guerrillas. Today, the mainstream CPP faction is estimated to have 7,000 to 8,000 guerrillas. Smaller breakaway groups may have a total of 1,000 combatants. There are certainly other factors that explain the decline of the party starting in the second half of the 80s. The two factors I chose to explore here are very important but not the only explanations. I chose them less to explain the past than to locate the present – to place what I and the people I work with have chosen as key lessons from our common past.

### **From development to governance**

The decline of the CPP in the latter half of the 80s was also marked by the rapid growth of the NGO movement. The tens of thousands of young people

politicised during the last few years of the Marcos dictatorship could not be incorporated into the national democratic movement (ND). The CPP, at this time, was in the throes of profound disorientation. With the support of the Cory Aquino government which took over from Marcos, many new NGOs were established, soaking up all this youthful energy. NGOs also provided a way for party members who left the CPP to continue to do progressive work. Non-party political formations, what we call 'political blocs,' provided more comprehensive ideological frameworks.

At this time, these NGOs mainly engaged in development work. The preferred framework, emphasising 'people empowerment,' was distinctly political. Forming people's organisations, as cooperatives or sectoral organisations (peasant, labour, urban poor, indigenous people, women) would invariably be the first step. In the Philippines, we never refer to NGOs on their own, always as 'PO-NGO.' The range of experience with development work is enormous, from simple subsistence projects, to commercial production, to microcredit, to export trade. Peoples lives have certainly been improved. But the enormity of problems of poverty in the country and the difficulty of sustaining development projects in the face of government indifference and often obstruction, generated a lot of frustration.

The PO-NGO movement naturally moved into governance and democratisation work. This process was facilitated by a number of developments. The most important was the passage of the Local Government Code in 1991. The transfer of power and significant fiscal capacity to local governments fed into PO-NGO preference for grassroots work. It helped that the LGC provided specifically for PO-NGO representation in local special bodies including powerful bids and contracts committees. International agencies such as the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) also moved into governance work at this time, providing funds and new ideas for PO-NGO work.

From active involvement with local governments to electoral work was a short step. PO-NGO staff easily saw who among local government officials were corrupt or inept and who were innovative and reform oriented, and who therefore they should support in the next election. The next steps were more difficult. Starting in 1987, PO-NGO electoral initiatives coordinated at the national level were abject failures. One of the lessons drawn from these experiences is that it does not make sense for PO-NGO initiatives to only support established national politicians. They have to build their own political parties and establish electoral bases at the local level. This is where Akbayan (Citizens Action Party) comes in.

So I do not get accused of favouritism, I want to make it clear that I am in fact playing favourites in focusing on Akbayan. I am in the national leadership of Akbayan so it should be clear that it is my favourite progressive organisation. The very nature of Akbayan, however, among others its being a multi-tendency, non-ideological organisation, is a good antidote for the poison of sectarianism. We have also made it a point to ban people without a sense of humour from the party. It is difficult to be sectarian when the favourite form of communication within the party is heckling.

Akbayan started out at a series of meetings of leaders of four political blocs in April 1996. Building on the success of progressive participation in the May 1995 local elections, the group formulated a concept paper which was discussed widely in a series of consultations throughout the country. We invested the resources necessary for these extensive consultations because we wanted to break a standard pattern of the Philippine Left, parties and other organisations being started by a small group of intellectuals in Manila. With the consultations, we not only benefited from a wide range of ideas and experiences, we also started the party with a lot of stakeholders throughout the country.

The most important elements of the Akbayan concept include:

- (1) Akbayan's goal is the mobilisation of people around a programme of radical democracy. As a progressive organisation, our programme is anchored on the economic and political empowerment of the poor and disenfranchised majority through redistributive and entitlement programmes. We also believe that democracy – constitutional government, a Bill of Rights limiting the power of the state, the rule of law – is essential to the well-being of modern societies.
- (2) Akbayan participates in elections to win. This may seem self-evident. From past experience in the Philippines, this point is in fact crucial because progressive participation in elections tended to be mainly for propaganda purposes. Since the CPP strategy for achieving state power was armed struggle and the CPP saw elections as 'meaningless ruling class exercises,' they mainly used election campaigns to popularise certain issues. This then is a crucial point of departure for Akbayan, that elections would be Akbayan's main strategy for accumulating state power.
- (3) Akbayan emphasises participation in local elections, again in contrast to past Left experience which focused intervention at the national level. This is both a matter of principle and practical politics. We participate in elections initially at the local government level where

we have the resources to win and only slowly build up to the national level. Given people's alienation from a political system dominated by upper class groups, restoring a sense of effective participation – the essence of radical democracy – can be best done at local government levels.

- (4) Unity is built around a progressive political project, not a specific ideology. Groups and individuals following different ideologies are welcome in Akbayan. There are practical reasons for this choice. At a time of rapid change and ideological crisis, of splits and bitter ideological struggle in the Left worldwide, we did not want to bring these tensions into the party. In addition, because Left groups in the Philippines remained small, electoral impact required working together. The Akbayan political project is a 'work in progress.' We see it as being constantly in a process of shaping based on conditions outside and the democratic process within the party.
- (5) Akbayan can remain a progressive political party only if it continues to be accountable to a dynamic and assertive mass movement. While asserting a leadership role on matters of government policy, Akbayan will defend and promote the autonomy of organisations in civil society. Akbayan leadership will be a matter of political persuasion, not organisational fiat.

Since its founding Congress in January 1998, Akbayan has taken small but solid steps towards its long-term establishment. We are not in a hurry. Life is hard enough as it is without having to run at a forced pace. Our target is to win a few more seats in every election we participate in. In 1998, we won one seat and got cheated out of another. It is not much given that the Lower House alone has 250 seats. If we can win three seats in the next election, we will be happy. More importantly, we need to at least triple the 10 town mayorships we won in 1998.

### **Relevance for Indonesia**

What part of the Philippine experience is relevant to the Indonesian progressive movement? Only as much as you want to appropriate. We are now past those days when the Left operated on the basis of models of revolutionary practice imported from a socialist motherland. The only safe conclusion is that whatever you want to appropriate, you need to go beyond the generalisations that intellectuals like me are fond of making. We consider it part of our internationalist responsibility to facilitate exchanges of experience. We do not assume that this traffic has to be one

way. There is much that we can learn from the Indonesian experience.

When I reflect on the future of the Indonesian progressive movement, I am optimistic. I am very impressed with what you have accomplished under extremely difficult conditions. You brought down the dictator, prevented the military from replacing the dictatorship with Malaysian-style constitutional authoritarianism, today you play active roles in shaping the institutional framework of Indonesian democracy through campaigns on human rights and on local autonomy. You have also moved quickly to use the democratic space available to organise a social movement base.

Of necessity, new organisational forms to fit the new political circumstances will have to be learned. Given the enormity of the political tasks, there will be a temptation to use democratic centralist organisational forms. Voluntary organisations can choose to be run in whatever way they prefer. More tightly run organisations can do more than loose formations. But when you are trying to put many other people into political motion, or if you are running a government, it is very tempting to think that the efficiency of a tightly run organisation can be extended to a whole society.

The experience of the Left in the Philippines provides good examples of the dangers of this way of thinking. The CPP got 'separated' from the people in 1986 because what the party wanted the people to do – guerrilla warfare in the countryside – was at considerable distance from what the people wanted to do – vote in an election and continue urban mass actions. The cost of this kind of 'separation' was borne at this time by the party. In situations where the party controls the state such as Tienanmen Square in 1989, the cost is paid in blood by the people.

In Indonesia, at this time, the dilemma is made even more difficult by two elements of the political equation. What the June 1999 election showed is that religion and ethnicity remain powerful elements of political identity and electoral choice. The choice that progressive friends made in working with Amien Rais and Muhammadiyah in building PAN made a lot of sense at the time. Does it still make sense at this time? Another dilemma has to do with the favourite organisational tactic of the student movement, OTB (*organisasi tanpa bentuk*). This organisational tactic was appropriate during the repression of the Suharto dictatorship. Something different has to take the place of OTB at this time. But what should it be? How much of the spontaneity and exuberant energy of OTB can be retained by tighter organisational methods?

Only Indonesian progressives, of course, can answer these questions. When I have tried to answer these questions for my own movement, I have looked not at ideological propositions writ large, but at what my

answer would mean for specific individuals, for Raffy or Anna or Risa. The problems of poverty that we face in our countries provide enough reason for a lifetime political commitment for each of us. But what we do in fighting for the future cannot be too distant from that future. If we are forced to distort our lives and our relationships during the period of struggle, if we do not allow ourselves to laugh and to have fun at this time of struggle, how can we build societies where we can enjoy ourselves together with our people?

#### NOTES

1. Sarah Miles, 'Sleeping with Communists,' *Debate*, No.7 (August 1993), p.13. Joel Rocamora, *Breaking Through – The Struggle Within the Communist Party of the Philippines* (Manila: Anvil Press, 1994), pp.224-5.
2. Indonesian friends should note that CPP founder Jose Ma. Sison's analysis of the Philippines was closely patterned after D.N.Aidit's *Indonesian Society and Revolution* including the book title which simply replaced 'Indonesia' with 'Philippines'. Sison spent some time in Indonesia in 1962 and was in touch with the PKI.







Victims of  
Development  
in Asia



BOOK EXCERPT

## Burma Development: Hostage of the Junta

MYO NYUNT & NANCY HUDSON-RODD

### Introduction

Burma, with a land area of 676,578 sq. km, is the largest country in Southeast Asia. It remains one of the least densely populated countries in the region and is among the most ethnically diverse, with about 150 ethnic groups and even more languages. There is also great diversity in landscape with four climatic and geographical regions: the Western and Northern Hills; the Shan Plateau; the Dry Zone, Central Plains Region; and the Rakhine and Tenasserim Coastal regions. The four major river systems – the Irrawaddy, Chindwin, Sittang, and Salween – flow from north to south following the general slope of the country. The basins of these rivers form the fertile delta of the Irawaddy extending inland. Swift-flowing rivers and their tributaries – which on the one hand posed as physical barriers to interactions between peoples while on the other helped in communications as major transportation routes – are now being dammed for irrigation and hydroelectric power for export purposes.

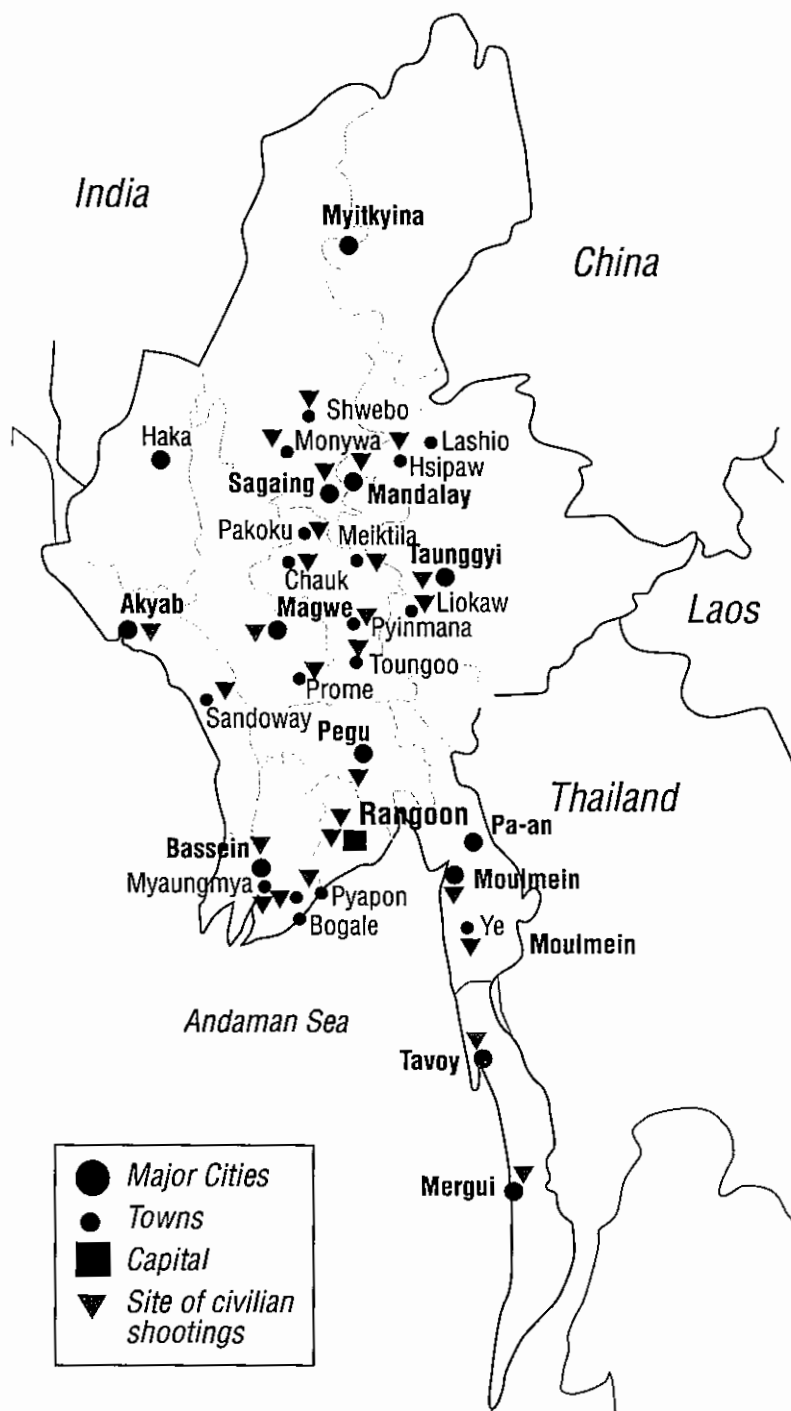
Burma's wealth of natural and human resources are such that it should be able to sustain the present and future generations of people and maintain its ecological diversity. However, the majority of the population remains poor, the land is increasingly impoverished, and most people simply survive from day-to-day in fear of the military regime. For over three decades the military has ruled Burma. In 1988, widespread demonstrations by students, monks, workers and citizens seeking release from oppressive rule and poverty were brutally repressed by the army. Approximately 3,000

people were shot dead in streets of Rangoon and other cities. The army set up a military junta called the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) which did permit free elections to be held in 1990. Results of the elections gave an 82 percent majority of the seats to the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi but were never recognised. She has been detained under house arrest for most of the past decade. December 8, 2001 was the 10th anniversary of Aung San Suu Kyi receiving the Nobel Peace Prize for her peaceful struggle to reestablish democracy in Burma.

An estimated one million people are internally displaced within Burma and over 300,000 Burmese work illegally in Thailand – forced out because of civil war, persecution and the inability to make a living. According to Asia Watch, 20,000 Burmese women were forced into prostitution in Thailand during 1997-99, but a far greater number of young girls and women work within Burma in the sex trade. The military government stands accused by the ILO of using forced labour for infrastructure development – construction of bridges, roads, dams, and railways. Amnesty International and other human rights groups accuse the regime of continued acts of violence, torture, execution, imprisonment for any people who dare to criticise or to make fun of the leaders. The country remains isolated and closed to scrutiny and study. Crucial fieldwork to supplement literature search is not possible and statistical data is unreliable and incomplete.

A just society, the 'democratic state and the social market' is guided by principles of democracy, human and civil liberties, rule of law and impartial justice. Democracy is a process acknowledging difference, supporting the flourishing of citizens. Aung San Suu Kyi in conversations with Alan Clements (1997: 161) describes what democracy should mean in the day-to-day life of the people of Burma.

Democracy is about your job and your children's education; it's about the house you live in and the food you eat; it's about whether or not you have to get permission from somebody before you visit your relatives in the next village; it's about whether or not you can reap your own harvest and sell it to the person you want to sell it to. The struggle is about everyday life. For a businessman, democracy is a system where there are sound commercial laws which are upheld by the institutions of the state, and he knows his rights and what he is allowed to do or not. For a student, democracy is the right to be able to study in good schools and in peace, and not to be dragged away to prison because you happen to be laughing with your friends over some funny characteristic of a minister.

**Civilian Shootings by Military in Burma 1988**

The democratic development process of Burma as encouraged by the NLD depends and thrives upon an active civil society. The strength of the nation is based on the creation of, encouragement to and support for a variety of voices. The military authoritarian system depends on hierarchical control-command and coercive-surveillance mechanisms and processes using instruments of domination, exclusion and oppression. The military dedicates itself to safeguarding the unity and integrity of the nation in three main causes:

1. Non-disintegration of the union;
2. Non-disintegration of national solidarity;
3. Consolidation of national sovereignty.

As declared guardian of Myanmar cultural purity, the military maintains tight control over social, religious and economic affairs, not trusting in non-military institutions or individuals. Yet these elements of civil society, institutions and individuals outside the state, are critical for the growth of pluralism and democracy. This is the crux of the difference between the NLD democratic approach to governance and the military-dictated state approach to control.

Given the military regime, how have domestic and external factors contributed to Burma's social, economic, and political developments and transformations since 1988? What comparisons can be made, for instance with neighbouring countries of Thailand and Vietnam, one a constitutional monarchy and the other a socialist state with power vested in the Vietnam Worker's and the Peasant's Party? People have been pouring across the permeable border into Thailand, escaping the hardships of Burma. Through a variety of resources, personal communication, and official and academic reports we attempt to analyse the landscape of Burma.

### **Economic growth and structural change**

There has been no significant structural change in the Burmese economy since 1962, whereas the economies of Vietnam and Thailand have achieved measures of 'success' through flexible and consistent economic policies. The per capita income growth of Burma between 1960 and 1994 was in the range of 1.7 to 2.1 percent. Real per capita income (after taking into account population growth in the range 1.9-2.3 percent) was stagnant. Thailand for the same period achieved actual per capita income growth of 3-4 percent and this outstripped its population growth rate, which declined from 2.4 to 1.8 percent.

**Table 1: Growth Rates: Selected Countries**

|                          | Year              | Burma | Thailand | Vietnam |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Gross Domestic Product   | 1981-90 (Average) | -0.1  | 7.9      | 8.1     |
|                          | 1991              | -0.6  | 8.5      | 6.0     |
|                          | 1994              | 7.5   | 9.0      | 8.8     |
|                          | 1997              | 5.7   | -7.8     | 8.2     |
|                          | 1998              | 5.0   | -10.4    | 4.4     |
|                          | 1999              | 4.5   | 4.1      | 4.4     |
| Per Capita GDP           | 1991              | -2.5  | -3.2     | 3.6     |
|                          | 1994              | 5.5   | 7.6      | 6.6     |
|                          | 1996              | 4.5   | 4.8      | 7.3     |
|                          | 1997              | 3.7   | -2.9     | 6.2     |
|                          | 1998              | 3.1   | -11.2    | 2.7     |
|                          | 1999              | n.a.  | 3.1      | 2.5     |
|                          | 2000              | n.a.  | 3.5      | 3.1     |
| Per Capita GNP (in US\$) | 1985              | n.a.  | 1050     | 240     |
|                          | 1998              | n.a.  | 2200     | 330     |

Source: ADB Annual Outlook, various issues

Comparing per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for Burma, Thailand and Vietnam over 1991-98, we conclude that Burma's economic performance was marginal (*Table 1*). Per capita GDP growth rate was positive though declining from a high of 5.5 percent in 1994 to 3.1 percent in 1998. Per capita GDP for both Thailand and Vietnam in 1994 exceeded Burma's by a factor of 18 and six respectively. The per capita GDP growth rates achieved by both these countries in 1999 are the more noteworthy given the 1997 Asian financial meltdown and especially the newly-opened economy of Vietnam. The total value of external trade for these two countries has also been much larger than that of Burma since the 80s.

Examination of the sectoral shares of GDP for Burma, Vietnam and Thailand shows a continuing and widening gap in all the sectors (*Table 2*). The agricultural sector continues to dominate the Burmese economy, its share having declined sluggishly from 49.5 percent in 1970 to 42 percent in 1999 (it was 48 percent in 1938). By comparison, over the period 1980-99, Vietnam's agricultural sector share of GDP dropped as much as 44 percent – from 42.7 to 23.9 percent, while Burma achieved only a 9 percent decline (*Table 2*). Thailand's agricultural sector share of GDP also declined at a fast rate from 30.2 percent in 1970 to 10.2 percent in 1999, a 66 percent decline over three decades, depicting the adaptability of its market-based economy to changing world trade and financial contexts.

Structural change and performance of the Burmese economy between 1981-90 was dismal with significant negative growth in Value Added (VA)



**Table 2: Sectoral Share of GDP**

|             | Year | Burma | Thailand | Vietnam |
|-------------|------|-------|----------|---------|
| Agriculture | 1970 | 49.5  | 30.2     | n.a.    |
|             | 1980 | 47.9  | 20.2     | 42.7    |
|             | 1996 | 46.1  | 10.9     | 32.2    |
|             | 1999 | 41.9  | 10.2     | 23.9    |
| Industry    | 1970 | 12.0  | 25.7     | n.a.    |
|             | 1980 | 12.3  | 30.1     | 26.3    |
|             | 1996 | 16.0  | 43.0     | 28.6    |
|             | 1999 | 17.2  | 42.9     | 34.7    |
| Services    | 1970 | 38.5  | 44.1     | n.a.    |
|             | 1980 | 39.8  | 49.7     | 31.0    |
|             | 1996 | 38.2  | 46.6     | 39.0    |
|             | 1999 | 41.0  | 46.9     | 41.4    |

Source: ADB Annual Outlook, various issues.

**Table 3: Growth Rates: Selected Countries**

|                               | Year               | Burma | Thailand | Vietnam |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Value Added<br>in Agriculture | 1981-1990(Average) | -0.3  | 3.8      | 7.4     |
|                               | 1991               | -2.4  | 6.5      | 2.2     |
|                               | 1994               | 5.9   | 4.7      | 3.3     |
|                               | 1996               | 5.0   | 3.8      | 4.4     |
|                               | 1997               | 3.7   | 2.9      | 4.3     |
|                               | 1998               | 2.8   | -6.6     | 2.8     |
|                               | 1999               | 2.5   | 6.6      | 5.0     |
|                               | 2000               | n.a.  | 3.0      | 3.5     |
| Value Added<br>in Industry    | 1981-1990(Average) | -0.2  | 10.3     | 7.7     |
|                               | 1991               | 1.5   | 12.1     | 9.0     |
|                               | 1994               | 10.3  | 10.1     | 13.3    |
|                               | 1996               | 10.7  | 7.1      | 14.5    |
|                               | 1997               | 8.9   | 2.7      | 12.6    |
|                               | 1998               | 6.6   | 8.3      | 7.0     |
|                               | 1999               | 6.0   | 8.3      | 7.0     |
|                               | 2000               | n.a.  | 6.8      | 7.4     |
| Value Added<br>in Services    | 1981-1990(Average) | 0.2   | 7.7      | 9.3     |
|                               | 1991               | 0.7   | 6.1      | 8.3     |
|                               | 1994               | 8.3   | 8.9      | 9.6     |
|                               | 1996               | 6.5   | 5.3      | 8.8     |
|                               | 1997               | 6.6   | -1.1     | 7.1     |
|                               | 1998               | 6.7   | -9.4     | 2.4     |
|                               | 1999               | 6.0   | 1.4      | 2.0     |
|                               | 2000               | n.a.  | 3.0      | 3.9     |

**TABLE 4: Trends in Economic Performance:  
Growth in Gross Domestic Product and Inflation**

| Year      | GDP growth | Inflation: % change in CPI |
|-----------|------------|----------------------------|
| 1962-1973 | 2.8        | 5.7                        |
| 1974-1985 | 5.3        | 8.4                        |
| 1986-1988 | -2.26      | 16.8                       |
| 1989-1991 | 1.93       | 25.7                       |
| 1992-1994 | 7.73       | 25.9                       |
| 1995-1997 | 5.96       | 23.7                       |
| 1998-1999 | 3.50       | 45.7                       |
| Average   |            |                            |
| 1989-1999 | 5.60       | 28.9                       |

Source: Selected Monthly Economic Indicators, various issues, Yangon, Central Statistical Organisation

for both the agricultural and industrial sectors, registering -0.3 percent and -0.2 percent respectively. Vietnam's VA agricultural and industrial sectors registered positive growth of 10.3 and 7.7 percent respectively for the same period. Considering the 1997 Asian financial meltdown into the 1999 economic situation, we conclude that Burma's economy was floundering

at a still lower level of economic growth and structural development. Since 1994 Burma's agricultural and industrial sectors' economic performance suffered continuous declines. Agricultural sector VA declined from 5.9 percent in 1994 to 2.5 percent in 1999, while VA for the industrial sector declined from 10.3 percent to 6.0 percent over the same period. Over the same five-year period 1994-99, Vietnam registered a decline in VA for the industrial sector from 13.3 percent to 7.4 percent, but achieved a sustained agricultural sector VA increase (with a brief decline in 1998) from 2.2 in 1994 to 5.0 percent (*Table 3*).

### Macro-economic analysis of economic performance

According to ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia-Pacific) economists, external stability can be achieved if Burma has a relatively stable monetary exchange rate and the magnitude of the balance of payments remains within a suitable range consistent with ongoing economic activities of the private commercial sector (*Tables 4 & 5*). The cost to Burma from illegitimate military rule can be derived from a number of outcomes that have emerged. The State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) military state and regime has legitimated social and economic exclusion by oppression and dispossessing the people from resources. Macro-economic stability does not exist and the military regime has not been able to maintain internal and external fiscal and monetary balance. There is an increasing budget deficit and a continuing fiscal crisis of the State. Government expenditures are consistently greater than are revenues and imprudent monetary measures such as increasing money supply

through printing of new currency has been resorted to more drastically since 1987.

### Savings & investments

Burma's savings and investments, which are both crucially important for enlarging the national capital stock, have remained static at around 12-13 percent of GDP since 1994. Both Thailand and Vietnam have higher rates of savings and investments, ranging respectively from 26 to 40 percent and from 17 to 28 percent of GDP (Tables 6 & 7). The savings and capital accumulation process in Vietnam, a 'transitional socialist economy,' is very impressive. The savings ratio has steadily increased from 16.1 percent in 1994 to 21.6 percent in 2000. Burma's savings ratio languished at a low 10.6 percent in 1998.

### Balance of payments

The balance of payments situation has worsened since 1991-92. The ever-increasing trade and current account deficits (Table 8) and decreasing exports from Burma result from 'stagnant production' in the agricultural sector and the various ad hoc controls of both external and internal trade. The military government have instituted foreign exchange controls and regulation, both de facto and de jure, and three parallel rates exist: the official rate at Kyat 6.80 per US\$1; the unofficial ongoing market rate ranging from Kyats 380 to 520 per US\$1 between 1994 and 1998; and the foreign exchange certificate (FEC) conversion rate in the black market, ranging from Kyats 250 to 280 per US\$1.

Furthermore, both trade licenses and permits to export are under the control of different line agencies and ministries, which make for considerable impediments to the process. Within the global context of an E-commerce business environment, where transactions in trade and finance

**Table 5 : Gross Domestic Product and Inflation Growth Rates, 1989-1999**

| Year | Burma |           | Vietnam |           |
|------|-------|-----------|---------|-----------|
|      | GDP   | Inflation | GDP     | Inflation |
| 1989 | 3.7   | 27.2      | 7.8     | 35.0      |
| 1990 | 2.8   | 17.6      | 4.9     | 67.0      |
| 1991 | -0.7  | 32.3      | 6.0     | 68.0      |
| 1992 | 9.7   | 21.9      | 8.6     | 17.5      |
| 1993 | 6.0   | 31.8      | 8.1     | 5.2       |
| 1994 | 7.5   | 24.1      | 8.8     | 14.5      |
| 1995 | 6.9   | 25.2      | 9.5     | 12.8      |
| 1996 | 6.4   | 16.3      | 9.3     | 6.0       |
| 1997 | 4.6   | 29.7      | 8.2     | 3.6       |
| 1998 | 4.0   | 51.5      | 4.0     | 9.2       |
| 1999 | 3.0   | 40.0      | 3.7     | 8.0       |
|      | 5.6   |           | 7.4     |           |

Source: Burma, GDP: Mya Maung, pp 83, Burma Road to Capitalism  
Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Review of the  
Financial, Economic and Social Condition, various issues  
Vietnam, World Bank

**Table 6: Gross Domestic Saving**  
(percentage of GDP)

| Year     | Burma | Thailand | Vietnam |
|----------|-------|----------|---------|
| 1981-90* | 11.4  | 26.2     | n.a.    |
| 1994     | 11.7  | 34.6     | 17.5    |
| 1995     | 13.4  | 33.4     | 16.1    |
| 1996     | 11.5  | 33.6     | 17.8    |
| 1997     | 11.9  | 32.4     | 21.8    |
| 1998     | 10.6  | 39.3     | 21.1    |
| 1999     | n.a.  | 36.4     | 22.0    |
| 2000     | n.a.  | 36.3     | 21.6    |

\* percent of GNP, average

Source: ADB Annual Outlook, various issues.

**Table 7: Gross Domestic Investment**  
(percentage of GDP)

| Year     | Burma | Thailand | Vietnam |
|----------|-------|----------|---------|
| 1981-90* | 15.4  | 31.1     | n.a.    |
| 1994     | 12.4  | 40.2     | 25.5    |
| 1995     | 14.2  | 41.4     | 27.1    |
| 1996     | 12.3  | 41.7     | 28.1    |
| 1997     | 12.6  | 33.2     | 28.3    |
| 1998     | 11.1  | 26.1     | 25.5    |
| 1999     | n.a.  | 26.8     | 19.7    |
| 2000     | n.a.  | 30.4     | 20.8    |

\* percent of GNP, average

Source: ADB Annual Outlook, various issues.

**Table 8: Balance of Payments on Current Account and BOP as Percentage of GDP**

| Year | Burma      |      | Thailand   |      | Vietnam |       |
|------|------------|------|------------|------|---------|-------|
|      | Million \$ | %    | Million \$ | %    | Million | %     |
| 1994 | -53        | -0.1 | -7,862     | -5.4 | n.a.    | -8.0  |
| 1995 | -244       | -0.2 | -13,248    | -7.9 | n.a.    | -11.0 |
| 1996 | -305       | -0.2 | -14,380    | -7.9 | n.a.    | -10.3 |
| 1997 | -350       | -0.2 | -3,130     | -2.1 | n.a.    | -6.5  |
| 1998 | -447       | -0.2 | 14,261     | 12.7 | n.a.    | -4.4  |
| 1999 | n.a.       | n.a. | 11,330     | 9.1  | n.a.    | 2.3   |

Source: ADB Annual Outlook, various issues

**Table 9: External Debt Outstanding (in Million \$) and Debt Service Ratio\***

| Year | Burma      |      | Thailand   |      | Vietnam    |      |
|------|------------|------|------------|------|------------|------|
|      | Million \$ | %    | Million \$ | %    | Million \$ | %    |
| 1991 | 4,875      | 13.1 | 33,266     | 10.1 | 2,739      | na   |
| 1992 | 5,355      | 6.2  | 37,353     | 10.6 | 3,957      | na   |
| 1993 | 5,756      | 11.8 | 46,826     | 10.7 | 4,788      | na   |
| 1994 | 6,555      | 14.5 | 64,866     | 11.7 | 5,434      | 13.4 |
| 1995 | 5,771      | 16.7 | 82,568     | 11.4 | 6,452      | 12.2 |
| 1996 | 5,185      | n.a. | 90,536     | 11.0 | 8,283      | 12.2 |
| 1997 | 5,647      | n.a. | 93,416     | 11.4 | 10,465     | 15.6 |

\* Debt Service Ratio (percentage of exports of goods and services)

Source: ADB Annual Outlook, various issues.

are being conducted instantaneously, the arcane and restricted business practices of Burma are reminiscent of another century. These restrictions ensure the impossibility of conducting business and are heavy impediments to obtaining timely market intelligence necessary to compete in world markets. The 'costs,' in terms of high prices for imported consumer and intermediate manufactured goods, are borne by the majority of people in Burma. The import requirements have increased in order to provide

**Table : 10 Changes in Government Revenues and Receipts – Burma: 1987/88-1997/98**

| Year    | Revenue | Expenditure | SOE deficit* | Overall balance |
|---------|---------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
|         | (%)     | (%)         | (%)          | (%)             |
| 1987-88 | 12.1    | 16.9        | 1.0          | -5.8            |
| 1990-91 | 9.4     | 16.2        | 0.6          | -7.4            |
| 1995-96 | 6.6     | 12.3        | 0.7          | -6.4            |
| 1996-97 | 6.7     | 12.8        | 1.4          | -7.3            |
| 1997-98 | 6.8     | 10.6        | 2.3          | -6.1            |

\* Balance of State Own Enterprise (SOE)'s current revenue and current expenditure

Source: Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, various issues; Myat Thein, 1999: Table 2.

essential inputs, machinery spareparts, equipment for the manufacturing industry and also for domestic consumption demand. The volume of foreign trade has been increasing in absolute terms, but as a percentage of GDP it has declined. The incremental increases in trade volume value are less than the increase in GDP. The external public debt was about US\$5.6 billion in 1997 and the foreign reserves about US\$250 million (*Table 9*). The growth rate of a gross domestic product of 10.5 percent was estimated to be achieved by the Burmese economy in 1999-2000, by the SPDC military government. Using official Burmese but questionable statistics, the GDP growth figure for the decade 1989-99 appears at a superficial glance to be impressive. The past decade's economic performance of Burma in relation to Vietnam and Thailand is deplorable, according to comparative performance figures of GDP growth rates issued by the Asian Development Bank and World Bank (*Table 1*).

The deterioration in the fiscal position of the regime can be observed from the fact of the expenditures of the government always being greater than that of its revenue. There has been a continuing budget deficit since 1987-89. Also, the state-owned enterprises, which the regime promoted for political expediency and concentration of economic power, were subjected to a continuing deficit since 1987 (*Table 10*). The overall shortfall in government finance has remained constant since 1987-88, averaging about 6 percent of the gross domestic product over 1988-98. The inability of the government to manage the public finances prudently is borne out by these figures and this abuse of public funds has brought unnecessary economic and social hardships to the majority population of Burma.

The Burmese economy in fact achieved only a 5.9 percent GDP growth rate for the financial year 1999-2000, according to the Burmese deputy minister of planning (*Table 11*). We have argued that the SPDC authoritarian military regime's deficit in governance and institutional capability lacks understanding of 'positive' economic fundamentals making Burma 'a poor and backward economy' and a 'hostage of the military status class (MSC)' and 'totalitarian militarist state.'

**Table 11 : Myanmar's Gross Domestic Product Growth Rates**

| Average Annual Growth Rate |                   |                     |                      |  |
|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--|
| Year                       | GDP               | Agricultural Sector | Share of Agri in GDP | %GDP growth directly caused by Agri growth |
| 1989/90                    | 3.7               | 5.2                 | 39.1                 | 55.0                                       |
| 1991/92                    | 2.8               | 2.9                 | 38.7                 | 27.6                                       |
| 1992/93                    | 9.7               | 12.4                | 38.4                 | 49.0                                       |
| 1993/94                    | 6.0               | 4.7                 | 37.9                 | 29.7                                       |
| 1994/95                    | 7.5               | 6.7                 | 37.6                 | 33.6                                       |
| 1995/96                    | 6.9               | 5.5                 | 37.1                 | 22.7                                       |
| 1996/97                    | 6.4               | 3.8                 | 36.2                 | 21.5                                       |
| 1997/98                    | 5.7*              | 2.9                 | 35.6                 | 22.4 <sup>#</sup>                          |
| 1998/99                    | 5.6               | -                   | 34.5                 | -  |
| 1999/00                    | 10.5 <sup>+</sup> | -                   | 34.3                 | -  |

\* revised upward from 4.6 percent

<sup>#</sup> calculated with original GDP growth rate of 4.6%

+ GDP growth rates of 4.3 and 3.6 for 1999/2000, respectively was calculated by the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank

Source: Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Review of the Financial, Economic and Social Conditions, Various issues. The Publication stopped in 1998. The last issue was for 1997/98.

## Conclusion of macro-analysis

Based on the experience of economic development in other countries, for a national economy to sustain an 8-12 percent growth rate a minimum savings ratio threshold of 20 percent needs to be maintained. If this does not occur, then foreign aid and direct foreign investment has to supplement the savings-investment gap. We conclude that the development performance of Vietnam since 1991 and Thailand since the 1970s are directly related to the capacity of the economy to generate a high rate of internal savings and invest into increasingly productive activities. In stark contrast, the economic development policy and practice of Burma under the ruling SPDC and the authoritarian military system has swallowed up whatever surplus the Burmese economy generated for maintaining political power and the economic monopoly of the neo-corporate military bureaucratic class. Since 1962, the control and command economic system of the SPDC (the 'military state' within the state) has maintained and enhanced its own viability to the detriment of expanding economic and social development of the nation. By suppressing human and democratic rights and neglecting proper measures to promote economic growth and development, the SPDC has brought about unnecessary human and social hardship and economic misery to the people of Burma.

The experience since the mid-60s of other ASEAN economies point to a clear alternative for Burma achieving superior structural recomposition

for economic growth and development, trade and finance. Both Vietnam and Thailand have been able to restrain their money supply and price inflation to tolerable levels so as not to dampen internal economic growth and commercial activities. Thailand also has consistently maintained a flexible exchange rate, a prudent responsive monetary policy and an open foreign trade regime tempered by the world trade and financial change dynamics. The Central Bank of Thailand has consistently, in consultation with the private commercial banks and the various Chambers of Commerce and Industry, posted a stable but flexible monetary rate of interest. Central banks' monetary policy and market-determined interest rates sustain business confidence and investment. Both Thailand's and Vietnam's macro-economic policies refrained from unnecessarily constraining domestic manufacturing and industrial expansion and the flow of direct foreign investment, commercial bank credit and loans to both the private and public sector.

Adoption of the best of Thailand's and Vietnam's policies and practices regarding changing output composition, pattern of foreign trade and investment and economic and monetary policy settings would by 2020 enable Burma to achieve a 50 percent reduction in agriculture's share of GDP and for exports' share to rise to 30 percent. We propose that by 2020 per capita income for Burma has the potential to multiply three to five-fold to reach US\$1500. Implicit in this prediction is the need for agricultural sector efficiency to improve dramatically and its labour force as proportion of total active population to be halved.

### **The role and performance of the agricultural sector**

Burma remains much as it was in the 40s, an 'old world' inward-looking economy based on agriculture and medium-scale manufacturing and raw material processing. Burma's 1938 GDP share of agriculture was 48 percent and this remains unchanged in 2000. The structure and performance of the Burmese economy has changed little since the 60s.

Thailand's economy, by comparison, has been transformed from mainly self-sufficient agriculture to export-oriented manufacturing and industry. It has embraced globalisation and democratic reforms. Vietnam too has embarked on the path of economic transition since 1985 while not opening up its governance. Exports and imports and degree of trade openness have increased for Vietnam and Thailand, whereas Burma's exports and imports have declined and remain at very low levels compared with Vietnam and Thailand.

Burma's GDP is significantly related to the agricultural sector growth

rate. The GDP growth rate dropped to 2.8 percent in 1992 from a rate of 3.7 achieved in 1989. GDP growth rate for Burma reached a peak of 9.7 in 1993 and thereafter has continuously declined to a rate of 5.7 in 1999. For the year 2000, though the Burmese government has announced a figure of a GDP growth rate of 10.5 percent, it is nearer to the 4.6 percent figure estimated by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Agriculture continues to play an important role in Burma's social and economic transformation. Both agricultural sector shares in GDP and its contribution to GDP growth has declined since 1989. The agriculture sector share of GDP was about 40 percent in 1989 and decreased to 34 percent in 1999. Agricultural sector growth declined from a peak of 12.4 percent to a low of 2.9 percent in 1997. This indicates that land resource use intensity and agricultural labour productivity has not increased since 1992. The policies adopted by the SPDC military regime have not induced a sustained structural change in Burmese agriculture.

Burma's per capita agricultural production declined continuously whereas agricultural production in both Thailand and in Vietnam has increased. Between 1980 and 1993, Burma's agricultural production per capita increased by only 3 percent compared to Thailand, which achieved a 9 percent growth rate. Vietnam achieved an outstanding rate of 30 percent increase in per capita agricultural production over the same time period. Vietnam attained larger gains in food production and was able to satisfy the food requirements of its large and ever-growing population, estimated as 75 million in 1995.

As productivity in Burmese agriculture deteriorated, the rate of growth of its per capita agricultural output declined to an all-time low of 0.7 percent in 1985-96. Vietnamese agriculture on the other hand sustained high rates of per capita agricultural production growth of 2.4 percent in 1985-96. Vietnam's agricultural productivity increases were due to using resources effectively and the successful adoption of market mechanisms. Greater agricultural output was achieved through expansion of irrigated land, more appropriate usage of fertilisers on a smaller area of cropland, combined with certainty of retaining a larger share of agricultural output. The greater market incentives, availability of credit through informal and family sources and the introduction of 'land laws and decree 10' changed the human-land relationships at local township and village levels. All of these factors influenced production by promoting and sustaining increases in Vietnam's agricultural production resulting in a greater marketable surplus for exports. The average yield of cereals per hectare increased by 30 percent in Vietnam between 1982-84 and 1992-94, whereas for the same decade Burma's cereal yield only increased by 4 percent.



### **Conclusion on the role and performance of the agricultural sector**

Development of Burma's agriculture remains beset by lack of freedom of farmers to own and farm land of their choice and by technological constraints on production. Lack of economic incentives and unfair distribution of benefits between employed labour, other resources and capital greatly retards Burma's agricultural performance. Growth of income from agricultural production in Burma is also constrained by the protectionist policies of both other developing economies and by the mature developed market economies that still produce natural-primary products and export to other food and raw material-deficit economies. Continuing increases in agricultural productivity and greater net returns to farm and non-farm activities have been constrained by military control. The promotion and creation of non-military institutions and agencies which collaborate with local farmers to create sustainable use of land and resources building on the their knowledge and skills has been denied.

To alleviate poverty in specific disadvantaged geographic areas, the state or public sector needs to engage local people, firms, agencies and institutions in dialogue and actions for their future. Participatory decision-making and local consultation to understand and protect customary rights of local community-level organisations should be a priority. Poverty, low income and unemployment in the specific disadvantaged or deprived areas are the results of deepseated structural rigidities and 'local inertia' as well as lack of financial resources and managerial coordination skills and knowledge. In order to achieve sustainable comprehensive social, environmental and economic opportunities a democratic process and governance of Burma is desired, for thinking globally and acting locally.

### **Social consequences of military authoritarianism**

Today the majority of Burmese people are languishing in poverty and underdevelopment because the military regime has consistently placed the demands of army ahead of economic and social development needs of the people. The military dictatorship has not adopted real economic measures nor introduced and implemented pragmatic and flexible economic policies to improve the quality of life of the people living under the abuse of the illegitimate military rulers. Whatever be the measure of social indicators – mortality rates, infant mortality rates, life expectancy, access to health services – people of Burma show a dangerously low and deteriorating level of human development. These abysmal rates of decreasing quality of life are in sharp contrast to an increasing rate of

human development and quality of life measures, over the past 20 years for people in Vietnam.

We recognise some improvements in reducing under-five mortality rates, and in increasing life expectancy in Burma over 1960-98. But, Vietnam and Thailand have achieved far greater success in improving the quality of life of their citizens. For example, both men and women can expect to die at a much earlier age in Burma than their neighbours in Vietnam and in Thailand do. Life expectancy is 7-10 years longer for men and 9-13 years longer for women in Thailand and in Vietnam than in Burma. Also in 1994 out of 1000 babies born, 109 died before reaching the age of five in Burma. In Vietnam and Thailand only 35 and 27 babies died before reaching age five. The population's access to safe drinking water and sanitation is better in Burma than in Vietnam but it largely lags behind Thailand.

Access to basic material and service needs, such as electricity, paved roads and adequate daily supply of calories for improved nutrition, is lower for a Burmese, lagging behind similar access for a Thai or a Vietnamese citizen. Almost one-third the population in Burma lives below the poverty line. As much as 95 percent of Thailand's roads are paved whereas only 12 percent and 25 percent of the roads in Burma and Vietnam are paved. Only five persons out of 1,000 have the opportunity to use a telephone or mobile phone in Burma in 1997, whereas 23 Vietnamese and 113 Thai out of 1,000 people use phones and mobiles. The average person in Burma had access to only a daily per capita supply of 1997 calories available, which was below the international benchmark of 2100 calories, by 103 calories per day, whereas the average Thai and Vietnamese respectively had access to 48 and 22 calories more in excess of the standard supply of calories required per day.

### **Corruption and rent-seeking**

Corruption and political patronage increases the initial cost of investment in new business ventures and also enhances the risks and uncertainties involved in business. Rent-seeking, cronyism and hidden transaction costs impact negatively on the incentives that are necessary for new business investments and for gains through economies of scale and scope. Apart from the 'external constraints' of competitive international trade and dynamic regional and world markets, genuine business activities in Burma have to confront the additional burden of 'domestic induced policy constraints' and the military systems' ad hoc economic directives.

In 1998, the SPDC government leased – what it described as being

'fallow and wasteland,' so-called 'vacant land' – a total of 1.2 million acres (486,000 ha) to be reclaimed and developed within three years by the newly-proclaimed owners, business groups. The average size of the holdings are 13,500 acres (5467.5 ha) but most holdings range from 1200-2000 ha with the largest being around 29,000 ha. As of June 1999, only 10 percent (around 47,000 ha) of these lands has been developed. The degree of destruction of Burma's natural environment to achieve short-term profits can be gauged by the fact that there has been a 58 percent loss of mangrove forests and deforestation of 677,000 ha of forestland in the period 1980-90. The objective of the military is to requisition land for their political cronies and client, to amass and concentrate economic power in the name of development while allowing the emergence of Burmese entrepreneurs within the so-called 'open market economy.'

### **Appropriation of Burma's economic space**

Burma's defence expenditure, as percentage of GNP, remained stable at about 3 percent during 1984-88. Since the military seized control of the country (1989), defence expenditure has increased to an annual average of at least 4 percent. For a low-income, least developed nation, with a per capita income of less than US\$300 in 1996, the defence expenditures for Burma are relatively higher than in Vietnam or Thailand. As percentage of government expenditure, Burma's defence expenditure was 32 percent, at the height of internal disturbance in the 50s, but declined to 28 percent in 1970. The cost of achieving internal security and military-dictated 'peace' is a drain on public funds and human resources which could profitably have been invested in national economic development activities and improvement of institutions, infrastructure and social capital. It is understood that the key to ensuring wide population benefits of national economic growth and to decreasing the rate of poverty in the long-term, is enhancement of women and girls' social, economic, political opportunities. Investment in areas of primary health care, primary and technical education, public infrastructure (clean water supply, sewerage, sanitation), all contribute positively to high national rates of economic growth and to a relative decline in poverty in the medium term. In Burma, expenditures in these areas are not high priority, and are ignored to the detriment of the people and the long-term development of the economy.

Defence expenditure has increased dramatically and steadily (350 percent) from 4 billion kyats in 1988 to 14 billion kyats in 1994. During the same period, the government's deficits rose 385 percent from 7.7 billion kyats to 29 billion kyats. Furthermore, the number of recruits in the Burma

defence force has increased continuously from a figure of 132,000 in 1964 to 170,000 in 1987, approximately a 30 percent increase. In 1991, sources within the military establishment indicated that their goal was to achieve a 500,000-person, well-equipped and fully-trained fighting force by the year 2000. According to the United Nations Human Development Report (1998), the MSC is close to this goal with an armed force of 400,000, an increase of 80,000 people since 1996.

The basic rights of the citizens of Burma to achieve a certain level of economic and social development have been denied. This lack of rights to a decent life is a direct result of the concentration of funds and people forced to serve the demanding needs of the ever-increasing defence forces and to support the military dictatorship. The majority of the Burmese people, since 1962, have been relegated to slaves and subjects of the military status class. This is the reality of life for most people now living in Burma.

In comparison with Thailand and Vietnam, Burma increased its per capita defence expenditure from US\$32 to US\$40 whereas Vietnam has reduced it from US\$53 to US\$12. This illustrates that the MSC, apart from utilising absolute rule of power, has also requisitioned, controlled and allocated resources for its own interest rather than for the wider public or peoples' interest. Assuming that the SPDC military regime could contain Burma's military expenditure level to that of Vietnam (US\$0.930 billion in 1996) then about US\$1 billion could be redirected and allocated towards social services and disadvantaged area development programmes in Burma. These programmes and activities would allow 'civil society' to encompass and flourish in Burma and bring social and economic benefits to the wider population and strengthen the nation's present organisational and economic capabilities.

Burma's military rulers appear to play 'catch-up' to Thailand in terms of military strength and not in terms of the last four decades of achievements in the spheres of freedom, peace, development and social justice. Thailand's defence expenditure increased from US\$2.6 billion to US\$4.2 billion between 1985 and 1996 and in 1996 its military expenditure was twice that of Burma. At present, Thailand's robust and viable economic system and democratic polity can accommodate such expenditure levels. But in Burma, every US dollar expended on military expansion brings untold misery and hardships, not only to the present generation, but also extinguishes the confidence and competence of future generations who will have to live and coexist with regional neighbours, some threatening and some friendly.

Thailand's defence expenditure declined to 2.5 percent of GDP whereas Burma's increased to 7.5 percent of GDP in 1996 from a similar base of 5

percent for both the two countries in 1985. The extent of the burden and cost to the population of Burma by such an increase of military expenditure can be highlighted by recognising that real per capita GDP of Thailand was larger than that of Burma by a factor of seven. Thailand's per capita GDP was US\$7742 purchasing parity price (PPP), whereas Burma's per capita GDP was US\$1130 PPP in 1995. Per capita military expenditure has increased in Thailand by US\$20 and in Burma by US\$8 since 1985 but military expenditure, as percentage of the combined amount spent on health and education, has consistently been lower in Thailand than that in Burma. Burma's defence expenditures have consistently exceeded those expended on health and education combined. Burma continues to increase spending on the military in relation to education and health activities and social programmes. In 1960, Burma spent more than 140 percent on defence than in education and health. In 1990, Burma's expenditure on military was still a whopping 120 percent more compared with Thailand which has decreased military spending by 30 percent in the same year. Now 40 years later, the military and the MSC retain comprehensive dominant power over the allocation and use of the scarce monetary resources of the people of Burma.

By whatever standards we measure the conditions and quality of life in Burma, the majority of the people are suffering through dispossession, discrimination and social exclusion. Through a variety of sources we have attempted to demonstrate the social and economic costs to the people and to the economy of Burma as a result of the continuous military rule in Burma over the past 30 years. Under a variety of names and guises the rulers in Burma have all focussed upon the perpetuation and survival of their own class, a military status class. We attempt to track the effects of this continued illegitimate military ruling system on the country through comparative statistics for the neighbouring countries of Vietnam and Thailand. The military rulers have achieved their vision of a large military force at the direct cost to the economic survival of the nation and at the cost of the lives of the majority of people in Burma who lead day-to-day lives of quiet desperation.

We suggest that three universal functions of the state fundamental to improving the life conditions of the population as argued by Robert Chambers (1994) have not and cannot be achieved by military rule. These three state responsibilities include: maintaining peace and democratic rule of law; provision of basic infrastructure and services; and management of the economy. These three functions are aspects of a democratic society as envisioned by the NLD.

Civil disturbance causes much suffering and poverty. The resulting fear, pain, destruction of property, loss of life, the insecurity of tenure, the disincentives to invest in land development, the danger of loss of crops, the weakened power of labour with adults and children involved in fighting, the interruption of education, the disruption of services, the movement of people from their communities are some of the effects of lack of peace. Decades of constant warfare in Burma have devastated many communities with even government leaders confirming that over one million people have died in fighting since Burma's independence in 1948. General Saw Maung, when chairman of SLORC, revealed (1989) that 28,000 families in Burma were receiving pensions for soldiers who had been killed since 1953 and 40,000 for disabled veterans, while there is no exact data for the losses of the armed opposition side. There are growing numbers of refugees and illegal migrants who seek solace in neighbouring countries as well as an estimated one to two million people who are internally displaced in Burma (Liddell:1999). Since the 1988 creation of SLORC with its open reassertion of military power over the civilian population, the military has exercised major influence over the political, economic and social development of the country (Selth:1996). Development of the country cannot be separated from this central element. The years of civil war, lack of democratic rule of law and political and social neglect by the military rulers have resulted in a debilitated population. Until there is return of democratic rule of law and peace in all regions of Burma there can be no improvement in the lives of people.

The democratic state remains the long-term institution to provide and maintain the country's basic infrastructure and services. Fiscal management of revenues and budgets is fundamental to rural development. Based on this management of the budget is the provision and maintenance of basic amenities such as roads, railroads, primary and secondary schools, community and preventive healthcare, agricultural and veterinary extensions, water supplies, electricity and telephones. In recent years the suffering of Burmese people has been compounded by the government's social and economic reforms. Market-oriented, open-door economic policies have brought prosperity to certain sectors of the community (especially traders and families of the ruling elite), but a growing number of health problems have been observed in different parts of the country. Opposition groups argue that the government's economic and development reforms are ill-planned, discriminatory and often exploitative, causing many families to lose their traditional livelihoods or lands.

Poverty reduction and broader improvements in the quality of life for the Burmese people depend upon policies, practices and institutional

supports which support the inclusion and variety of people and groups beyond the single control of the military, a civil society.

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## A P P E N D I X

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CHOMSKY:

Extract from an interview with the Greek media

**Do you condemn terrorism? How can we decide which act is terrorism and which one is an act of resistance of a desperate nation against a tyrant or an occupying force? In which of the previous categories do you “classify” the recent strike against USA?**

I understand the term “terrorism” exactly in the sense defined in official US documents: “the calculated use of violence or threat of violence to attain goals that are political, religious, or ideological in nature. This is done through intimidation, coercion, or instilling fear.” In accord with this — entirely appropriate — definition, the recent attack on the us is certainly an act of terrorism, in fact, a horrifying terrorist crime. There is scarcely any disagreement about this throughout the world, nor should there be.

But alongside the literal meaning of the term, as just quoted from us official documents, there is also a propagandistic usage, which unfortunately is the standard one: the term “terrorism” is used to refer to terrorist acts committed by enemies against us or our allies. Political scientist Michael Stohl is quite correct when he writes that “we must recognize that by convention — and it must be emphasized only by convention — great power use and the threat of the use of force is normally described as coercive diplomacy and not as a form of terrorism,” though it commonly involves “the threat and often the use of violence for what would be described as terroristic purposes were it not great powers who were pursuing the very same tactic.”

This propagandistic use is virtually universal. Everyone “condemns terrorism,” in this sense of the term. The Nazis harshly condemned terrorism, and carried out counter-terrorism against the terrorist partisans — in Greece, for example. The US basically agreed. It organized and conducted similar “counter-terrorism” in Greece and

elsewhere in the postwar years. Furthermore, us counterinsurgency programs drew quite explicitly from the Nazi model, which was treated with respect: Wehrmacht officers were consulted and their manuals were used in designing postwar counterinsurgency programs worldwide, typically called "counter-terrorism."

Given these conventions, even the very same people and actions can quickly shift from "terrorists" to "freedom fighters" and back again. That's been happening right next door to Greece in recent years. The *kla-uck* were officially condemned by the us as "terrorists" in 1998, because of their attacks on Serb police and civilians in an effort to elicit a disproportionate and brutal Serbian response, as they openly declared. As late as January 1999, the British — the most hawkish element in nato on this matter — believed that the *kla-uck* was responsible for more deaths than Serbia, which is hard to believe, but at least tells us something about perceptions at high levels in nato. If one can trust the voluminous documentation provided by the state department, nato, the osce, and other western sources, nothing materially changed on the ground until the withdrawal of the *kvm* monitors and the bombing in late march 1999. But policies did change: the us and UK decided to launch an attack on Serbia, and the "terrorists" instantly became "freedom fighters." after the war, they became "terrorists," "thugs," and "murderers" as they carried out similar actions in Macedonia, a us ally.

Everyone condemns terrorism, but we have to ask what they mean. You can find the answer to your question about my views in many books and articles that i have written about terrorism in the past several decades, though i use the term in the literal sense, and hence condemn all terrorist actions, not only those that are called "terrorist" for propagandistic reasons.

It should be unnecessary to point out that massive terrorism is a standard device of powerful states, just as Stohl observes. Some cases are not even controversial. Take the us war against Nicaragua, leaving tens of thousands dead and the country in ruins. Nicaragua appealed to the world court, which condemned the us for international terrorism ("the unlawful use of force"), ordering it to desist and pay substantial reparations. The us responded to the court ruling by sharply escalating the war, and vetoing a security council resolution calling on all states to observe international law. The escalation included official orders to attack "soft targets" — undefended civilian targets, like agricultural collectives and health clinics — and to avoid the

Nicaraguan army. The terrorists were able to carry out these instructions, thanks to the completely control of Nicaraguan air space by the us and the advanced communications equipment provided to them by their supervisors.

It should also be recognized that these terrorist actions were widely approved. One prominent commentator, Michael Kinsley, at the liberal extreme of the mainstream, argued tha we should not simply dismiss state department justifications for terrorist attacks on "soft targets": a "sensible policy" must "meet the test of cost-benefit analysis," an analysis of "the amount of blood and misery that will be poured in, and the likelihood that democracy will emerge at the other end" — "democracy" as the US understands the term, an interpretation illustrated quite clearly in the region. It is taken for granted that US elites have the right to conduct the analysis and pursue the project if it passes their tests. When the terrorist project succeeded, and Nicaragua succumbed, Americans were "united in joy," the New York Times proclaimed, knowing full well how the goal was achieved. As Time magazine put it joyfully, the methods were to "wreck the economy and prosecute a long and deadly proxy war until the exhausted natives overthrow the unwanted government themselves," with a cost to us that is "minimal," leaving the victim "with wrecked bridges, sabotaged power stations, and ruined farms," and thus providing the us candidate with "a winning issue": ending the "impoverishment of the people of Nicaragua." euphoria over the achievement was unconstrained among elites.

But the US terrorist war was not "terrorism," it was "counter-terrorism" by doctrinal standards. And us standards prevail in much of the world, as a result of us power and the cost of defying it. This is by no means the most extreme example; i mention it because it is uncontroversial, given the world court decision, and because the failed efforts of nicaragua to pursue lawful means, instead of setting off bombs in washington, provide a model for today, not the only one.

**There are (in the light of the recent terrorist attack) a lot of debate and controversy here in Greece (and i suppose in other countries) that in the wholeness of human history, there had not been a single superpower with ethics. Many analysts, historians, politicians and intellectuals claim that superpowers, nations, states and all the other human institutes are interested only in becoming bigger, stronger. In other words, power and authority have nothing to do with values,**



**ethics and ideas. They have only to do with more power, more money, much greater force, and much greater authority. Do you believe that? Do we have an historic example of an empire, a state, a superpower that dealt with the rest of the world and the citizens having in mind human values?**

I am frankly surprised that there is even a debate. States are not moral agents. They are systems of power, which respond to the internal distribution of power. Human beings, however, are moral agents, and can impose significant constraints on the violence of their own states, particularly in societies that are more free. They may fail to do so; the international behavior of classical Athens was hardly delightful, to mention one case, and we need not speak of the examples of modern history. But they can do so, and often do. Of course, virtually every system of power describes itself as deeply humane and pursuing the highest values, and a primary task of elite intellectuals is to lead the chorus of self-acclaim, as they commonly do. That is another story, which should be just as familiar, right up to the present moment. I have two recent books reviewing how "the herd of independent minds" (Harold Rosenberg's apt description of intellectual elites) fulfilled their function in the past few years, perhaps establishing new records in disgracing the intellectual vocation.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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## Do You Have Something to Say?

### ISSUES FOR DEBATE

#### Beyond Democracy

Is it that notions of legitimization, fair play and equity have got tentrapped within formal definitions of democracy, i.e. electoral democracy with one person holding one vote? We need to unpack the construct, examine whether the problems faced by democratic systems (of efficiency, speed, decisiveness at one level; of divisive and fragmentary politics resulting from mobilisation along identity and interest lines) can be traced to the specific forms of democracy (proportionate voting; list system, etc.) or are a reflection of some limitation of the notion itself.

Initiating the debate is a thought-provoking essay by Rajni Kothari. We welcome reactions, comments or articles on this topic from our readers, a selection of which will be published in forthcoming issues of *Asian Exchange* and/or other ARENA fora.

Send your contributions by post, fax or e-mail to:

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