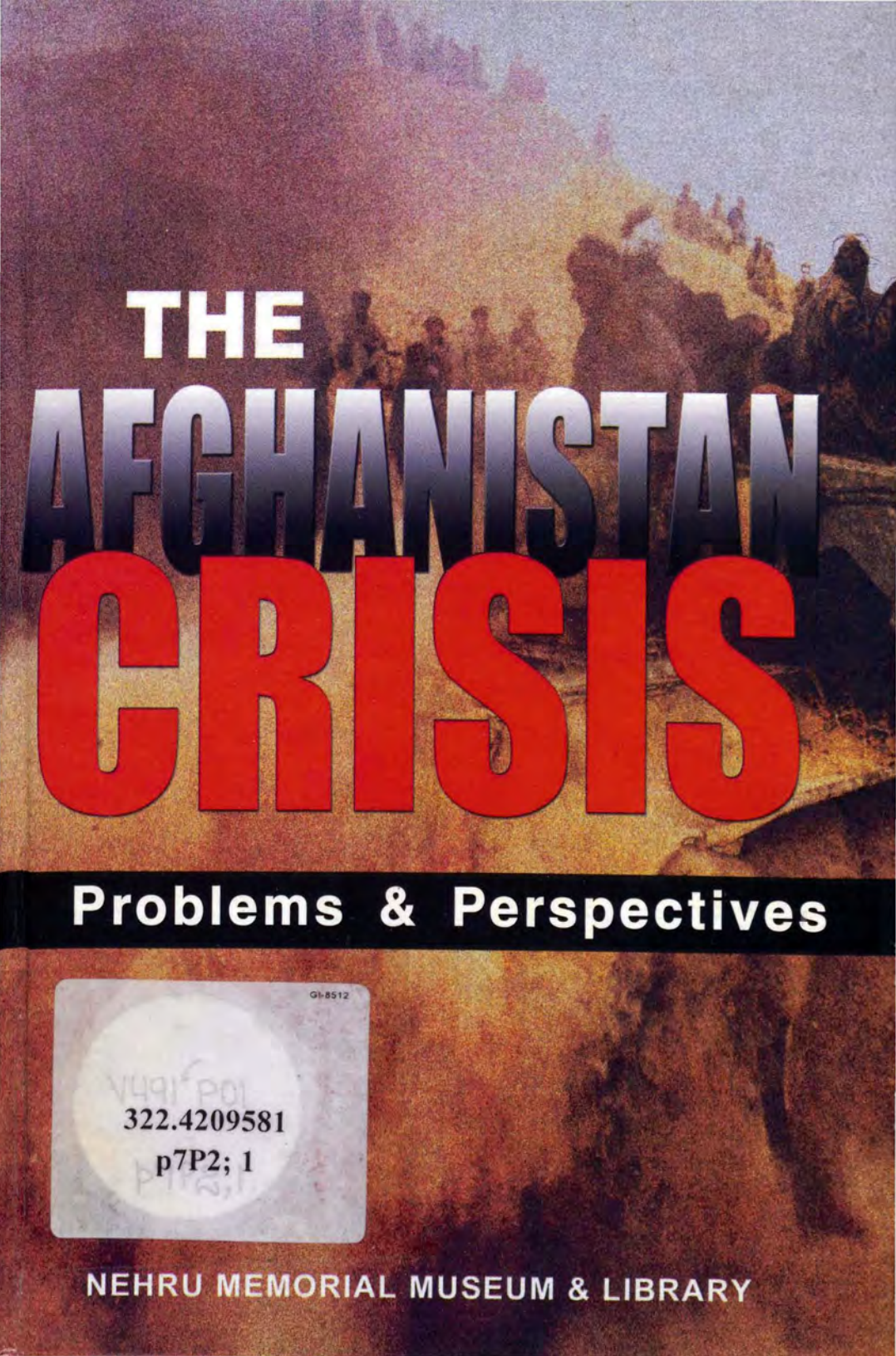

Current Debate - 3

THE AFGHANISTAN CRISIS

PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES

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PREFACE

Two years back, the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library started a programme called 'Current Debate' which consisted of a seminar on a particular topic followed by the publication of the proceedings together with a summary of the discussions. This was with the objective that our Institution would offer a platform to best minds, including journalists, academicians, political and social activists, to discuss issues of contemporary importance. The first seminar we organised was on 'Kargil Crisis' and it was soon followed by a publication titled *Kargil: The Crisis and its Implications*. The publication was well received and went into a reprint. The second seminar we organised was on the theme 'Bharatiya Gantantra mein Hindi: Dasha aur Disha' and its deliberations were brought out as our Current Debate No. 2.

The present volume is the outcome of our third seminar on 'The Afghan Crisis and Its Implications'. The events of 11 September had not only shaken the American people but had far reaching effect and can almost be regarded as a date important in world history. The crisis in Afghanistan and the American response to it had an important bearing on the Indian perspective towards America, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Thus the papers included in this volume touch upon a wide gamut of issues including India's relations with Pakistan and with the United States.

Given the global significance of the subject, this book is a timely publication on issues which demand probe and understanding. I hope the publication will be found useful by the scholarly community, the general public and the policy makers.

May 2002

O.P. Kejariwal

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The Afghanistan Crisis: An Overview

Prem Shankar Jha*

There has been so much on Afghanistan both in the Press and in the electronic media, particularly the foreign media. For someone to give an overview of the Afghanistan situation is really to pull things that you have already seen and know, together into a pattern. Only by doing that can one really look ahead and get an idea of where we might go; where Afghanistan might go and in fact, how Afghanistan might affect the delicate balance in the relations between India and Pakistan.

The Afghan war was the fourth eruption of a conflict between Russia and a western hegemonic power, in 200 years. The conflict began in 1798 when Napoleon I invaded Egypt and the British for the first time realised that it was possible for another western power to get to India via the land route, whereas all the British connections with India were by sea. So, we then saw the Great Game—almost a century of Anglo-Russian rivalry, which only really ended with the First World War. Afghanistan emerged eventually as the cockpit of that struggle. It did so because all the three overland routes by which anyone could have come to South Asia and India in those days passed through Afghanistan. There was no way of avoiding Afghanistan.

Everyone knows about the First Afghan War in 1839, the second one was in 1879; and there was a third one, which was in 1919. In all of them, the power of the Afghans to throw out

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invaders was demonstrated. So, what began in 1979, was the fourth round of a game that had been going on for 200 years.

One feature of wars in Afghanistan is often forgotten i.e., while the nature of the terrain in Afghanistan did favour guerrilla warfare and decentralised wars, it also favours technology. The reason why the Afghans were able to wipe out the entire British expeditionary force in 1841 was that their Jezails had a longer range than the British rifles. They would simply sit out of range of the British soldiers and pick them off one by one. In 1879 on the other hand the British totally wiped out the Afghans because by this time, they had machine guns. In 1919 the British very nearly lost the administered territories. There is a British Indian Army account of how close they came to doing that. It was only the use of the Air Force for the first time in war in British India, that turned the tables. The planes were less effective to kill people but terribly effective in demoralising the Afghans. That enabled the British to very quickly turn the tables and win that war in 1919 itself. I mention this now because the swift collapse of the Taliban can be traced directly to the US total air superiority in Afghanistan.

Till the Americans came in, it was a land war between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. Neither side had any significant air power, let alone air superiority. Therefore, over the time, the Taliban, who are in any case led by Pakistani officers and strengthened by Pakistani ex-servicemen and serving jawans, were fighting on conventional lines with trenches, armour and ammunition dumps. When air power came in, they collapsed literally like a house of cards. Eventually, they were pushed back to the only area which is well suited to guerrilla warfare, which is the mountains and mountainous regions of southern Afghanistan. That is the reason for the swift collapse of the Afghans. I wanted to give you the history of technology in various Afghan wars, to explain it.

The second important thing is that the news items and television programmes have been showing or suggesting that

actually Mulla Omar, by the time the incident of September 11 took place, had become practically a vassal or a pawn of Al-Qaida. Actually Afghanistan was being ruled by Al-Qaida. For us and for those who are not actually following this in some detail, this sounds like an incredible statement. How could a bunch of guerrillas take over an entire State? Well, in the case of Sudan, they have come close to doing that, but in a very decent way. The State of Sudan has accommodated their people. It does not dare go against their wishes and gives them a free run of the country. But in Afghanistan, Al-Qaida went one step further and took over the State. Again, I would like to explain to you as to how it happened before we move on further, looking at the future.

Firstly, one must look at the origins of the Taliban. The rise of Taliban did not take place as Pakistan and the Americans wanted the world to believe. It did not happen spontaneously because the Afghans were fed up and tired of violence; wanted peace at any cost and because the simple faith of the clerics appealed to them. The origins and rise of the Taliban lie in the Great Game itself. In 1994, Benazir Bhutto's government was desperate to restore Pakistan's relevance to the West, as a means of re-establishing countervailing power versus India, where it was fighting a proxy war in Kashmir. None of its goals with respect to India, or its aggressiveness had been affected by the cut-off of US aid, certification, etc. in 1990. They were economically broke but their ambitions and dreams had not changed. Benazir's Interior Minister General Naseerullah Babar devised the idea of proving that Pakistan and Afghanistan could be a safe route to Central Asia from Quetta to Kandahar to Turkmenistan for oil, gas, a major highway and everything else for Western penetration of Central Asia. The CIS states were keen because it would give them countervailing power against the Russians who paid them peanuts for whatever they were getting from them. Hence the UNOCAL deal. An American oil company UNOCAL may have spent up to 500 million dollars

bribing the various warlord factions—the Taliban in Afghanistan and also the Turkmenistan Government.

To prove the feasibility, General Naseerullah Babar decided to send the convoy through this route in October 1994. The convoy needed protection, so he assigned the first 80 km beyond Kandahar, to this bunch of former students of the various madrasas who had fought in Afghanistan and had gone back to settle down in Kandahar and were led by Mulla Omar, who had already become a kind of an adjudicating authority for righting wrongs in the region. At that time, the Taliban were not probably more than 1500 people. The first 80 km after Kandahar was the only part of the entire route in which the convoy was not hijacked. Eventually the convoy did not get through. Ismail Khan blocked it in Herat; serious negotiations took place and 50 per cent of the goods had to be suspended. Pakistan's attempt blew up in its face. But the connection with the Taliban was made and Babar was extremely impressed. A couple of months later, long before Spin Boldak which is supposed to be the place where the Taliban got most of their arms, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) arranged for Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's arms depot at a place called Shin Naray to fall into their hands. According to a recent book *Reaping the Whirlwind: The Taliban Movement in Afghanistan* by Michael Griffin, they got between 600 and 800 trucks of arms and up to 15,000 trucks of ammunition from Shin Naray. That was the true beginning of the Taliban and it was entirely done by the Interior Ministry in Pakistan.

The fact that all these warlords laid down their arms and joined the Taliban was not accidental either; it was not because there was a great deal of respect for the clerics or whatever. All the mujahideen in the Kandahar region had fought under Hekmatyar. He had been Pakistan's first candidate for the acquisition of Afghanistan. But Hekmatyar got bogged down before Kabul and became useless to Pakistan. Thereafter the phenomenon of break-up of warlords took place. So Pakistan told the Pushtoon warlords and mujahideen to join the Taliban.

And since these Pushtoons under Hekmatyar had been receiving between 50 and 60 per cent of all CIA money via the ISI they did as they were told.

But the Taliban had also developed a second connection. The Taliban were an elite group within each of the mujahid groups. They were very austere. They not merely stayed together, but did fraternise with the rest of the mujahideen. They actually had their meals separately. These people had developed a fantastic respect for Osama bin Laden. Osama bin Laden had come to Peshawar in 1980; he organised two reception centres for Arab mujahideen. These were acclimatisation-cum-training centres, where they taught them Pushto; also he paid the airfare for a lot of these people to get to Peshawar. Much of that money was funded by Osama bin Laden himself. Later across the border, Osama bin Laden used his construction connections to build some of the most important fortifications which became the permanent base within Afghanistan of the mujahideen. Many of these have become targets of attack by the Americans.

Finally when all this was done, Osama bin Laden took guns, and went in himself to fight and was wounded. In all, he brought between 16,000 and 20,000 people—the Arab jihadis—highly motivated people into Afghanistan. When the Afghan war was finished, he was the absolute hero. So, there was that connection. When he was finally kicked out of Saudi Arabia because he was becoming too much of a cult figure for the younger generation of the religious establishments, which were totally and violently anti-monarchy he came to Kabul and he came with his Al-Qaida people. Many of them had never left Peshawar. They filtered back into Afghanistan. According to one estimate there were probably as many as 10,000 Al-Qaida fighters in Afghanistan at the time of the September 11 episode. And of them, about 2,500 to 5,000 were Arabs and about 5,000 were Pakistanis.

The Al-Qaida did not simply take over. Mulla Omar ceded power to them out of profound respect, shared battle experience

and shared ideals. It was an organic connection. The Americans knew everything all along and they kept quiet all these years because they were playing the Great Game. It is that connection which explains the destruction of Bamiyan; it is that connection which explains Osama bin Laden and Omar's refusal to give him up, etc.

The Americans took a month to bring about the collapse of the Taliban, partly because there was the necessary preparation time; the Americans did not know about the capabilities, particularly about the technological capabilities of the Northern Alliance. They finally solved that problem by just dropping in enough people with high technology to give them the technological support from the ground they needed for accurate aerial bombing. The Northern Alliance, in terms of their air strikes, was incapable of giving it to them because they were not familiar with the technology that the Americans were using. The other reason why the Americans took a month was that they were directed and misdirected, to second rated targets by the ISI. In fact, Donald Rumsfeld admitted at a Press Conference in the Defence Department that two weeks of bombing had only killed civilians.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban are finished. One reason is the disappearance of their mentor, Pakistan. The second is that the Taliban were fundamentally alien to Afghanistan. Their religious beliefs were alien; Afghanistan's Islam is much more Sufi. The Taliban are Deobandi bigots who hated women. But certainly, the speed with which opposition to the Taliban had developed shows that they truly were even in the Pushtoon areas, to some extent strangers and aliens. It is not simply because the Al-Qaida people were there, although they were the convenient scapegoats. What is being rejected is the old way of life that was sought to be imposed on the Afghans.

Will a stable Afghanistan emerge or not? I have my doubts. I believe that the Koenigswinter Conference, Bonn, was hasty and premature, given this the Conference results were the best

that one could hope for. The Northern Alliance's military pre-eminence is recognised. The Pushtoons' political pre-eminence in any future set-up is also recognised in Hamid Karzai. The choice of Hamid Karzai is exceptionally good. Firstly, he belongs to the same tribe as Zahir Shah, and therefore, he was able to mobilise the symbolic legitimacy of Zahir Shah quite easily; secondly, he is and has been and is known to be a moderate. Thirdly, he lived in Pakistan for all these years; the Pakistanis know him and they feel that he is somebody who they can deal with on some responsible State to State basis. That means, that the Government survives. The entire success for the next six months in getting stability in Afghanistan will depend upon one thing whether unity among these desperate elements will last. I say that this Conference was premature because I believe this should have been held after the fall of Kandahar and Tora Bora. In State formation, you need two things and not one. You need not only to reconstitute authority or legitimacy; you also need to endow that legitimate authority with coercive power: What is more, not just some coercive power, but a monopoly of power. That is the essence of a State. This Conference concentrated successfully on developing legitimacy. By giving the three crucial Ministries to the Northern Alliance, it also conceded the power; had the war been over, the Northern Alliance and the new Pushtoon allies of the South would have made their relative contributions which would have been known to all; and they would have been able to strike a balance and a compromise in developing the future power, arrangements, which would give the State stability and a monopoly of coercive power. Today, the Afghan State can only survive so long as Karzai and the Northern Alliance work extremely closely together. As you can see, already there are voices of dissatisfaction in the Northern Alliance, most notably Rashid Dostum; we do not know what the next six months will bring. I think, the survival of the Government is needlessly jeopardised, the same arrangement could have been achieved

in a month or six weeks later, without any change in the Afghan picture. And the natural selection of the strongest and the development of a power hierarchy, which was aborted in favour of power sharing in that Conference would have taken place naturally.

I have great doubts about the idea that somehow or the other you can endow this new Government with a substitute for the kind of coercive power that I am talking about by giving them large amounts of reconstruction aid, to grant or withhold in order to keep different groups in line. I do not think this will work. Within the six months' time, in any case, this will not work because it takes a long time to get old going. As far as the food aid is concerned, it is the most important thing that is needed in the Afghan winter. It is already there. So, you cannot use the economic lever as means of measuring political stability in Afghanistan.

In that, I think, Americans have an important role; India has an important role; India already played a very important role, which has been recognised by Americans and others. In Koenigsberg we had just the right man for this role in Ambassador Mr. S.K. Lambah. I think that we will be required to and asked to play an important role in the future.

Let me finally end by saying about the third part of the triangle, which is Pakistan. What will now happen in Pakistan? Everything will depend upon whether Musharraf survives or not. If he survives, Pakistan's economy is being repaired; it will continue being repaired; debts will be re-scheduled; 1.3 billion dollars have already been re-scheduled. More money will come; many other loans from ADB, and others will come, and this is not being done as was originally being thought. It was not a blind repeat of 1980. It is being done for different reasons today. It is being done because Pakistan has nuclear bombs which must not be allowed to fall into the hands of the jihadi combine. Americans are quite clear in their minds and the Pakistanis know this. They made no secret about this that

they will not allow Pakistan to go with jihadis in a serious way. If Pakistan had not cooperated the Americans would have taken out all their nuclear installations. This was the threat given to Musharraf to bring him in line right at the beginning. This is the threat that is hanging over Pakistan today. It is a powerful threat indeed. But the West is absolutely clear in its mind that the nuclear Pakistan must not fall into jihadi hands. Otherwise, I think, there are also important differences between 1979–80 and today. Americans do not trust Pakistan because they do not trust the ISI. They know the ISI too well. They are using Pakistan; the kind of cosy, 'we are all brothers together in the fight against the evil Empire' mentality that Americans had in 1980, is not there today. The fact that they were fed second-grade information, the fact that arms continue to go to Taliban, long after 11 September, long after Musharraf formally joined the American allies, the fact that people are filtering through back from Afghanistan, and one does not know where they are disappearing, the fact that the Taliban could talk to as many as 10 Pakistan's nuclear scientists and the ISI, in fact, had this until it became impossible, then there were changes made in the ISI itself. I think, these are all important indicators. At least no one trusts the ISI.

The key to many of the things that had developed in Pakistan-US relations is really Kashmir. The great mistake again would be to think that we are again going for a repeat of 1980. The ISI is already trying to retain its relevance to the Pakistan State and therefore, to its autonomy of action, by concentrating on Kashmir. That is why, there has been a quantum jump in the concentration of jihadi forces in attacks on the Indian Army, while there has been much more sophisticated techniques being used and the attack on Parliament yesterday, 13 December.

Each of these actions—this is a losing game for the ISI and for anyone who is supporting this in Pakistan—makes it clearer to the whole world and to the US that what India has been saying is true—that where terrorism is concerned, we and the

West, are on the same side of the fence for we are the targets. Therefore, when we point out who is doing the targeting, they should take us seriously because the same persons would be targeting them. Every attack in Kashmir actually reveals further the nodal position ISI occupies in Al-Qaida and the attacks on the West, directly or indirectly.

I therefore predict that Musharraf will now have tremendous stake in the survival of modern Pakistan because he has nowhere else to go. There is going to be an increasing fall out in Pakistan between Musharraf and the Tablighi elements in the ISI. His very direct and instantaneous condemnation of what happened yesterday was part of this. Do not forget that after the bombing in Srinagar, he took three weeks to condemn it. This is the movement that is taking place within. It is the ISI which will come increasingly under pressure from the US. Musharraf is under pressure and he is bringing ISI under pressure. The ISI has tried to wriggle out itself by doing more in Kashmir. But that is going to increase the pressure further on itself. I predict that there is going to be a separation of Musharraf and the ISI. Ultimately, if an attempt is made on Musharraf's life, the ISI will be behind it. It will not be rogue elements who have come back from Afghanistan, thirsting for revenge. They are there. They will be marshalled by the ISI. This is the future that we have to look at.

2

Indo-US Relations in the Context of the Afghanistan Crisis

K. Shankar Bajpai*

The title assigned relates to the question in so many people's minds, whether the policies America is adopting, pursuant to its decision to lead a campaign to get rid of the Taliban and of the whole base in Afghanistan of Osama bin Laden's terrorist network, are going to affect India and our interaction with America for good or ill. Since this campaign is part of the longer, larger "War" against terrorism triggered by September 11, the question must really be part of an enquiry into the wider new context of changing strategic and political aims, pressures and equations in the world as a whole, and how India and America can be expected to shape their bilateral relations in accordance with their sense of their national interests, i.e., one should look beyond the immediate context of Afghanistan, starting by taking account of what happened in Indo-American relations till now, and why. Three conclusions should then appear pertinent: that after a long meagre interaction, the closer constructive ties that had lately begun to interest both sides remain attainable; that while what America feels it needs to do internationally after September 11 provides opportunities for new cooperation, it also carries complicating dangers if not conflicts of interest; and that the most decisive element in shaping the future of the relationship is going to be how well we manage our affairs at home.

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Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to the White House on November 9 happened to take place almost exactly 60 years after another Bajpai—Sir Girja Shankar—went there to present his letter of introduction as India's first Representative to the United States, thus formally establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries. For almost five of the six decades since then, that is all those relations were to be—formal and diplomatic, though alas not always as courteous as those words might imply. To begin with, hardly anyone in either country knew anything about the other, and ignorance has remained a major element in the relationship. Misconceptions also abounded; such impressions as Americans had of India were based on Kipling—Gunga Din and the *Jungle Book*, or that appalling caricature of Indian society which Gandhiji called a sewer-inspector's report, Katherine Mayo's *Mother India*, while on the Indian side many British prejudices had led us to look at Americans as their crude, vulgar transatlantic country cousins and predatory Yankee capitalists. Moreover, the initial interaction between the two States was almost entirely shaped by the Cold War in which, to put it mildly, the two did not see eye to eye.

There were passing moments of friendly warmth and hope—when President Eisenhower came to India or in the Kennedy era—but basically India never weighed much in Washington's thinking, since we had no economic relations worth the name and were only on, if not beyond, the periphery of America's strategic concerns. For most of the first 50 years, America looked upon Pakistan as its instrument of policy in the region, and found India mostly a nuisance. In effect, Indo-American relations were largely determined by our mistrust and dislike of America's alliance with Pakistan and America's mistrust and dislike of our relations with Soviet Union, which they took to be a counter alliance. India, of course, was too big to ignore, and we did indeed receive some positive attention—in economic aid, especially in carrying out the Green Revolution.

Nevertheless, the relationship was thin and distant, and the occasional flickering of better hopes became genuinely promising only in the early eighties.

The common assumption that Indo-American relations found possibilities for improvement after the end of the Cold War, overlooks the fact that the change began well before then. India was at that time hardly pursuing the kind of policies President Reagan approved of, yet it was on his watch that the change began. Much of the credit should go to the then Secretary of State, George Shultz, with whose visit to Delhi in 1983 there began a genuine effort for adding substance to the atmospheric improvement supposedly begun at Cancun in 1981 and enhanced by Mrs. Indira Gandhi's visit to Washington in 1982. In 1984, then Vice President George Bush came to India and the following year the new bonhomie was cemented by the highly successful visit to Washington of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Just before that a Memorandum of Understanding was signed clearing the way for technology transfer to India, followed soon by Washington clearing American collaboration in the development of India's Light Combat Aircraft and the then fastest computer in the world, the Cray. For the first time, some serious interaction also began with the Pentagon. The visit to India of its leading planner, Under-Secretary of Defence Fred Ikle being followed by—alas, none too happily—the first ever visit to India of an American Defence Secretary, Caspar Weinberger.

Why did all this start under a President in whose general philosophy, and in whose approach to the world India could hardly expect to find a favourable place? Perhaps the most important reason was the fresh thinking in Delhi that constructive interaction with America was in India's interest. Mrs. Indira Gandhi was widely supposed not only to share her father's intellectual misgivings about the United States, but to have deep suspicions about America's intention towards India and towards her own regime in particular. Nevertheless, her assessment of

the national interest was what made possible a totally new approach to America from the Indian side; and on the American side, two considerations made possible some truly cooperative responses. First, the Shultz view of India as a potentially significant power with whom confrontation was not necessary, was reinforced by the Pentagon's realisation that India had become a major military force which, again, ought to be dealt with something other than confrontation. And underlying these calculations was the whole Reagan approach that wherever the Soviet Union had influence, it should be rolled back; and in a democratic country like India, the rolling back should be attempted through a politico-economic dialogue with the military interactions also possible. And once the end of the Cold War removed many points of friction, these factors could come further into play.

As old differences faded into irrelevance, and as governments everywhere cast around for post-Cold War priorities and perspectives, constructive new elements also attracted Indo-American attention, three of them being of particular interest: first, India's economic liberalisation, which made us appear afresh as a valuable economic partner, while we on our side became more open about accepting such a partnership; second, instead of viewing each other as strategic contestants, both sides began to look for commonalities of strategic interest, notably in the security of the Persian Gulf, and generally of keeping maritime routes open, and, more equivocally, in the complex of forces relating to East Asia; and third, but not least, American awareness of India became much more favourable, thanks to such non-governmental developments, as the rise to highly respected success in America of the community of Indian origin, the parallel reputation earned by the hi-tech brain power within India, and by the achievement of Indian writers in English. And perhaps most helpfully of all, the two sides gave up bickering acerbically as had become habitual during the Cold War, and the whole tone of intercourse greatly improved.

Optimism about the Indo-American potential owed a great deal to the goodwill and the active interest that developed under the last four years of the Clinton administration, and which have not only continued but been given a notable emphasis by the Bush administration. There are, however, important lessons to be borne in mind from the very sharp differences that marked the first Clinton term. We in India tend to emphasise the personality factor, and assumed that the unhappy run of events was due to the lady in charge of South Asian Affairs in the State Department. For once, we were probably right, but the lady was able to pursue her course only because nobody else was interested—which again shows how thin the basics of the relationship remained. On the other hand, an event that could have very seriously ruined the relationship, the May 1998 Pokharan tests, while it caused considerable friction, was eventually handled with constructive good sense, perhaps because it forced a wider circle in Washington to pay attention to India. Both countries also owe a debt to the Jaswant Singh-Talbot dialogue which kept things from getting out of hand.

On the economic side, India's inhibitions and internal debate over liberalisation have severely limited the potential for growth, while making outside interest wane into disappointment at the continuing difficulties of doing business with us. On the strategic side, although recent official exchanges appear to be not only forward-looking but already meaningful, we are both far from working out agreements on what constitutes the respective security priorities on which we can work together; in fact, the tentative beginnings have illustrated the profound difficulty inherent in many international interactions, namely that even when two states have a common objective, differences regarding the ways of achieving it can create more or less severe problems.

Consider, for example, the extreme importance to both India and America of the security of the Persian Gulf. If anything, this is of even greater consequence to India than to America since we are so overwhelmingly dependent on this area for our

energy supplies. But America's principal instrument for maintaining that security has long been its alliance with Saudi Arabia, from where huge funding of obscurantist fundamentalism has done great harm to India; whereas India has preferred to work in cooperation with Iraq and, lately, with Iran, both of which countries raise Washington's hackles, particularly the latter. Which is not to say that commonalities cannot outweigh such differences, but simply to note how much work remains to be done—and with how much care.

So there are genuine new factors at work which should make us shed old hang-ups. While doing so, however, we cannot get away from the fact that we are still at the stage of looking forward to a weighty relationship i.e. we are not there yet. Because that, by definition, is something that is not present but is yet to develop in the future, doubts and suspicions are voiced even by those who want a good relationship. And there is also no getting away from the fact that the nature of Pakistan-American relations greatly affects India's assessments. The question now, therefore, is whether the manifest revival of close US-Pakistan cooperation goes beyond the Afghan crisis and whether that would be harmful to Indo-American relations.

As noted earlier, those earlier tentative probings of better Indo-American interaction were during the years when America had worked out a huge cooperation effort with Pakistan over Afghanistan. Was India simply being placated so as not to create trouble against Pakistan and thus oil America's game plan regarding Afghanistan? And is that what is happening now again, when America finds it convenient to use Pakistan in a new game plan for a new Afghan crisis and perhaps beyond?

Considering the long history of disappointments, disenchantment and lack of real content to the Indo-American relationship, cynics abound who think this is what happened then—and may be happening again. Now such suspicions can also claim support from the fact that nothing very much came of the improved atmosphere or the tentative explorations of better interaction

in the Reagan-Bush eras. Yet such a view would not allow for the very real and dynamic change both in attitudes and in the external circumstances within which policies are thought out.

But just as the search for giving the relationship the content it deserves seemed to be getting back on course, September 11 completely oriented America's priorities and approach to the region. Which brings in the Pakistan factor.

India's genuine and widespread sympathy for the United States and the American people over the horrors inflicted on them on September 11 continues to strengthen our equally sincere and consistent desire to cooperate in both the immediate and the long-term struggles against terrorism, but the initial sense that the tragedy released a great new cementing force to our relations rapidly gave way to dismay that the real beneficiary of America's new policies was Pakistan. As it began to fashion its responses to the crisis, the American leadership repeatedly emphasised how different this new 'War' of terrorism would be from any war any State had ever experienced, but, however carefully it urged the need for patience and for adapting one's thinking to a very long, slow, wide-ranging struggle, it also inevitably faced the pressure to demonstrate, by immediate action, its resolve and its capability. Whether or not Osama bin Laden and his network were directly responsible for September 11, there could be no doubt that those who master-minded and executed the attacks drew their inspiration by that source of fanatic hatred. The decision to go after bin Laden was, therefore, an obvious choice, and with it came two other unavoidable decisions: to capture or destroy this source of terrorism meant toppling the Taliban regime that sheltered and supported it, and that objective virtually demanded cooperation with Pakistan once again.

Americans are at pains to maintain that this should not worry us, that their good relations can be pursued separately and successfully with both Pakistan and India without the one affecting the other harmfully. Things do change, and what may

have happened before should not spoil the future; but while avoiding the danger of getting stuck in old ways and old times, it would be unwise to ignore the lessons and realities of the past, that the overriding, if not the sole, objective of all Pakistan's foreign policies and relationships is to undermine India, specifically by depriving us of Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan turned overnight from international obloquy to international favour. Its usefulness to the manhunt in Afghanistan needs no elaboration: geographical contiguity and Pakistan's information regarding the Taliban were obvious foundations for cooperation. Clearly recognizing both the dangers of not cooperating with America and the benefits of doing so (probably in that order), General Musharraf swiftly and deftly abandoned the Pakistan-Taliban alliance and lost no time in projecting his country and his regime as the moderate Islamic force the world is looking for. Everyone has noted the financial help that quickly relieved a country about to default on its international debts and made it the recipient of substantial new aid, but perhaps even more substantially welcome for Pakistan was its return to high praise and high expectations from Americans. Not least, what has not been adequately noticed, General Musharraf was able to get rid of the most dangerous potential threat to his leadership, namely the pro-Taliban elements in his own country. That there has been opposition, was to be expected, but so too was its relative weakness and the effectiveness of the Pakistan Government's control—indeed General Musharraf has even been able to make a virtue of the opposition he faces by gaining sympathy for the risks he is taking. Some risks are doubtless still there, but barring some coup, the Pakistani ruling class has once again asserted itself to stabilise its rule.

We need not doubt the sincerity of Washington's assurances that none of this would come in the way of realising the Indo-American potential. Of course America would like nothing better than to develop friendly cooperation with both Pakistan and India and there is no need for us to be paranoid about that:

the problem is that a relationship cannot be shaped only by one of the two partners, even the more powerful; the other partner has a separate agenda, and India has known to its cost over the years that no matter what its internal or external difficulties, Pakistan always uses international help to strengthen its efforts to wrest Kashmir from India.

There is a theory that the removal of the Taliban from Afghanistan and the concomitant crackdown by General Musharraf on its Pakistani branch, is in India's interest. One could in fact go further and see advantages to the whole subcontinent in the revival of moderate Islam in place of the extremism which was spreading in Pakistan while it was employing it in its campaign against us. The only difficulty with such hopeful views is that, in regard to Kashmir, there is no difference between any Pakistani regime. With the marked, but very especial, exception of Z.A. Bhutto's tentative cooling of the issue after Shimla, all Governments in Pakistan have chosen to make Kashmir the excuse not only for preventing any normalisation of relations with India but for keeping tensions high. We have seen four different Governments since General Zia's in the last decade-plus, and each one of them (*pace* Ms. Benazir's recent reassuring views) has pursued various ways to force India into yielding on Kashmir, with terrorism the weapon of choice. The one benefit this brought to India was that, gradually, the world outside became more sympathetic to our views, and, especially as Pakistan's international situation earned international disapproval, we were spared any outside pressure. It would be wholly unrealistic to overlook how dramatically that situation has changed as a result of the post-September 11th campaign in Afghanistan.

The chagrin in India over the revival of the Pakistani-American nexus is of course provoked by the bizarre, and painfully ironic fact, that the state, and particularly the regime, that had built up the Taliban and used it as an instrument of Pakistani policies, and which was viewed internationally almost as an

outcast for having undergone yet another military coup, should overnight be forgiven all its sins and admitted into the company of angels, but that is the way of the world. It is unfortunate that too many people in India seemed to be saying only 'how can you do this to us'? It is neither mature nor dignified, but it is a reaction that represents and illustrates the still inchoate and weakly-structured nature of Indo-American relations.

Several American leaders, from President Bush onwards, have warmly praised Pakistan for its help and—believe it or not—for the nature of its leadership and policies. The change in the situation India now faces is summarised in the words of two key policy-makers. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, in an interview with Reuters in July, while stressing all the strong ties that were developing and would grow stronger between America and India, was critical of Pakistan both for its lack of democracy and for its links with terrorism and concluded that whereas Indo-American relations were thriving, "with Pakistan, we have a long way to go". By November 8, in her interview on BBC's Hard Talk India, National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice could declare that "Pakistan is a stable country committed to the anti-terrorist campaign. Pakistan is not just a credible ally, but an ally which is proving itself...."

The "long way" had been traversed in a few weeks, and the new benevolence towards Pakistan was clearly reaffirmed by Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca who, in her testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on December 6, referring to Pakistan's "crucial role" in support of the Afghanistan campaign, praised General Musharraf for the "serious political risks" he was taking to do this. His position at such a juncture in international history will be remembered and recognised for a long time to come.

An objective review of Pakistan-US relations over the same sixty odd years looked at above in regard to Indo-US relations, would show that Pakistan had enjoyed similar support from Washington several times in the past but also felt let down by

America time and again, particularly after the mid-sixties, when Pakistan had developed strong relations with China and was as critical as India of America's Vietnam intervention. Washington in fact became fairly even-handed in its approach to what it calls the South Asian sub-continent; as is well known, it was quite content to leave it to Moscow to be the main player after the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war. The Nixon-Kissinger 'tilt' towards Pakistan in 1971 was a passing aberration. Washington really continued to be fairly equidistant—as well as distant—from Indo-Pakistan affairs until the 1980s, when the then Afghan crisis led to a major, in fact unprecedented, US-Pakistan alliance—of which, sadly the Taliban was to be the most powerful legacy. Yet, it was during that same period of the mid-eighties that Indo-American relations started to look up.

The point of relevance to be noted in all this history is that Washington's attitudes and policies towards Pakistan as well as India have till now been determined by the totality of its global concerns. As it assessed how those concerns might evolve in the post-Cold War world, it began to see India as a significant country both economically and strategically. It certainly helped that India's achievement in building democracy so exceptionally well added a base of values to work on, and that is even more of a potential when the campaign against terrorism looks to free and plural society as the best ultimate answer. But we must realise that international relations are very much shaped by considerations of power, something we in India have never quite got used to, and the world's greatest power has to bear it in mind more than most.

Which means that Washington will deal with India in the perspectives of its interests in the region and beyond, and while that is what all powers do everywhere, different countries carry different weights in the total reckoning. China, for obvious instance, is both a focus in itself for American policy-makers and a major determinant in their approach to other issues where China counts. India's weight in this scheme of things has clearly

risen, and no doubt counts more heavily than it used to or than Pakistan normally would, but it is not enough to make us the prime determinant, much less a focus in itself. Other interests will prevail in America's total reckoning, depending on the needs and demands of circumstances.

And in the present and foreseeable circumstances, Pakistan must inevitably weigh more than it used or than suits us. As already indicated, the Musharraf regime is working overtime to cement its revived friendship with Washington to build itself up as a long-term partner in America's strategic and political planning of relations with the Islamic world. There is also the advantage that Pakistan could provide, both geographically and politically, an outlet for Central Asian oil and gas. American interest in a pipeline through Afghanistan and Pakistan lapsed when the oil companies decided Afghanistan was a hopeless case. Whether tomorrow's Afghanistan will be considered safe enough for a pipeline is still debatable, but Pakistan clearly would like to continue to be a major influence in Afghanistan, and to persuade the Americans that in future that influence will not create problems like the Taliban but will be a stabilising factor helpful to American interests.

Washington insists that regardless of all this, the relationship with India will develop independently. Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to Washington certainly laid out substantial areas of cooperation looking beyond the present Afghanistan crisis, especially in science and technology and in selective military areas, particularly naval. The ideas that have been listed are certainly worthwhile, and there is no reason why they should not grow as talked about. The growth, however, depends very very greatly on how we in India can manage our economic and related issues so as to consolidate ourselves as a valid partner. In the long run, as everyone keeps saying, it is economic relations that provide the most solid foundations for other relations but it is also obvious that the political equations within India are inhibiting our Governments from doing what is

needed. We have to be careful, therefore, that the new possibilities are not lost again as happened with the possibilities that seemed to be emerging under Reagan-Bush; and in the meantime, we have to be particularly careful that other things do not go wrong.

3

India-Pakistan Relations in the Context of the Afghanistan Crisis

Satish Kumar*

Introduction

The Afghanistan crisis post-September 11 did not introduce any qualitatively new dimension in India's relations with Pakistan in the manner in which it did in Pakistan's relations with the United States or Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan. The decision of the United States to launch an attack in Afghanistan aroused some hope in India that the United States might come to its help by way of attacking the terrorist training camps and bases in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, in return for the complete support offered by India to the US for its campaign against terrorism. That hope was soon belied when the US categorically stated that its first priority would be to capture or kill Osama bin Laden and destroy his support structure, namely, the Taliban and the Al- Qaida. India remained entangled in the controversy whether or not Prime Minister Vajpayee should talk to President Pervez Musharraf either on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York (November 2001) or on the sidelines of the SAARC Summit in Kathmandu (January 2002). India wasted a splendid opportunity of sending a strong signal to Pakistan that just as the US did not tolerate an attack on its sovereignty on 11 September and took prompt retaliatory action, India too would not tolerate any attack on its sovereignty

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of the kind perpetrated on the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly on 1 October 2001.

As stated earlier, the Afghanistan crisis did not introduce a new dimension in Indo-Pak relations per se. But the crisis makes it necessary for India to review its entire approach towards Pakistan for the last many years, particularly since the Lahore visit of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee in February 1999. The reason for this review lies in the fact that terrorism, as revealed by the 11 September incidents and the subsequent Afghanistan crisis, appears to have much deeper roots and wider linkages within the Pakistani power structure and in the neighbouring region than was known to India hitherto. Besides, the ruling military establishment of Pakistan headed by Pervez Musharraf has steadfastly refused to acknowledge even obliquely since 11 September that what passes as "freedom struggle" in Jammu and Kashmir is quite substantially terrorism which is abetted and sustained by Pakistan.

The Lahore visit

The Lahore visit of Prime Minister Vajpayee in February 1999 symbolised a new approach by India of "walking an extra mile" to carry the message of peace and to drive home to Pakistan that India was keen to normalise relations. Otherwise, a bus service between Delhi and Lahore could have been easily started by a mere flagging off ceremony by the Prime Minister sitting in Delhi itself without the pomp and euphoria that attended the Lahore visit. In essence, this was the culmination of the spirit of rapprochement built in a series of meetings first between Prime Minister I.K. Gujral and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and then between Prime Minister Vajpayee and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. It is possible that Nawaz Sharif was almost as sincere as Vajpayee in organising the Lahore events.

The documents signed in Lahore on 21 February 1999 were marked by an extraordinary degree of realism and sincerity in

harmonising the contending views and approaches of the two countries. While due references were made in the Lahore Declaration to the Charter of the United Nations, the Shimla Agreement, the Jammu and Kashmir issue, and all other outstanding issues, all these references were governed by an overriding desire and assertion that promoting "an environment of peace and security" was in the supreme national interest of both countries. The two Prime Ministers traced this commitment to their New York meeting of 23 September 1998 which is where they had agreed that a bus service should be started between Lahore and Delhi. Also, in the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 21 February 1999, the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries agreed on detailed measures for risk reduction and confidence building in the nuclear, missile and conventional fields. This was an extremely significant agreement, given the atmosphere of enhanced threat perception and acute mutual distrust ever since the nuclear tests of May 1998 by both countries.

Unfortunately, however, the apparent sincerity and exuberance at the time of signing the Lahore documents on 21 February were in utter contrast with the ground reality of Pakistani intentions towards India. By the time the Lahore extravaganza was taking place, Pakistani army had gone quite far in planning its intrusions across the LoC in Kargil. As pointed out by the Kargil Review Committee set up by the Government of India: "Within two weeks of taking over, General Pervez Musharraf visited the FCNA region on October 20–21, 1998 along with Lieutenant General Mahmud Ahmad, GOC 10 Corps. The plan for intrusion into the Kargil sector may well have been fine-tuned at this stage. There are also indications that the plan was approved as early as October 1998 by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif when it was proposed to him by General Musharraf. Subsequently, in January 1999, Nawaz Sharif was briefed at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi. Presumably, the final go ahead was given at this stage."[1]

The politest word that can be used to describe the Pakistani behaviour in February 1999 is 'perfidy'. Attempts have been made by some people to exonerate Nawaz Sharif from this characterisation. It has been suggested that Nawaz Sharif was not fully aware of the magnitude of intrusions that had been planned by the Pakistani army. Be that as it may. The fact that the Lahore events were staged when Kargil intrusions had already been planned at least means that the entire Pakistani establishment was not supportive of the decisions taken and agreements signed in Lahore on 21 February. Whether such a dispensation reflected adversely on Pakistani character or not, it certainly reflects poorly on Indian diplomacy. It was India's job to make sure through its own intelligence that the effort undertaken and the prestige put at stake in the form of Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit did not end up as an exercise in absurdity.

The Kargil War

The Kargil war came as a rude shock to India. It took quite a few weeks for India to realise the magnitude of Pakistani army's intrusions into Indian territory in Jammu and Kashmir. But when India realised the seriousness of the situation, its military response was quite vigorous.

However, the question that needs to be raised about India's response is the nature of results it achieved. Firstly, by common knowledge, it would not have been easy to ensure the withdrawal of Pakistani troops if President Clinton had not impressed upon Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on 5 July in Washington that it was important to restore the sanctity of the Line of Control so that the Lahore process could be resumed. Therefore, to assume that the withdrawal of Pakistani troops from the Indian side of LoC took place entirely because of India's military response would amount to giving more credit to India than it deserves. Secondly, given the strategic seriousness of the Pakistani game plan which was inherent in

the Kargil intrusions, the objective of merely pushing the enemy back to the Line of Control was highly inadequate in terms of preventing such attacks in future.

In this context, one must refer to the captured diary of a Pakistani captain, Hussain Ahmad of the 12 NLI in the Mashkoh sector. According to this diary, the Kargil intrusion was a move to establish a "new LoC". The diarist quotes Pakistan's COAS, General Pervez Musharraf, who visited the Mashkoh sector on March 28, as describing the gambit as "a reply to [India's] Siachen invasion of 1984."[2]

The strategic seriousness of the Kargil invasion becomes still more obvious when viewed in the light of the disclosure by Altaf Gauhar that contingency planning for a Kargil operation had been done as far back as 1987 during the period of General Ziaul Haq. Reports emanating from Pakistan after Kargil suggest that the plan might have been revived some time in 1997, and that units of the Northern Light Infantry being trained in high altitude warfare during 1997–98 were a part of the process of implementation of the plan.[3]

Under these circumstances, one has to say that India's military response to Kargil intrusions by Pakistan failed to achieve any strategic objective. An opportunity like the Kargil war does not provide itself too often. When Pakistan provided this opportunity, it should have been utilised not merely to push the enemy back from within Indian territory but to make it impossible for the enemy to undertake any such venture in future. This could have been done by prolonging the war, if necessary, and destroying the infrastructure which made the Kargil intrusions possible, by crossing the LoC or by whatever other means. There is no doubt that India's exercise of restraint in this respect was appreciated by the international community. There is also no doubt that on the diplomatic front India scored the victory of the sanctity of the LoC being recognised by the rest of the world. As against these gains, however, the gain of deriving military advantage to prevent future incursions would

have been more durable, even if it meant some escalation of conflict. India missed the opportunity once again, allowing the hardliners in Pakistan to continue to think that India could be fiddled with, whether in the name of Islam or in the name of Kashmir.

Hijacking of IA Plane, December 1999

The manner in which India dealt with the crisis arising from the hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane, IC-814, from Kathmandu on 24 December 1999 with 187 passengers and crew aboard also did not convey the message of strength to Pakistan. The hijacking was outright an ISI operation executed with the assistance of Harkat-ul-Ansar. Among the six hijackers, four were Pakistani nationals, one Afghan and one Nepalese. The plane's ultimate destination was Kandahar, the headquarters of the Taliban, safer than which there could be no other place for the Pakistani-sponsored hijackers. In exchange for the 159 hostages who were set free in Kandahar on 31 December, the hijackers ensured the release of three hardcore Pakistani terrorists who had been under detention in India and who were given the honour of being escorted to Kandahar by India's Minister of External Affairs.

India's response could not be faulted on humanitarian grounds. But equally valid is the argument that the three hardcore terrorists after being freed would find it possible to endanger the lives of many more human beings than those released in exchange. As it happened, one of the released terrorists, Maulana Mohammed Masood Azhar of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, did actually establish a new and more deadly organisation called Jaish-e-Mohammed. This organisation along with Lashkar-e-Tayyiba have been the two most active militant organisations conducting acts of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir in the years 2000–2001. The message that went across to Pakistan once again was of a weak and vacillating India, whose sovereignty could be tampered with.

July 2000 Cease-fire by Hizbul Mujahideen

The people of India, including those from Kashmir, welcomed the offer of cease-fire for three months announced by Abdul Majid Dar on 24 July. Abdul Majid Dar claimed to be the commander-in-chief (operations) of this powerful militant organisation.[4] The Indian government after due consideration of the cease-fire offer on 28 July asked the Hizbul Mujahideen leadership to come overground and establish contact with the Union Home Secretary to discuss modalities for initiating a dialogue. On 30 July, the Hizbul Mujahideen named a three-member team consisting of Ghulam Ali, Mushtaq Gilani and Mohammed Ali Saqib to participate in the talks with the central government in India. The three-member team had been named by Syed Salahuddin, the chief of Hizbul Mujahideen based in Islamabad.[5] Meanwhile, on 26 July, the United Jehad Council, an umbrella organisation of 14 Pakistan-based militant groups, dismissed the supreme leader of Hizbul Mujahideen, Syed Salahuddin, as its chairman and suspended his organisation for announcing unilateral cease-fire in Jammu and Kashmir.[6]

Suddenly, on 8 August, the Hizbul Mujahideen called off its cease-fire in the Kashmir valley on the plea that India had refused to allow Pakistan to participate in the peace talks. In the assessment of the Government of India, it was the Pakistani agencies which put "intense pressure" on the Hizbul Mujahideen leadership in PoK to revoke the cease-fire. According to the Government of India's statement, the 24 July cease-fire offer by Hizbul Mujahideen "did not fit in with Pakistan's design of aiding and abetting terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir". During the period of cease-fire, i.e., 24 July to 8 August, acts of violence by other militant groups had of course continued in Jammu and Kashmir.[7]

India's Unilateral Cease-fire: 19 November 2000

It was obvious from the experience of July 2000 cease-fire offer by Hizbul Mujahideen that Pakistan would not allow any

peace talks between the Indian government and Kashmiri dissident groups without its own participation. And yet, the Government of India in keeping with its own attitude of "walking an extra mile" made a unilateral offer of cease-fire in Jammu and Kashmir on 19 November 2000. The cease-fire was to coincide with the month of Ramzan which would begin on 27 November. Explaining the timing of the cease-fire, Home Minister L.K. Advani said on 20 November: "The government felt the security forces had reached a point after October where they had the upper hand. So it was felt that a move of this kind, specially related to Ramzan, would give the right message and establish our credentials as a government wanting to usher in peace."[8]

On the eve of the cease-fire taking effect, Home Minister Advani on 26 November described India's cease-fire offer as "Lahore-II" and formally called upon Pakistan to respond positively by stopping cross-border terrorism and putting an end to infiltration in Jammu and Kashmir. Unfortunately, however, Pakistan did not respond. On the very first day of the cease-fire, i.e. 27 November, 17 persons, including 5 army soldiers, were killed and nearly 30 others injured in a landmine blast and four other encounters in Anantnag district.[9] For the sake of form and international image, Pakistan announced on 2 December that it would exercise "maximum restraint" along the LoC. But the irrelevance of this announcement can be seen from the fact that the Home Minister of India, Mr. L.K. Advani, had stated on 20 November that the cease-fire would not be applicable to the LoC and the international border, because India would not like to lower its guard against infiltration and exfiltration in these areas.

Cease-fire Extensions by India

Prime Minister Vajpayee extended the unilateral cease-fire from 27 December 2000 to 26 January 2001 and then again from 26 January to 26 February 2001. On 26 February, the

Prime Minister announced in one go an extension of the cease-fire for three months. All these extensions had the full support of opposition parties in the country. While one would not like to question the wisdom of the political leadership in India in extending the cease-fire from time to time in the hope that Pakistan would stop cross-border terrorism, one would certainly like to question the assumptions on which such hope was based. The record of Pakistani behaviour gave no justification for such hope.

Just four days before the first cease-fire period was to come to an end, i.e. on 22 December 2000, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba staged an attack on the Red Fort in Delhi. This was followed by an attack on the Srinagar airport on 15 January 2001, an attack on a police complex in Srinagar on 9 February, an attack on an army camp in Kupwara on 13 April, an attack on Jammu railway station on 7 August, an attack on Jammu & Kashmir Assembly on 1 October, and an attack on Avantipur airbase on 22 October. This is the list of only major incidents which were gross violations of Indian sovereignty inasmuch as all the targets were symbols of the Indian state. There were of course hundreds of civilian killings by Pakistani jihadi organisations during this period. And yet the Indian political leadership continued to hope that Pakistan would respond to India's cease-fire initiatives by stopping cross-border terrorism.

India Invites Pervez Musharraf

At the end of the six months of cease-fire, i.e. on 23 May 2001, India extended an invitation to General Pervez Musharraf to come for talks with the Indian Prime Minister. This was yet another evidence of India "walking an extra mile". Objectively speaking, there was no justification for such an invitation. India had been severely critical of Pervez Musharraf for staging the military coup on 12 October 1999, and was instrumental in ensuring the boycott of Pakistan from some important international organisations and conferences. India had demanded

of Pakistan that cross-border terrorism must end before any talks between the two countries could take place. India had of late been persuaded by the neighbouring countries to agree to the resumption of the SAARC process which lay suspended since the military coup in Pakistan. There was some speculation in the air that the Indian and Pakistani leaders might "run into each other" on the sidelines of the SAARC summit. Suddenly came the announcement from India that General Pervez Musharraf, who soon upgraded himself to the position of President, was welcome to India.

Again, Government of India's decision to invite Pervez Musharraf was endorsed by political parties across the spectrum. No political party or leader stopped to question what exactly had changed in Pakistan to warrant the possibility of a successful summit between the Indian Prime Minister and the Pakistani President. It seemed as if some kind of peace bug had bitten the entire body-politic of India. What made matters worse was the high profile red carpet treatment given to Pervez Musharraf in the symbolically important city of Agra on 15 and 16 July 2001.

The visit which lasted from 14 to 16 July turned out to be one of the worst disasters in the history of Indian diplomacy. Pervez Musharraf, far from promising that he would put a stop to cross-border terrorism, even refused to acknowledge that cross-border terrorism was an issue to be talked about. He persisted with the formulation that what was happening in Kashmir was a "freedom struggle". Secondly, Pervez Musharraf scored a big media victory by holding an unexpected breakfast meeting with the senior editors of India on the 16th morning and putting across his viewpoint very effectively. Thirdly, the Pakistani delegation got away with creating the impression that the two leaders were on the verge of signing a joint declaration but were prevented from doing so by the hardline leaders in India like L.K. Advani. So miserable was the outcome of the Agra summit that the same opposition leaders who had endorsed the idea of the summit were now at the government's throat

questioning the wisdom of holding this summit without adequate preparation.

September 11 and the Aftermath

As stated in the beginning of this essay, the Afghanistan crisis which developed in the aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001 offered opportunities to India which remained unexploited. Indian diplomacy derived considerable satisfaction from the fact that India had offered full support to the United States in its war against terrorism, which in the immediate context meant the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. India subconsciously hoped while giving this support that it would be suitably rewarded by America in the form of destruction of terrorist training camps and bases in PoK as a part of the anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan. When India was categorically told that Afghanistan was the first priority and that other sources of terrorism worldwide would occupy America's attention in phase II, India had to rest content with the hope that the United States would put sufficient pressure on Pakistan to restrain the jihadi activity against India.

It is possible that the United States and Britain may have put some pressure on Pakistan to restrain the jihadi elements operating in Jammu and Kashmir, because the incidence of large-scale terrorism has tended to come down since the Avantipur airbase attack of 22 October. But very little consolation can be derived from this trend because there is no evidence with regard to Pakistan's basic policy of promoting anti-Indian terrorism having undergone any change. For instance, the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba chief, Hafiz Muhammed Saeed, threatened in Islamabad on 21 November that the Lashkar would keep the Kashmir jihad alive by launching six or seven Red Fort type attacks in the future.[11] There was not a word of condemnation or refutation of this threat by anyone in the Pakistan government.

As against this continuation of Pakistan's encouragement and

support of terrorism against India, the US government in a highly myopic and self-centred approach to the whole question of terrorism kept advising India to observe "restraint". The US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, during his visit to India on 17 October urged India to exercise restraint by pointing out that: "The focus of the ongoing international campaign against terrorism should remain fixated on Afghanistan and the Al-Qaida network. Diversionary tensions between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, therefore, had to be kept in check".[12]

Advice like this, repeated over and over again since 11 September, could not remain without effect. India which had been pursuing the policy of "walking an extra mile" and bending over backwards to establish peace with Pakistan got another strong reason for behaving meekly *vis-à-vis* Pakistan.

India's Options

Having allowed itself to be persuaded by the West to show utmost restraint *vis-à-vis* Pakistan in the wake of the Afghanistan crisis, India has landed itself in the unenviable position of a country without options. Pervez Musharraf, fearing that India might avail of Pakistan's difficulties and resort to some military action, issued a warning on 19 September telling India to "lay off". He accused India of trying to take full advantage of the crisis arising out of the terrorist attacks on the United States, and of trying to harm the vital interests of Pakistan, and said that the Pakistani army would never allow the "grand Indian game-plan" to succeed.[13] Once again, on 22 October, Pervez Musharraf warned India against what he termed as "anti-Pakistan rhetoric" and said that Islamabad would pay New Delhi in the same coin if it were to indulge in any misadventure across the border.[14]

This sabre-rattling by Pakistan was totally uncalled for because India had given no evidence that it was thinking of taking any military action across the LoC or the international border. The only leader of consequence who openly suggested

that India should send its forces into Pakistan to destroy terrorist training camps was the Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. Omar Abdullah. In an interview to the BBC on 3 October he even said: "It does not have to be (done) overtly... You can do it covertly and destroy these training camps because otherwise bleeding by a thousand cuts is really not the way to go about it".[15] But his was a voice in the wilderness. Except a stray TV channel, no one in the country, least of all in the political leadership, picked up his suggestion for serious debate. On the contrary, Prime Minister Vajpayee while addressing the BJP's National Executive meeting in Amritsar on 2 November said: "We have no plans for a war. India will never do anything to escalate tension even though our troops are on high alert...."[16]

The sticking point in India's dialogue with Pakistan ever since the Kargil war is cross-border infiltration and terrorism. There could be only two ways of stopping cross-border terrorism. Either the Government of Pakistan should have agreed to put an end to it or the Government of India should have done something on the ground to make it too costly for Pakistan to resort to it. Neither of the two has happened. There is no possibility in the foreseeable future that the Government of Pakistan will put a stop to cross-border terrorism. Firstly, this is the most cost-effective way of keeping the Kashmir pot boiling. Secondly, the jihadi organisations in the last twelve years have acquired deep roots and wide ramifications in the political and social structure of Pakistan. Also, because of the training and support by the ISI and some foreign countries, these jihadi organisations have acquired a certain degree of autonomy, making it difficult for the government to exercise full control over them. Therefore, it is futile for anyone in India to hope that the Pakistan government will stop cross-border terrorism.

The second possibility of the Government of India doing something in this regard has been discussed above. India has made itself a prisoner of many constraints. The first constraint is lack of capacity among the political leadership and the

government apparatus to take a firm decision well in time before the situation gets out of hand. This happened during the Kargil war. The inability to assess available intelligence in time resulted in lack of preparedness when the Pakistani infiltrations were detected. This happened again during the hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane in December 1999 when the inability to stop the plane in Amritsar resulted in capitulation and surrender of the hardcore militants in Kandahar in return for the safety of passengers. This has happened again during the Afghanistan crisis when the inability of India to undertake even a token act of self-defence after the attack on J&K Assembly on 1 October led to Western pressure to continue the policy of so-called restraint and not do anything to upset the Western apple-cart.

The second constraint is the lack of adequate ammunition and equipment to enable the armed forces to cope with the possibility of conflict escalation, should it happen as a result of any Indian military action. There is a widespread feeling at senior levels in the armed forces that the country is not prepared for a full-scale war partly because of a long period of reduction in defence expenditure and partly because the ethos in which the armed forces have been brought up since the Shimla Agreement of 1972, and particularly since the nuclear tests of 1998, is that of No War.

The third constraint is the propensity of the present government to stay on the right side of international opinion, particularly the Western. Despite the rhetoric that India will not tolerate any third party interference or mediation in its relations with other countries, India of late has tended to be susceptible to foreign pressures. For instance, India derived a lot of satisfaction from the fact that the international community greatly appreciated India's restraint in not crossing the LoC or the international border during the Kargil war. But the international community has done nothing in return to restrain Pakistan from resorting to cross-border terrorism. And yet, India likes to justify its sensitivity to the views of major countries on

the plea that engaging with those countries might result in the flow of technology and capital to India. This, of course, has happened only to the extent warranted by economic imperatives.

Since cross-border terrorism has not stopped, India has quite rightly taken the stand that resuming the dialogue with Pakistan would make no sense. The Pakistan President, General Pervez Musharraf, has tried to come clean before the world opinion by stating that he was ready to revive the Agra process. He said so on 28 October in the presence of the German Chancellor, Mr. Gerhard Schroeder, in the context of the possibility of a meeting with Prime Minister Vajpayee in New York in early November.[17] He repeated on 24 November in the presence of a European Union delegation that he was ready to discuss all issues with India.[18] But the Pakistan President does not realise that without any change in the ground situation, a meeting at the summit level, if it does not yield a positive outcome, only creates frustration and breathes more life into the machinations of those elements which thrive on hostility.

Conclusion

India has no easy choices with regard to Pakistan. The threat of Pakistan is a long-term one. It is to a large extent a manifestation of Pakistan's internal contradictions. To a certain extent, of course, it is the consequence of our inability to resolve discontent in the state of Jammu and Kashmir on a continuing basis. The blame for this would fall on the political leadership as a whole, irrespective of any hue.

The threat from Pakistan will continue to be reinforced by the assistance it gets from China in the field of nuclear weapons, missiles and defence-related technology and equipment. Any improvement in India's relations with China, whether on the border question or in matters of trade and culture will not mitigate China's support to Pakistan to any significant extent.

Any hope that improvement in India's relations with the United States in economic and defence-related areas will

automatically lead to the United States taking action against Pakistan-sponsored terrorism will be misplaced. The United States has re-entered the Pakistan-Afghanistan region to promote its own strategic interests which are not limited to curbing international terrorism. Therefore, to expect the United States to promote Indian strategic interests in Pakistan can lead to the weakening of the foundations on which Indo-US relations are based.

The best bet for India *vis-à-vis* Pakistan would therefore be to adopt a more clear-headed and determined approach. Such an approach would have to be based on a judicious mix of coercion and diplomacy. Coercion becomes necessary when the behaviour of the adversary state continues to be irrational, either because the state as a whole is disarrayed or because the command structure is not effective. Coercion of course must be replaced with diplomacy at an appropriate time after the ground has been cleared to enable the dialogue to move forward.

Notes

[1] *From Surprise to Reckoning*: *The Kargil Review Committee Report,* December 15, 1999, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2000, p. 95.
[2] Ibid., p. 21.
[3] Ibid., pp. 77–78.
[4] *Asian News Digest* 2000, p. 500.
[5] Ibid., p. 516.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., p. 531.
[8] Ibid., p.771.
[9] Ibid., p.804.
[10] Ibid., p.771.
[11] *The Hindu,* 22 November 2001.
[12] Ibid., 18 October 2001.
[13] Ibid., 20 September 2001.
[14] Ibid., 23 October 2001.
[15] *The Hindustan Times,* 4 October 2001.
[16] Ibid., 3 November 2001.
[17] *The Hindu,* 29 October 2001.
[18] Ibid., 25 November 2001.

4

The Issue of Fundamentalism in the Afghanistan Crisis

Asghar Ali Engineer*

To begin with, I would like to make it very clear that Islamic fundamentalism is basically not a very correct use of the term. It has more Christian background than Islamic background. Our media also just imitates what appears in American media and the word Islamic fundamentalism was first used after revolution in Iran. The revolutionaries in Iran were termed as fundamentalists by America. But Saudis were never termed as fundamentalists by the American media because they were friends and not hostile. So, this is basically, politically loaded terminology. It is not a neutral term. It has become so common that we have forgotten its meaning that how politics decides the use of certain terms. As a matter of fact, the term Islamic fundamentalism should be very positive, if you look at religion. But it is being used very negatively because of political situation or political compulsions.

Another term which is very commonly being used by our media also is Islamic terrorism. It is a very politically loaded use of the term. Even if they say Muslim terrorists or Muslim terrorism, I can understand. But Islamic terrorism is a very objectionable term. But unfortunately, it is being very widely used, not only of course, by the American media but also by our media. Again unfortunately, our media becomes so imitative that if Americans cannot pronounce certain words correctly,

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'Arabic words', and distort them, we also use the same spelling. A good example is Lashkar-e-Toiba. There is nothing like Toiba. It is Tayyiba. But all our papers are writing Toiba. I pointed out to *The Times of India* repeatedly, but they write it as Toiba. There is no such word in Arabic at all. It is Tayyiba. Anyway, another thing which I would like to say is that terrorism is not a product of any religion; but it is a product of a situation. So, if some people are terrorists, they have been produced by their own situations, be it in Afghanistan, or be it any other part of the world. Every ideology produces its extremists. There is no ideology in the world which has not produced extremists. So, when Islam is reduced to ideology, it also produces its extremists. Islam is a religion and there is no question of extremism. But Islam as an ideology, and particularly political ideology, is bound to produce its own extremists and it has produced its own extremists. We have extremists in political ideologies like Marxists, Maoists, Naxalites, Pol Pot, as you pointed out, and similarly in Islamic political ideology also.

Let me tell you, thousands of Muslims have opposed the use of Islam as political ideology. Many people left those parties which reduced Islam to an ideology. Another thing is that the extremists are always a handful, in any ideology. The large number of people continue to be moderate. There is the huge sea of Muslim population from the Philippines to Morocco. How many of them are extremists? I would like to know this. How many of them are followers of Osama bin Laden? He could produce 40,000, 50,000 and some admirers, 500,000 or 1 million or 2 millions? It may not be more than that, whereas the Muslim population is more than 1.5 billion. Also, those who are admiring Osama bin Laden today, they do not admire him for his extremism; I am saying this after interaction with a large number of Muslims not only in India, but in various other countries. They do not admire him because of his extremism. They admire him more because of his guts. It is because he

could take a position against America, which most of the Muslim countries are unable to do.

Now, the Governments in most of the Muslim countries are pro-America or readily became partners in the coalition against terrorism. Now, nobody can justify terrorism. Terrorism is something which has to be fought and fought with full determination, tooth and nail. It is because terrorists do not represent people. They take their own decisions. Osama does not even have a country; let alone consulting people of his country; I mean, he is a rudderless, rootless man who is living in another country, a country with which he does not share his language, does not share his history, does not share his culture. It is Taliban. Taliban is an Arabo-Persian word—Arabic word with Persian plural. Because there is no word like Taliban in Arabic. It is Talib and its plural is Tolaba. It is not Taliban. Taliban is a Persian way of making plural. So, it is Arabo-Persian word. Who created Taliban? It is Pakistani politics. We all know that. Ninety-nine per cent of the so-called Taliban neither have any political understanding nor do they have any political motive. They are told to fight in the name of Islam and they fight. They have no political agenda either. If anyone has any political agenda, it is the Pakistan Government. So, it is Pakistani politics or the politics of some politically motivated people from Afghanistan and America.

It is also a misnomer to say that Taliban are products of the Deobandi School of Islam. I think that the Deobandi School of Islam has played a very positive role in Indian politics—the role of moderation and not of extremism. Deobandi 'Ulama were resolutely determined against the creation of Pakistan. If they could have had their way, they would not have allowed Pakistan to come into existence. I would like to mention here, the role of Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani, whom hardly a few people know. He played a glorious role in exposing Jinnah and in opposing Jinnah. When the two-nation theory was propounded, he came out against it. He was the Vice-Chancellor

of Darul-Ulum Deoband. He was also the President of Jamiat-ul-Ulama-e-Hind, which was basically a Deobandi organisation. He wrote a book *Muttahida Qaumiyat Aur Islam*, in which he fully justifies composite nationalism. He opposes Pakistan and cites verse after verse from the Koran to show that followers of two religions are not two nations. They can constitute one nation. That he shows by citing various verses of the Koran, in showing that different Prophets who come from different communities, different nationalities were opposed by people of his own nationality, but still they remained as one nation. They shared nationality, though they differed in matters of religion. That is why, there is no harm in having a composite nationalism and Islam does not require the creation of another nation on the basis of religion. This was the glorious role of the Deoband School.

So, I do not think that Taliban has anything to do with this philosophy of Deobandi School. It is true that some Deobandi Ulama migrated; they were very few, hardly any 'Alim' of great prominence migrated to Pakistan. But some did, some products of Deobandi school did migrate to Pakistan and they founded their own school there and they also came to be referred to as Deobandi. But in fact, they violated the spirit of Deobandi School of Islam in India and they became, those who justified the two-nation theory. They lived in Pakistan and so, they have to justify the two-nation theory. Taliban are nothing but a creation of Pakistan. They should not be associated with any religious school or any political school, in my view.

So, what is happening in Afghanistan has nothing to do with Islam, as a religion. Let me tell you that Islamic teaching about jihad is equally misunderstood. It is true that jihad had become a part of a section of the Muslim psyche. I do not deny that. For historical reasons—again not for religious reasons—Islam has been most unscrupulously misused by rulers throughout history. Rulers do all sorts of things; they put their own powers above everything, we all know that. They want to legitimise

power and for that they use religion, they use culture, they use language and what not. They use everything. So, Islam was grossly misused by ambitious rulers throughout. Who were Umayyads who came into existence within 30 years of the death of the Holy Prophet? They were most unscrupulous. They totally distorted the teachings for their own power. In fact, Umayyads were at one time never recognised by true Muslims. They were also part of the same tribe as the Prophet, but they were rivals of the Hashmi branch. I mean, the Quresh tribe was divided into two major branches—Hashimis and Umayyads. They were rivals all through. They could not oppose the Prophet for obvious reasons. But they had great animosity towards Hashimis of the Quresh tribe and Umayyads and Hashmis always fought against each other and Umayyads were never considered as true Muslims. They were considered as most opportunist; most of them accepted Islam after Mecca was conquered by Holy Prophets. Umayyads had no scruples in misusing Islam and it is Umayyads who created monarchy in Islam. There is no concept of monarchy in Islam; it is Umayyads who created monarchy and then started misusing Islam for their political purposes. It is Umayyads who martyred the grandson of the Prophet Imam Hussein in memory of whom all Muslims observe Moharrum, the 10th of Moharrum, the day on which the Prophet's grandson was martyred by Umayyads.

Similarly, Umayyads were succeeded by Abassids. Abassids, though cousins of the Prophet, were no less unscrupulous in misusing religion and it is these people who misused the word jihad, in Islamic tradition. Jihad does not mean war in Arabic at all. It means utmost effort. It is a very multi-layered concept in Islamic theology, but not in Islamic history. In Islamic theology, jihad is a very multi-layered concept. The basic meaning of jihad is to make utmost effort. Now, we have hadith from the Prophet, which clearly says that real jihad is to control one's desire. He calls it jihad-e Akbar. That is, it is a great jihad. The small jihad is to fight with weapons; but the great

jihad is to control one's own desire, because it is desire which leads to war, which leads to violence and conflicts. So, the Prophet himself said that real jihad is to control one's desire. And the Koran repeatedly says that the Muslims' basic duty is to enforce what is good and to fight what is evil.

So, real jihad is to spread goodness in the world and to remove evil from the world. This is possible only if you fight your own selfish desires. I would like to cite a very interesting episode of Sufi Sarmad whom Aurangzeb killed, for political reasons, but he had to find some religious ground to kill him. He used to recite half the part of Kalima, that is, La Ilaha. He would not say Illallah. Now, Aurangzeb found it very convenient to find this reason to punish him with death. He used to go around naked.

There is no such precedent in Islam to punish with death one who went about naked. Then he found this excuse. Sarmad sided with Darashikoh. So, he wanted to kill him. When his head was to be chopped—that is the real thing that I want to narrate here—somebody came and told him in his ear, "Now at least you say, Illallah; Aap ki jaan bach jayegi." La Ilaha means there is no god. Illallah means, except one. So, when you do not say 'except one', how can you be a Muslim? You are simply denying the existence of God. This is worth writing in letters of gold. Sarmad said, "How can I say? I have not denied those false gods within me. So, what right do I have to say 'except one'? Because first I must deny all those gods which are controlling me. Unless I deny them truly, I cannot affirm the existence of one God". This is real jihad. That is why, all Sufis believe that real jihad is not to be fought with the sword, but real jihad is to be fought by controlling one's own false desires. This is the real meaning. Let me tell you, the Koran has not used the word jihad for 'war' not even once. You cannot cite any verse from the Koran which has used the word jihad for 'war'. 'Qatal' is the word in Arabic meaning 'war' and not jihad. Jihad means, making efforts. Efforts sometimes might

include use of force, but that is the last resort, but that too in defence and not in offence. It is because the Koran very clearly says, even while permitting defensive war, it says "Wala ta 'atadu wa Assahula Yuhibbul m'ut'adin": That means, do not transgress; Allah does not love those who transgress. It means, even where it is permitted for defence, the condition is laid down that do not commit aggression or do not transcend limits because Allah does not love those who transgress. If somebody attacks the World Tower in the name of Islam, I do not think, Islam is to be blamed for that. Osama is to be blamed for that. Osama himself is a creation of a situation.

I always maintain that the terrorists are always the creation of a situation; terrorists are not a creation of any religion. How can there be a religion which terrorises others? Religion is something which appeals to your heart, which enables you to develop your spirit. Basically, it is connected with spiritual things, irrespective of any religion. So, if it terrorises people, it can be anything but religion. So, Osama can be anything but Islamic in that sense as far as Islamic values are concerned.

Jihad is a very multi-layered concept in Islamic theology, apart from history. So, Islamic theology being a very multi-layered concept, it lays its central emphasis on the spread of justice. The Koran lays great emphasis on justice. Allah's name is 'Adil', that is, just and justice is so important in the Koran that it says "I 'adalu huwa aqrabu littaqwa": That is, be just; to be pious, one has to be just. Do justice; it is an injunction. Be just, do justice; it is closest to piety. So, if there is anything closest to piety, it is justice. One has to make so much effort to make justice in the world; the real mujahid is one who devotes his or her life to spreading justice.

Osama has done anything but spreading justice in the world; he has spread terror. So, he cannot be called so. But again, we have to see some of his actions in that context. I mean, it is not to justify his action, but to explain why he did so. Certainly, he was not motivated by Islamic teaching. But he was motivated

by his own circumstances. He himself is a creation of the CIA. Who does not know this? An ordinary student knows that Osama is the creation of the CIA. He was angry with the CIA for all these reasons, that he was used by the CIA and then thrown out like a hot potato. So, he was very angry. Another thing is that they landed their troops in Saudi Arabia just to fight Iraq; still they are not prepared to remove their troops from Saudi Arabia because their basic aim is to control Middle East oil. Wherever they can get a foothold, they will try to get a foothold in that region of the Middle East. They had the Shah. The Shah had to flee; an Islamic revolution took place in Iran; now they are desperately looking for excuses to attack one or the other region of the Middle East so that they can have their foothold. I mean, it is America which is terrorising the people of Iraq today. 500,000 people have already died because of non-supply of medicines, non-supply of vital food items for the nourishment of children. As a result of that, 500,000 people had died and the earlier Deputy Secretary of State, I think, Madeleine said that this is the price they are paying. Now, who is terrorising whom? If Osama attacked and 4000 people had died, American attacks have killed thousands and thousands of people; it is not even possible to count how many people have died and still, they want to attack Iraq. If you want to punish Saddam, you punish him by all means; nobody has any sympathies for Saddam. But why do you punish the people of Iraq? One terror will create another terror. It has to be seen in that perspective. But all of us have fallen for American motives and we are condemning Islam itself as a religion of terrorists or a religion which promotes terrorism.

The attack on Afghanistan is termed as 'infinite justice'. What a mockery of justice, to call it 'infinite justice'! In the name of freedom and democracy, Bush said, 'Why are these Muslims jealous of our freedom and democracy?' Who has smothered democracy and freedom throughout the third world? Who killed G.S. Allende in Chile? Who removed Mohammed Mosaddeq

and killed thousands of people in Iran in the early '50s, when Mosaddeq nationalised oil? Who is supporting the Saudi King or Saudi monarchy who suppresses ruthlessly the rights of the people? All this is creating anger and that anger cannot be expressed in countries like Saudi Arabia or various Muslim countries where dictators, sheikhs, monarchs being supported by America are ruling and violating people's rights. So, people express their anger in this manner. Then they lionise people like Osama. If you want to fight terror really, you will have to create democracies in the entire Muslim world. It is a very fundamental question, why there is no democracy in any of the Muslim countries today. Why are all Muslim countries like this? The nearest they get to democracy is controlled democracy. There is no real democracy in any Muslim country; either monarch or Sheikh or military dictators are ruling and they all have the support of America. Not a single ruler in any Muslim country will survive if American support is withdrawn. So, Muslim peoples are being denied the freedom because of American interests. And its President asks why the Muslims are jealous of its democracy and freedom. In fact, Muslims are aspiring for democracy and USA is smothering democracy in all these Muslim countries.

So, my submission is that you have to create proper conditions to fight terrorism. The very primary thing is to establish democracies in these Muslim countries. If there is democracy, then there will be a real fight against terrorism because then, people will have a right to express their opinion and whatever anger that has accumulated there, that will not find such a violent form, but it will find a democratic form. All of us know how Ziaul Haq misused Islam in Pakistan. Today all the extremists who have been created in Pakistan have been created by Zia for his own politics of power; and the various madrasas have been financed by Zakat money deducted directly from bank deposits. He encouraged them for militancy for his own use in Afghanistan because the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

came as a great boon to Zia, a boon to General Musharraf also to some extent, though Musharraf is facing a more complex dilemma. In the case of Zia, it was a real boon and Zia created and financed these madrasas, and created Islamic militancy for his own survival. Now, that has become an uncontrollable monster.

Unless you establish real democracy in Pakistan, you will not be able to fight these extremists. These extremists have developed their own taste for power. For that, they become more extreme; that is why, I always maintain that it is very dangerous to combine religion with politics. If you want to maintain the sanctity of religion, it should not be combined with politics. Religion is something very sacred to me and I would not like my religion being misused by unscrupulous politicians. So, I would always oppose the combination of religion and politics because it is also a myth that in Islam religion cannot be separated from politics. This myth has been created by monarchs and dictators. The Koran nowhere mentions state or politics or anything of that kind. The Koran talks about what kind of society should be established, etc. It says that it should be a just society; it should be a society without exploitation. That is why, 'riba' is prohibited; it is unfortunately translated as 'interest'. It is much more than interest. In Arabic riba means growth, and the Koranic use of this term is unjust growth. So, the Koran fights against all forms of unjust growth and wants to establish a just society. So, it talks of society; it gives a concept of society; it does not give any concept of state or politics or anything. That itself is a myth that religion and politics cannot be separated. This myth has been created by such dictators and the best example is Zia in Pakistan who misused religion for his own purposes and created extremism and this is a continuation of that extremism, the one that we witnessed in Afghanistan.

So, two things are very clear in my mind. Islam should not be associated with any kind of terrorism. Islam is a great religion

like any other religion, its value system is very precious to me. It talks of equality; it talks of justice; it talks of brotherhood; it talks of dignity of women. It is said that the rights of women being crushed by the Taliban; it is a fact, but what understanding did the Taliban have of the religion of Islam? The position of women in the Koran is high. In fact, once Iqbal, the famous poet remarked that if anyone reads the Koran without knowing who the author is, one would definitely say that it has been written by some feminist. Anybody who reads the Koran with meaning, would agree with Iqbal that the Koran is the first scripture which recognises women as legal entities and gives all legal rights to women, be it of marriage, be it of divorce, be it of ownership of property, be it of inheritance. Which right was not given to women in the Koran? Yet, the Muslim practices are so abhorring that people have come to draw. conclusions that Islam denies rights to women.

The first thing is that Islam has nothing to do with terrorism; it only talks of creating a just society. Secondly, terrorism should be understood as a political phenomenon than as a religious phenomenon.

5

The Post-Taliban World

Kalim Bahadur*

The rapid defeat and decimation of the Taliban and the formation of the an agreed Afghan regime under the leadership of Hamid Karzai brought to an end one of the most tragic phases in the history of Afghanistan. The Taliban left behind a terrible legacy of destruction, murder and bloodshed in the name of Islam. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington on 11 September, 2001 had shaken the world and traumatised the people of the United States of America. The finger of suspicion pointed to Osama bin Laden and his Al-Qaida organisation for the ghastly crime and that he had been a guest of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan from where he had been carrying on his activities was well known. The reason that it was widely believed that Osama bin Laden was responsible for the attacks was that no other terrorist group had the resources, organisation and the technical expertise to launch such a venture. He had also been held responsible for the 1998 attacks on the American embassies in Africa and last year for the terrorist attack on a US naval ship in the port of Aden both of which had resulted in many casualties. President Bush responded swiftly to the attacks on the Twin Towers and retaliated by declaring a war on international terrorism and those who harboured terrorists. He made no bones that his target was Osama bin Laden dead or alive. It is difficult to believe that the Taliban did not know about the

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activities of their guest. The only conclusion could be that they were also a party to the activities of Osama and rather they also endorsed his ideology.

It is interesting that Osama had no social and political programme. Given his commitment to fundamentalist Islam he had never spelt out what type of social system he would want to build either in his native Saudi Arabia or for that matter he had not cared to describe how he would solve the problems of the Muslim world. He had never spoken about his views on the Palestinian problem. His only grouse against the United States seemed to be against the stationing of the American troops on the Saudi soil. His influence over the Taliban leadership appeared to be the commonality of their views on an Islamic state and that he might have financed the Taliban and provided spiritual sustenance during their periods of trial. However, there is no indication that he was aware that his activities might have led to extreme hardship and misery to the Muslims around the world. Once the United States had decided to mobilise the international alliance against terrorism there was never any doubt that the Taliban regime was in serious trouble.

However, there were serious questions about the United States' response to terrorism in general and to the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September, 2001. This is apart from the fact that the jihadis in Afghanistan and Osama bin Laden had been politically and materially supported and set up by Washington during the Soviet intervention in that country. This also raises the issue of definition of terrorism. It is almost impossible to have an agreed definition of terrorism. This is mainly because of the social, economic and political complexity which give rise to terrorism. The well-known adage that one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter still holds. Terrorism can be broadly defined as the use or threat of violence intended to sow fear and panic in a society, to attack or to overthrow the government and bring about political change. It does not generally represent the majority of a community or does

not even reflect the strength of those who support the cause. New types of terrorism are constantly coming up and newer weapons are being used by the terrorists. The use of aircraft with fuel tanks filled full with gas used in the attacks at the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York only shows the new weapons the terrorists use.

One of the main issues which led to the failure of the famous Agra Summit between India and Pakistan last July was when General Musharraf insisted on calling the terrorist outfits which have been indulging in indiscriminate murder and mayhem as freedom fighters. General Musharraf being a military man considers the killings of innocent men and women as the normal collateral damage in a war even if the casualties were those of non-combatants, in other words, of innocent civilians. Terrorism is also defined as the use of the method of terror for achieving political objectives. However, political, economic or social objectives could be gained by using the democratic methods in democratic societies. Terrorism is used only when those having a particular political objective do not represent a majority of any section of population and are not sure that they could win a plurality. Most terrorist outfits are not democratic in their functioning. Lashkar-e Tayyiba in Pakistan fighting in Kashmir and LTTE in Sri Lanka and many others like them are not democratic organisations. The former denounces democracy as un-Islamic and attributes all the ills of society to it; while the LTTE is run by the writ of the Leader which no one has a right to question. Those dissenting generally lose their lives for the temerity. In societies where democratic, legal and constitutional avenues are not available for redressal of grievances there could be some justification for the use of violent methods. Pakistan has been under military rule for long periods when democratic and legal methods were not available to the people for the articulation of their social and economic problems and complaints. The discrimination against Bengalis within the Pakistani political system led to the growth of the secessionist movement

in that country. That is why even after the victory of the Awami League in the 1970 election when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was not allowed to form the government the people of Bangladesh had no option but to resort to violence and war to secure their independence.

The Taliban have given many surprises to the world over the years since they suddenly emerged on the scene in Afghanistan. The latest was the unexpected rapid folding up of their regime in the face of the American air attacks within less than forty days. It is not only the Afghan Talibans whose corpses litter the soil of Afghanistan but thousands of Pakistanis have also become victims of what they had wished to do with others in the name of faith—Qattal and not Jihad. Thousands of other Islamic internationalists-anarchists are faced with a horrible end while taking the Taliban down the drain with them. It was clear from the day that the terrorist attacks were launched in New York, that the Taliban would be decimated and were unlikely to make a recovery within the foreseeable future. There were some pro-Taliban elements in Pakistan and elsewhere who predicted a protracted guerrilla war by the Afghans in the mountains and caves in the country. There was such a widespread erroneous estimation of the fighting qualities of the Taliban that when they began to crack up it was suggested that they were withdrawing under a plan to trap the American army into a long-drawn guerrilla war.

The real reason for the rapid victories of the Taliban during the early period against the Mujahideen factions was the presence, support and leadership of the elements of the Pakistan armed forces among the Taliban. A large percentage of these elements were still on the rolls of the Pakistan armed forces. They were hastily withdrawn particularly after the fall of Kunduz. Only the non-military personnel, mostly Pakistani volunteers from the Pakistan terrorist groups were left to die under the murderous bombardment let loose by the United States.

However, that was not going to be the end of the Taliban movement. They have left a legacy the effects of which would continue to haunt the world for a long time to come. The most dangerous legacy of the Taliban would be their ideology associated with the name of Islam. As one writer has put it the other legacy that the Muslim world would have to live with for a long time to come is the so-called Jihad. Taliban were called fundamentalists, conservatives, revivalists and hard-liners, etc. Their interpretations of Islam were not acceptable even to the fundamentalists in Pakistan and elsewhere. There is no evidence that the Taliban received at any stage of their emergence popular or enthusiastic support in Afghanistan for claiming to build an ideal Islamic society based on their own vision of Islam. Historically the role of organised Islamic groups has never been a dominant one in Afghan society. However, whenever Ulama have been provoked they could upset the most well-entrenched monarch. King Amanullah was one of the victims of this outrage of the religious elements in the late twenties. He had been forced to flee the country when his measures to modernise the country met with tough opposition from the Ulama. One Tajik Mulla captured power and declared himself as the Ameerul Momineen almost as a preview of Mulla Omar of the Taliban. He was caught and later hanged by King Nadir Khan, father of the present King Zahir Shah.

The end of the Taliban brings to an end of the period of violence and civil war which followed first the toppling of King Zahir Shah in 1973 by his cousin Sardar Mohammad Daoud and later his own overthrow by the Leftist Khalq Party in April 1978. During the eighties, once the policies of the Khalq Party antagonised the vested interests and the religious elements, the external actors like Pakistan and the United States further inflamed the hostility and strengthened the Mujahideen within the country and those elements which were already located outside the country, mainly in Peshawar, ever since President Daoud had acted against some of them during his five-year rule.

The Afghans have always had a liberal attitude to religion. This was the result of the widespread influence of Sufism in the country. The spread of Sufism was a reaction to the authoritarian domination of the Mulla in the Afghan society. The Sufi faith was based on contemplation, dances and music in search of the ultimate truth. Out of the four schools of Sufism three had great influence in the country. They were the Naqshbandiya, the Qadiriya and the Chishtiya. These schools were integrated into the network of the *Pirs* which had a hierarchy, though mostly they had local influence. One of the leading lights of the Naqshbandiya school has been the former interim President of the country Sibghatullah Mujaddidi. However, his family had the dubious distinction of being linked to the British. Wahabism was never popular in Afghanistan before the emergence of the Taliban. Wahabism in the Indian subcontinent was associated with the movement led by Syed Ahmed Barelvi in the 1830s. Syed Ahmed Barelvi had led an army of Mujahideen from Patna across the Indian peninsula to the frontier area on the Indian Afghan border where he wanted to set up an Islamic state. However, the movement collapsed in 1831 because of the hostility of the local Pathans and when Syed Ahmed Barelvi's army confronted the Sikhs in the Battle of Balakot. The Wahabi influence came to Afghanistan in the seventies when the Saudis in the aftermath of the Ramzan war in 1972 began to finance the spread of Wahabism in a big way. It was only after the Soviet intervention that the Pakistani Wahabi parties like the Jamiat al Ulam-i-Islam (JUI) were encouraged by the military regime of General Ziaul Haq to set up seminaries and madrasas for the Afghan refugees in the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. The General also preferred Wahabi-Deobandis for recruitment to government services and the armed forces, assisted their madrasas (religious schools) and allowed them to recruit ex-servicemen for imparting military training to their students. The Afghan and Pakistani students of these madrasas played an active role in

the war against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan and were the backbone of the Taliban. Saudi Arabia, the cradle and citadel of Wahabism, was the main financial backer of the Wahabi-Deobandi organisations of Pakistan. It financed their activities in Pakistan to purify Islam and their participation in the war in Afghanistan. Not only the Saudi intelligence services, but also individual Saudi sheikhs like Osama bin Laden and his father, the owner of a rich construction company, which has the responsibility for the repairs and maintenance of the holy shrines in Saudi Arabia, contributed generously to the funds of these organisations. That is how Maulana Fazlur Rahman and Maulana Samiul Haq became the godfathers of the Taliban.

According to one writer the Taliban leadership under semi-educated Mulla Omar failed on all accounts. The militia fell short of understanding certain hard realities of statecraft. Some political analysts have remarked that their behaviour both towards the regional and the world community was beyond any logical explanation. After all Islamic history is full of the science of statecraft, diplomatic manoeuvring and dealings with adversaries. There was little understanding of the genuine Islamic norms and no attempt was made to learn from the religious scholars in other communities or for that matter from within their own immediate surroundings. General Kamal Matinuddin quotes Qazi Hussain Ahmed, Amir of the Jama'at-i-Islami in his book *The Taliban Phenomenon*, who had expressed his disappointment in the credentials of the Taliban leadership. The Jama'at chief is reported to have remarked about the Madaris, from where the Taliban leadership received their basic learning that education was not being properly imparted as the teachers were uneducated Maulvis. Similarly, no lesson was learnt from the welfare concept of an Islamic state and not a glimpse is evident from the Taliban to base their society on socio-economic justice. There was never any indication of any awareness on their part that Islam had some humane aspects also in dealing with the people. On the contrary, all actions of

the Taliban went in the opposite direction. Even those agencies of the United Nations and world community that made efforts to help the vulnerable and impoverished Afghan population were pushed away with unexplainable vengeance. Osama bin Laden, an honoured guest of the Taliban, was a multi-billionaire but he did not spend any of his wealth to mitigate the miseries of the poor in Afghanistan.

Terrorism flourishes in undemocratic societies. There are always deep social, economic and political reasons for the origins and growth of terrorism and hence it is essential to address those factors to root it out. The present phase of international terrorism has been the outcome of prolonged oppression and injustice to many communities and even nations by the ruling classes and governments in many countries. Just as governments in many countries coordinate their efforts to suppress popular discontent and protest in several countries similarly terrorist groups have emerged which have assumed international dimensions like the Al-Qaida, which is reported to have branches in 50 to 60 countries. The emergence of Osama bin Laden as an international terrorist who could mastermind the attacks on the powerful United States is part of the same process. Some of the terrorist outfits also make use of religion as an ideology to justify violence in the name of jihad. Most theologians of Islam have refuted the idea that Islam endorses any kind of aggressive violence or terrorism for achieving political objectives.

Military means could only suppress terrorism for some time but cannot root out the basic problems which give rise to it. Global alliance of democratic states which are committed to democratic and constitutional norms as a part of political process for the solution of resolving social and political problems could be effective in facing terrorism successfully. However, if such an alliance also comprises authoritarian regimes then certainly it would fail to resolve the problems of terrorism. Democratic states could solve the problems of

terrorism by addressing the problems of governance and solution of the social and economic problems of the people. An undemocratic world system cannot resolve the problems of rogue states. Rogues are defined by one superpower and sought to be punished by that superpower. Some of the states which are categorised as rogue states were deemed as part of the fraternity of the free world not long ago. No one state can be allowed to arrogate to itself the right to pronounce those who fall out with it as the rogue state nor any one state could have the right to become the prosecutor, judge and the executor. For this the United Nations has to become active and see that a democratic world order prevails.

According to one analyst the issues that different national governments and the international community will have to deal with are: (a) can non-state actors still afford to struggle in the present circumstances, and if not, (b) will there be a fall-out effect on the societies where hundreds of these men are roaming with weapons, and (c) what are the ways for reintegrating these self-acclaimed warriors into civil society. The US may have won its war, but unless a solution is found to the aforementioned problem, the state of peace and stability in Central and South Asia, the Middle East or the world will remain doubtful. The current situation in Afghanistan or other fronts is reflective of the problem. Several states which were fighting against the Soviet armies in Afghanistan had conveniently created hordes of religious ideological fighters willing to sacrifice their lives for a cause. Be it Afghanistan, Kashmir, Bosnia or Chechnya, these militants were willing to fight and die for a cause that was created by state actors. The availability of such actors provided some states with an inexpensive option to pursue their political objectives. In that respect, these jihadis were expendable. They would fight a war without increasing the immediate financial cost for any state.

Let us first look at the scene in the post-Taliban era in the Muslim world. There is no doubt that the ideology of the

Taliban supposedly based on a particular interpretation of Islam will outlive the Taliban. There will be elements, even large groups, in the Muslim world which will continue to espouse the Taliban ideology. It may be pointed out here that many of the Mujahideen who had fought with Syed Ahmed Barelvi and survived in the late twenties of the nineteenth century later came to fight during the 1857 revolt and some of them a decade later set up the famous seminary at Deoband. The Taliban ideology could only be fought on the theological plane. Attempts to suppress it by force or coercion will only add to the popularity of the ideology. Islamic fundamentalism, as defined by some scholars, as a religio-political movement essentially means going back to original sources and roots of Islam. It advocates adherence to the original beliefs of Islam in their literalist interpretations as fundamental and basic principles, transcending all social, economic, political and cultural transformations which span a period of 14 centuries. Islamic fundamentalism is not about individuals (Mulla Omar, Osama, Khomeini, etc.) but also refers to modern political movements and ideas, mostly oppositional, which seek to establish, in one sense or another an Islamic state. Fundamentalism finds a fertile soil in the basic economic conditions of society, feudalism, authoritarianism and status quo. The Taliban ideology was the typical product of the tribal society of Afghanistan with the hold of the feudals allied with religious vested interests of pirs and takiyas, the tarikas, the schools and the madrasas, the tombs and shrines of saints. All this and a mix of tribal social mores and traditions.

According to G.H. Jansen, while there are distinctive differences among Islamic revivalist movements in each country, they share a common basic Islamic heritage and confrontation with the Western political and cultural imperialism. According to Jansen some common themes in the Islamic discourse are the failure of the Western modes of political, social and economic developments; the need to throw off Western models of political and cultural domination which foster secularism, materialism

and spiritual bankruptcy; the need to return to Islam in order to restore identity, moral purpose and character; an emphasis on the unity and totality of Islam, rooted in the doctrine of the unity of God, i.e., belief that religion is integral to politics and society and the introduction of Shariah Law. Fundamentalism and extremism will remain an important feature of Muslim societies. There will be an increase in anti-American sentiments in the Muslim countries. The media has used the image of Islam and Muslims as created by the conduct of the Taliban during their six years rule in Afghanistan as a religion which promotes militancy, violence and irrationality. It has struck a blow at many freedom movements which the oppressed people of the world are fighting for just causes.

The question of what is terrorism has not been resolved by the war in Afghanistan. The deteriorating situation in Palestine and the American support to the Israeli atrocities on Palestinians will only encourage the extremist fundamentalism represented by the Hamas. Tel Aviv appears to be set on to eliminate Yasser Arafat taking inspiration from Washington's determination to hunt down Osama and Mulla Omar. This will not and cannot bring peace in West Asia. This is an unfortunate lesson that Israel has drawn from Afghanistan. The member countries of the Alliance against International Terrorism have not been able to either condemn Israeli state terrorism in Palestine. However, the decimation of the terrorists in Afghanistan would certainly dampen the spirits of the terrorists in Kashmir. However, Pakistan might try to redirect some of the foreign terrorists who have escaped the Northern Alliance or have been driven into Kashmir and up the ante in the state. That may add to the troubles of New Delhi. The recent rumbles of dissent within the Hizbul Mujahideen point to the aftershocks of the Taliban collapse that might be shaking the morale of the terrorist outfits.

The United Nations has once again exposed its weakness as the world body devoted to the maintenance of international peace and justice. Washington did not involve the UNO in

setting up the International Alliance against Terrorism. Nor did the UNO have any role in establishing the guilt of persons involved in the attack on the twin towers in New York. The United States' role of a policeman of the world appears to have been accepted by the world. Washington has been alluding to the possibility of extending the area of war against terrorism. Could any one country be trusted with the authority to decide which country has to be laid waste and its people battered from the skies? Democratic world system is as important as democracy in any one country. Terrorism and fundamentalism are all anti-democratic. You cannot fight them by undemocratic means. The world will never be the same again after the terrorist attacks on the twin towers in New York. The world community has yet to come to terms with the fall out of that cataclysmic event.

6

The UN and Conflict Resolution in Afghanistan

S.S. Misra*

The violent and protracted conflict in Afghanistan has been one of the residues of the Cold War conflicts with no signs of resolution, defying the logic of international peace and security as espoused by the United Nations and the comity of nations. According to former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Afghanistan has been one of the most orphaned conflicts, which the West ignored or forgot in favour of Yugoslavia. But the events of September 11 have turned the international situation from American unilateralism under President George Bush to his firm faith in the UN system in his search for international coalition of forces against terrorism and religious extremism. In the new millennium, the UN has focussed on the agenda of people's security as a corollary to state security and hence, it has an enormous role in conflict prevention, peace-building and conflict resolution in different parts of the world.[1]

With the success of American bombing of the Taliban and ultimate victory of the Northern Alliance forces, the office of the United Nations has come handy in meeting the scourges of international terrorism and seeking an answer to peace-making in Afghanistan. It is in this context that Secretary-General Kofi Annan's special representative for Afghanistan Lakhdar Brahimi has hammered out a peace deal among various Afghan factions towards an interim administration for Afghanistan as

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a sequel to peace-building and conflict resolution in Central and South Asia.

The matter of the fact is that the UN is ideally and practically capable of providing the mechanism for peace-building and conflict prevention in Afghanistan. In its chequered history of peacekeeping and conflict resolution, UN operations have seen many ups and downs, starting with traditional peace-making in Lebanon, Cyprus, Iran–Iraq War (1988) and Namibia to multi-dimensional peace operations in El Salvador, Angola, Mozambique, Somalia, Cambodia, Macedonia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and very recently in East Timor. One of the most successful operations under the UN auspices, the operations in Mozambique (ONUMOZ), saw the Mozambique peace deal in 1992 which ended 16 years of civil war through a process of disarmament and demobilisation and initiation of dialogue among the various groups in the violent conflict. ONUMOZ was a complex operation involving peacekeeping, demobilisation of armed forces, provision of humanitarian relief, electoral support and return of a million refugees. Moreover, in this gamut of peace-building exercise, the UN established a trust fund to transform guerrilla forces into a political party in the reconciliation process. This peace deal may serve as a model for the UN representative Lakhdar Brahimi who is the chief architect of the Afghan Peace Accord at the Bonn Conference.

The UN and Conflict Management

The history of the UN's conflict management or peacekeeping operations dates back to the Cold War period when the UN developed the format for mediation and traditional peacekeeping, which served the US and Soviet desire to avoid direct clashes of arms in regions of tension. With the exception of the Congo operation (1962–64) and a small political transition mission in West New Guinea (1962–63), all UN missions between 1948 and 1988 were of this type and involved military components only. A traditional peacekeeping force was

positioned between former belligerents and monitored a cease-fire, creating the political space for negotiation of the underlying dispute. Moreover, diplomatic efforts to resolve the dispute proceeded separately. These missions were conducted with the full consent of the parties involved in the conflict and only after a cease-fire had been achieved: for example, after the Suez Crisis (1956), the October War (1973), and the Iran-Iraq War (1988). It is important to note that since 1948, there have been 54 UN peacekeeping operations, and 41 of which were created by the Security Council between 1988 and 2000. But multi-dimensional or multi-sectoral peace operations for conflict management emerged near the end of the Cold War, as a number of conflicts with East-West dimensions came to a close and the permanent members of the UN Security Council were able to agree on more ambitious missions to help belligerents make the transition to a sustainable peace. These operations were aimed at 'peace-building', which meant efforts to identify and support areas that help to consolidate peace on a long-term basis. So these peace-building operations often have a mandate not only to facilitate the reduction of tensions between former enemies in conflicts, like traditional peacekeeping, but also to help implement a peace accord that addresses the cause of the underlying conflict. In most cases, and unlike traditional peace-keeping, multidimensional operations (or peace-building) have an implementation schedule and a timeline.

Because multidimensional peace operations primarily involve the settlement of internal conflicts, they operate in a much more complex domestic political environment than does traditional peacekeeping. Likewise, although they usually operate with the full consent of the local parties, their military component may be authorised to use limited force against local elements that actively hinder implementation of the peace accord. Thus, multi-dimensional peace operation can entail greater risk of casualties than traditional peacekeeping, and greater pressure to use force to keep a peace accord on track.

Moreover, multidimensional UN operations have civilian components that may outnumber the military, and they have civilian components like administrators, election supervisors and poll watchers, an information section to educate the public about electoral process and help develop grass-roots democratic institutions, refugees and displaced persons resettlement unit, a component to monitor and report human rights abuses, and civilian police observers. Thus, the military help to maintain a secure environment in which the civilian components can work, a role that may involve a number of tasks not found in traditional peacekeeping, such as guarding police stations, transporting refugees to resettlement areas, and assisting with the demobilisation and disarmament of local forces.

Broadly, the nature of the conflicts has changed in recent years and most of the conflicts are a complex mix of interstate and internal conflicts. Their roots may be essentially internal, but they are complicated by cross-border involvement, either by state, or non-state actors. And their consequences can quickly become international, because of destabilising refugee flows as well as the dangers posed by factions pursuing each other across borders. This is what happened in recent years in Sierra Leone, Angola, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) and Sudan.

In each of the above cases, the United Nations had to tackle a number of challenges concurrently: helping to maintain ceasefires and to disarm and demobilise combatants; assisting the parties to build or strengthen vital institutions and processes and respect for human rights, so that all concerned can pursue their interests through legitimate channels rather than on the battlefield; providing internal monitoring of elections following electoral reform to ensure that the reforms will take effect; providing humanitarian assistance to relieve immediate suffering; and laying the groundwork for long-term economic growth and development through interim administration.

According to the present Secretary-General, the United

Nations can claim significant successes among its peace operations in the last decade or so, beginning with Namibia in the late 1980s, and including Mozambique, El Salvador, the Central African Republic, Guatemala, Eastern Slovenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and, at least partially, Cambodia. These operations helped lead to, for example, Namibian independence; democratic elections in Mozambique; far-reaching political reforms in El Salvador; and new human rights protections in Guatemala. So, in the recent decades, the UN has played an interventionist role with the support of the international community in most of the conflict zones. Though most of these interventions have been partly military in nature, the UN has laid down the principle that "it is much better, from every point of view, if action can be taken to resolve or manage a conflict before it reaches the military stage".[2] Once the conflicts mature into intense armed struggle, the intervention and mediation process under the UN become burdensome and complicated in nature. This is evident from the long-running Afghan conundrum which has destabilised peace and regional security in Central and West Asia.

The UN and the Afghan Conflict

In the context of Afghanistan, the UN's track record of mediation and peace initiative has been a mixed success due to lack of support from the US, Russia and other regional players. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, and gradual exacerbation of Cold War conflicts between the US and Soviet Union, the offices of the UN like the General Assembly served as impartial agencies for peace-making and conflict management in different parts of the world. Thus, the Afghanistan problem received proper UN attention with the appointment of Perez de Cuellar in 1981 by Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim to mediate between Moscow and the main supporters of the '*mujahedin*' like the United States and Pakistan. In this phase of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet

Union, Afghanistan became the victim of the Big Powers' search for 'spheres of influence' in their hegemonic expansion. The Soviet invasion and military presence in Afghanistan was countered by the American military support to '*mujahedin*' leaders through various channels in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Thus the Afghan conflict, beginning as a result of internal bickering and factionalism, culminated in the involvement of outside powers which exacerbated the conflict.

In a historical perspective, the mediation of the UN in Afghanistan began with the 'proximity talks' in Geneva involving various internal and external parties to the Afghan conflict. When Perez de Cuellar became the Secretary-General, he appointed his close aide, Diego Cordovez, who assiduously carried out the UN's peace mission towards the conclusion of Geneva Accords. During this phase of the Cold War and the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement, the UN began a series of consultations authorised by the General Assembly (GA) Resolutions that advocated a political settlement. These GA Resolutions, which called for the withdrawal of foreign troops and an opportunity for the people of Afghanistan to choose their own government were passed annually with increasing large majorities. As the Security Council was paralysed by the Soviet veto, the General Assembly Resolutions provided the UN with a mandate to seek political settlement and a degree of autonomy in seeking it. So, the UN mediator for Afghanistan, Under-Secretary General Diego Cordovez, exploited this autonomy to take a number of initiatives in the negotiations. But in the face of serious Soviet objections, the UN agenda was not clear about the nature of the internal government of Afghanistan. So the Geneva Accords of 1988, which largely emerged out of the cooperative relationship between the Super Powers, failed to "address explicitly the link between the international and domestic aspects of the conflict in Afghanistan".[3] But the Accords succeeded in finding a timetable for Soviet troop withdrawal while leaving in place a proxy war.

Gradually, with the Soviet policy of 'détente' under President Gorbachev, and improvement of relations with the US, the Afghan question lost its geostrategic significance and the two Super Powers drastically scaled down their involvement. But the internal war was resumed in the downgraded version of civil war by internal actors, who continued to receive support mainly from neighbouring countries. In this process, the subsequent UN peace missions under Bevan Sevan, Mahmoud Mestiri, and Norbert Holl did not succeed due to continuous ethnic fratricidal wars inside Afghanistan.

Gradually, the rule of the Taliban and its atrocities reached such lengths that the internal Afghan situation worsened to the detriment of its neighbours who became burdened with problems of refugees, small arms and drug trade. There were too many regional states like Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Tajikistan who became enmeshed in the power struggle in Afghanistan. So, by the end of 1998, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan spoke ominously of the prospect of a deeper regionalisation of the conflict where Afghanistan had become the stage for a new version of the 'Great Game'. Still, the UN continued with its peace initiative in Afghanistan through the mechanism of Six-Plus-Two group of countries throughout 1999 and 2000. This Six-Plus-Two group of countries included the six neighbouring countries of Afghanistan, namely, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China and Pakistan and the two big powers, the US and Russia. This was in conformity with the UN's comprehensive approach to the issues of regionalisation and internationalisation of the conflict. But this multilateral diplomacy brought some peace dividends as the Taliban joined the forum for talks and started negotiation with the UN agencies and other international NGOs. But finally, acts like Osama bin Laden's confidants' attacks on US missions in Africa and Al-Qaida's involvement with Chechen fighters against Russia brought the Taliban international condemnation. Subsequently, the Security Council imposed an arms embargo

and economic sanctions on the Taliban for harbouring terrorist networks of Al-Qaida. But the Taliban regime had ignored international calls to respect and follow the UN Resolutions at a serious loss to its human population. These acts of defiance by the Taliban have been "stoked by a long history of great power neglect, interference by neighbours and severe economic decline."[4] So, the Secretary-General had time and again highlighted the plight of average Afghans in the context of economic sanctions and had sought international humanitarian assistance to stabilise the Afghan situation.

It is obvious from the Afghanistan and other cases that most violent internal conflicts encompass a host of socio-economic and political factors within a particular state and these have a contagious effect undermining regional peace and security. So, after decades of peacekeeping, the UN in recent times has highlighted that conflict prevention and peace-building are multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral in nature and therefore require concerted political, developmental, social and humanitarian efforts. So local, regional and national capacities need to be developed in a post-conflict situation where all the warring parties need to be assisted to pursue their interests through political channels.

With the adoption of the Brahimi report by the Security Council, the UN has reaffirmed the importance of structural conflict prevention by highlighting the root causes of conflict like poverty, inequality, absence of democracy, human rights violation, illegal arms and drugs trade. Moreover, the Brahimi report provides that the UN administrators have onerous responsibilities in post-conflict situations in terms of micro-managing these war-torn states towards peace and reconciliation. These UN responsibilities are: making and enforcing the law, establishing customs service, collecting business and personal taxes, attracting foreign investment, adjudicating property disputes, reconstructing and operating public utilities, creating a banking system and running schools.[5] In this context,

the UN has an important role to play in initiating the process of state formation and economic reconstruction in Afghanistan. Thus, the Bonn Accord is a first step towards peace-building and conflict resolution in Afghanistan.

The UN and the Bonn Accord

By and large, the Bonn proposals have got Afghanistan's peace process off to a good start. Instead of pushing a once and for all settlement, which would have proved even more vulnerable to internecine conflict over facts on the ground, the UN and Afghan leaders have opted to begin with an interim council of 29 people. At the same time, an independent commission will organise an all-Afghan Loya Jirga, possibly in Spring 2002, when it will be easier to travel across the country. The Loya Jirga, an assembly of tribal elders and local representatives, will nominate a transitional government to take over from the interim council, as well as a parliament or legislative council that will draft a future constitution for the country. The constitution will be mandated by a second Loya Jirga, and followed by elections. In other words, it is a three-stage process with a specific time frame. For instance, the interim council will administer for roughly six months, the transitional administration will govern for roughly 18 months and after that, Afghanistan will have a constitutionally mandated government.

The advantage of this three-stage process is that it allows the international community and the less democratic Afghan leaders enough space and time for reconstruction and regeneration of the Afghan state and civil society in a smooth transition of political power. In this context, the Bonn negotiators have provided some important safeguards. Instead of letting ethnic allocations dominate ruling government and administrative structures, they have also focussed on tasks and skill. The interim council is broad-based in more ways than one. While its membership is drawn from Afghanistan's major ethnic groups (Pushtoon, Hazara, Tajik, and Uzbek, and other religious

minority of Shias), it is led by the southern Pushtoon leader Hamid Karzai. So, the focus has been on getting moderate and untainted leaders, as well as those with some track record in their allocated responsibility. Equally important, the independent commission for an emergency Loya Jirga, to be held after this Spring, is completely separate from the interim council, and it can act as a guarantee of the council's interim nature. It also lays down an important role for women's groups, human rights and civil society, both in the Loya Jirga and in Afghanistan's future government. Hopefully, its membership will draw heavily on these groups rather be formed of the major parties in the council.

To this extent, the Bonn agreement provides a framework within which more stable governing structures can be built, drawing on recent experiences of Bosnia, Cambodia, East Timor, and Kosovo. But in order for it to work, it is important for the goals of each stage to be clearly demarcated, and to lay the foundations for the next stage. In the case of Afghanistan, the interim council's role will be short-lived, but it will hold the key to prospects of peace and security. Though it can plug the immediate power vacuum in Kabul it could fall prey to the worst kinds of ethnic and sectarian interests in the long run. It is especially important, therefore, to both limit and focus its tasks.

In other words, though the interim council comprises a formidable list of twenty-three ministries, it should not attempt to function as a regular government in normal times, because its role is to begin Afghanistan's stabilisation process. Secondly, to act as an established government would be to undermine the Loya Jirga. Given that the war has not ended, key portfolios such as defence, interior, trade, or foreign affairs could be used as another way of consolidating rival power bases. Three of these positions (trade is split between several ministries) have been allocated to the Northern Alliance's new and younger leaders, General Fahim for defence, Yunus Qanuni for interior

and Abdullah Abdullah for foreign affairs. More will depend on whether they, and the council as a whole, concentrate on the immediate tasks at hand rather than jockeying for place. In the six-month term that the council will administer, the chief tasks are to:

- Provide aid (including housing materials) health care and education on an emergency footing with the emphasis on reaching remote areas.
- De-mine and make transport routes safe.
- Establish the rule of law in cities, as they are the lifelines of the country.
- Draw up exhaustive plans for reconstruction, which again is likely to start in a major way only after Spring 2002. This task alone will keep the bulk of the ministries busy.
- Work with the UN to develop a civil service, judiciary and police force.

There are two vital lessons from the former Yugoslavia and East Timor for aid and reconstruction in Afghanistan. First, aid and reconstruction have to target local capacity within an overall frame of nation-building. Second, aid and reconstruction have to be timely, so that wartime divisions and a black economy are not allowed to take over the peace process. As far as the first goes, the Bonn agreement has two in-built advantages: the interim and transitional administrators will be Afghans. It will also include Afghan refugees and the diaspora, in which most Afghan professionals are concentrated and they are readying to involve themselves in reconstruction.

Summing up, the Bonn agreement has charted a political course for Afghanistan's future. But its proposal will have little chance of success if stabilisation and Afghan nation-building are not a top priority. Most important of all, the interim council and the independent commission, not to mention aid and reconstruction, will have difficulty in taking off as long as the war lasts.

Model for Conflict Resolution in Afghanistan

Thus, during this transitional period in Afghanistan, the basic UN objectives are broadly peace-building and conflict prevention by regenerating economic and political processes. Economically, the gargantuan task of humanitarian assistance and reconstruction of economy call for massive aid flows and infrastructural development towards the upliftment of conditions of people. In this context, the UN's strong presence in the region in terms of UNDP's necessary experience, political openness, financial controls and transparent budgeting will be of prime importance. Moreover, the synchronisation of economic and political processes under the UN auspices will be most successful with the UN's intrusive role than that of other aid agencies.

For example, the long-running World Food Programme could be augmented with other UNDP activities to deliver aid at community level, so as to help the political process by removing some of the urgency for an artificial, short-term economic and political solution. The protracted conflict in Afghanistan has virtually destroyed its roads, buildings and other economic infrastructure, which need massive funds for reconstruction and restoration. So like the ONUMOZ, the UN may establish a trust fund for the onset of economic and political processes in Afghanistan.

On the political front, the interim council as constituted with the patchwork representation of various ethnic groups seems to be feasible in nature. But its proper co-ordination and functioning in this transitional phase are very important issues in the coming days. In the Northern Alliance camp, all is not very well with dissenting voices of former President Rabbani and Uzbek warlord Dostum. They have to be politically rehabilitated with position and power in the jigsaw puzzle of Afghan power hierarchy.

In this context, the interim administration headed by Hamid Karzai has a tough job at hand to unite all the warlords and

tribal leaders to participate in the Loya Jirga (Grand Assembly) to establish a transitional government before a constitution could be drafted and direct elections held all over the country. This is quite an uphill task for the Afghan political class which are mostly guided by their partisan outlook. The point is that there is nothing like a national identity for an average Afghan to articulate his aims and aspirations in a given situation. Territorial and regional identities are predominant in present-day Afghanistan, and they have continued from very old times. So, there is a need for a complex relationship of power and authority, which should be based on principles of decentralisation and power-sharing by all ethnic groups, paving the way for the emergence of strong Afghan nationalism. This is an urgent need due to the nature of the Afghan society, which is largely identified with the predominance of various tribes, which serve as a loose coalition of competing interests that have never been fully subjected by a centralised state.

Thus, the international community under the vanguard of the United Nations has the imponderable task of reviving and resuscitating the state-formation process with economic and political assistance. But no sort of political solution (architecture) should be imposed on the Afghan people by external actors. The so-called formula of 'broad-based government' is based on the principle of getting all the parties to agree on the right mix of ethno-linguistic and sectarian representation. In this context, viewing the past failures, the minorities like Shi'ite Hazaras, Uzbeks and others need to be properly co-opted in government formation.[6] Therefore, the structural matrix of Afghan civil society in terms of powerful self-governing community (tribal) structures can be utilised towards "the formation of a central government based on democratic principles of free election and power-sharing among all interest groups in the country (tribal, ethno-linguistic, sectarian and gender) on an equitable basis—that is by applying the Islamic principles of *shura* or consultative rule."[7]

Thus, the transitional administration should strive for drafting and ratifying a new national constitution reflecting the political, economic and ecological realities of Afghanistan. The constitutional provisions guaranteeing the rights of community (tribal) self-governance at the local and regional levels need to be balanced with a national administrative structure to ensure uniform implementation of new constitutional and federal laws. This model of community (tribal) self-governance juxtaposed with the national federal structure can guarantee both the freedom and liberty of all the peoples inhabiting Afghanistan, ensuring the territorial integrity and full independence of the nation itself.

In the final analysis, the international community under the flagship of the United Nations has an immediate task of initiating the process of conflict resolution in Afghanistan. Hence, all international and regional players should co-operate towards the economic reconstruction and rebuilding of Afghanistan. In regional context, the Central Asian Republics bordering Afghanistan, and having rich oil and gas deposits, should have a positive role in the recovery of Afghanistan from its 'failed state' syndrome. In this context, Afghanistan and the neighbouring Central Asian Republics should come together under the umbrella of multilateral diplomacy on the lines of OSCE in Europe. Thus, in this post–Cold War world disorder, the United Nations with its peace-building and people-centred approach (as discussed in the New Millennium Report) can banish the scourges of terrorism and violence as perpetrated by states and non-state actors in the present-day world.

Notes

[1] For details see, Millennium Report of the Secretary General, *"We the Peoples": The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century*, A/54/2000 (New York, United Nations, 2000).

[2] Kofi A. Annan, *The Question of Intervention* (New York, United Nations, 1999), p. 9.

[3] Barnett R. Rubin, *The Search for peace in Afghanistan: From Buffer State to Failed State* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1995), p. 40.

[4] Ahmed Rashid, "Afghanistan: Ending the policy Quagmire", *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 54, no. 2, Spring 2001, p. 410.

[5] Brahimi Report, Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, United Nations General Assembly Security Council, 21 August, 2000, pp. 1–15.

[6] Michael Griffin, *Reaping the Whirlwind: The Taliban Movement in Afghanistan* (London, Pluto Press, 2001) pp. 33–52.

[7] M. Nazif Shahrani, "The Future of the state and the structure of community governance in Afghanistan" in William Maley (ed.), *Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban* (London, C. Hurst & Co., 1998), p. 242.

7

The Problematic of War and Afghanistan in Historical Perspective

Anirudh Deshpande*

Situating the Afghan War

Modern Afghanistan, thanks to the Western imperialist interventions of the 19th and 20th centuries, provides a scenario of total war to the historian and military analysts. Afghanistan is one of those unfortunate countries where every aspect of social life bears the deep imprint of war. This is modernity's ironical twist in one of the economically most backward regions of the world. Largely due to external interference, Afghan history is so mired in warfare that the word Afghan or Pathan has become synonymous with a mythical mountain soldier dressed in *salwar-kameez* and sporting a Kalashnikov rifle. Since the days of the so-called Great Game of the 19th century Afghanistan has periodically served as a laboratory of war and internecine conflicts. This laboratory has produced important lessons for mankind in general and Asia in particular. But above all, Afghanistan's predicament highlights the socio-political futility of war which often results from external interference in a country's domestic affairs. The history of British and Soviet imperialist interventions in Afghan affairs proves this beyond doubt.

There is reason to believe that 'hawks' might disagree with

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this generalisation although how they normally justify military action is difficult to explain here. Warfare, despite its many failures and inhuman manifestations, continues to have other supporters as well. The entire business of war, for example, certainly delights the narrow-minded military historian, the armchair strategist, the manufacturers and sellers of armaments and their cousins in the media for reasons not necessary to mention here. It is war which gives the opportunity to strategic experts and retired military personnel to appear on TV and hold forth in an armchair fashion. War almost certainly helps the companies eyeing the reconstruction of devastated countries. In addition it also helps traders and cartels interested in shortages and developing a black market. American companies, it is easy to presume, are already eyeing profits in the post-war Afghanistan. Several learned commentators have repeatedly drawn our attention to the fact that Afghanistan is crucial to the US interests in the region. The enormous Central Asian gas reserves are not far from a future Kabul-Kandahar-Karachi expressway. Economically speaking, therefore, a US-friendly Afghanistan will directly benefit the US consumers and automobile industry. Critics may argue that the prevalence of peace in Afghanistan will make the traders of devastation and death unhappy but, rest assured, they will ply their trade elsewhere. The cycle of destruction and reconstruction will go on as long as power elites find expendable capital and human life.

Hence, in the context briefly outlined above, posing the problematic of war is necessary to understand and oppose it wherever and whenever possible. It may seem somewhat paradoxical, but, in my view, the foremost task of the military historian—as distinct from the 'strategic experts' employed usually by the establishment or its 'think tanks'—is to criticise war and highlight the limitations of the military approach. In this paper I shall restrict myself to pointing out the general historical problematic of war. Connections with Afghanistan are drawn wherever necessary. In the context of the latest

Afghan war and the future socio-economic possibilities in Afghanistan I feel it is fruitless to discuss military tactics and technology beyond a point. For the moment the Northern Alliance has triumphed over the Taliban and the Al-Qaida network in Afghanistan has been smashed. Pakistan seems to have lost its strategic depth in Afghanistan and an India-friendly regime seems to be in place in Kabul after almost a decade. But perhaps the time to rejoice, sit back and sing praise of modern military technology has not come. Clearly, this victory over the Taliban could not have been so swift without the involvement of the Northern Alliance right from the beginning of this war: there were no highways in Afghanistan on which the Taliban, like the ill-fated retreating Iraqis in 1991, could be massacred. American air-power most certainly softened the Taliban formations but without the active involvement of the Northern Alliance this war would have become protracted. The Taliban also collapsed rather unexpectedly because Pakistan, under intense American pressure, withdrew its logistic and technical support. However, it is too much to expect the victory of the US- and Russian-backed Northern Alliance to transform the character of ruling elites in South Asia. Nor will this victory erase the popular memory of the genocide perpetrated on the Afghan people during the last two decades. It is easy to conclude that unless the causes of this war are studied and correct lessons are drawn from it, and practically applied, sustained peace will neither be won in Afghanistan nor in South Asia. The future of external intervention and foreign troops in Afghanistan must be viewed in this context.

The following generalisations on the subject are influenced by a few facts which I understand to be incontrovertible. I would like to begin by asserting that while war makes good copy for strategic analysts and other military experts [this has been demonstrated during the Gulf War and the current Afghan war], its overall usefulness must be examined and debated in the historical perspective. That is the only way to comprehend

warfare in a holistic paradigm. War has been analysed for as long as it has existed and historians have disagreed on the negative and positive outcomes of wars. But you don't have to be a philosopher of war to understand that wars have influenced society, culture, politics and indeed the very idea of civilisation. However, this influence has been multi-dimensional. Whether this has happened for good or bad is again debatable. Your view of a war is often coloured by the discourse of the side you happen to be on. Nonetheless, the ideological impact of war on society and social attitudes is indisputable. More often than not, and historically speaking, this impact has been appropriated by the ruling classes in various societies to suit their narrow class interests. Hence no analysis of war is possible without taking into account inter-society and intra-society class interests. At the international level wars, like the hot wars of the Cold War era, have been waged to justify and promote hegemonic interests. These imperialist hegemonic interests can be capitalist or, as the case in USSR was, party-bureaucratic. Beyond this, the veneration of military leaders and the armed forces in all nation-states goes hand in hand with the glorification of war as the most exalted national duty. These are the historical and ideological aspects of war which the modern philosophy of war can ill-afford to ignore.

Wars, like the two Afghan wars of the 19th century, have significantly shaped discourses on the notion of what is racial, martial, tribal or Muslim for instance. On the other hand, from the Afghan perspective, imperialist intervention and its fallout in the form of foreign occupation, lawlessness, death, pillage and rape have shaped ideas regarding outsiders. In the 19th century itself, the two Anglo-Afghan wars hardened perceptions on both sides. The stereotypical Afghan as an entity propagated by the British and the Afghans' suspicion of imperialist outsiders has a history located in the colonial period. To assume that these oppositional identities will vanish after Osama bin Laden and his followers are finished might be a little premature.

Often the notion of the other, with its history, is quite efficiently tapped by the various warring establishments and their friends in the interest of ideology and hegemony. It goes without saying that these establishments have a vested interest in committing economically vital resources to war. In the centuries of total war, that is the 19th and 20th centuries, the ideological aspect of war became more prominent than ever. But the problem is older and, I would submit, war continues to raise rather than answer more questions even as the masses everywhere bear the brunt of it while the classes conduct war in the name of defence, security, ethnicity, religion and nation. The perceptions of the other in Afghanistan may yet prove to be the biggest stumbling block encountered by democracy and peace. The international community, or whatever we mean by it these days, will really have to do something constructive in Afghanistan to win back the trust of all Afghans.

As an illustration of hardened discursive identities take the case of the Crusades. For a long time in European history and historiography these feudal military missions were portrayed as necessary to arrest the expansion of Arab power and Islamic influence into Europe. President Bush would, in all probability, agree with this view. The Crusades were conducted by the feudal ruling elites of the so-called Christian world but how productive they were is debatable. They may have also been caused more by the internal dynamics of the European feudal states than the perceived Muslim threat to Europe. Alternately, they could have resulted from the desire of the feudal elite to refashion its identity as a group of Christian warriors. Or else they may have been symptomatic of a deeper crisis of feudalism. But whatever was the outcome of the Crusades, Europe could hardly remain immune to Arabic socio-cultural influence. And subsequently *this* became a well-known fact.

The Crusading mentality, which is essentially the same as today's *jehadi*, *hindutva*, white supremacist or Zionist thought, ended up generating transhistorical images of the enemy. Many

of these Occidental images later entered Orientalism and the colonial discourse allied to it. The chronological division of South Asian history into the Hindu Ancient, Muslim Medieval and British Modern periods belongs to this discourse. The partition of India in 1947 and the emergence of the two-nation theory made matters worse. These images, it must be added in the context of Afghanistan and Osama bin Laden, have also found their way into the motivated and flawed Huntington thesis. Many of these images were prominently and promptly displayed soon after the horrendous event of 11 September, 2001. These images, and their counter reproduction in the Taliban like degenerate organisations, stoke religious bias everywhere and pose a clash of civilisations where there is actually none. Such imagery and its rapid appropriation by vested interests produces situations in which believers, parading as missionaries, fail to distinguish between Sikhs and Muslims simply because the former also keep beards. The questions whether the war in Afghanistan was about Islam or whether terrorism is inherently linked to Islam must be answered in this context. Nonetheless, the construction of rigid and oppositional identities does leave a third way out of the problem. This is the path of universal humanism, reason, co-existence and progress. It is a way predicated upon the decline of religious self-righteousness. Afghanistan might take this road. That will keep the zealots and imperialists at bay and also prove the sceptics wrong.

In the previous century war has raised similar questions and problems. What would the world have been in the absence of the two World Wars is an enticing question. We cannot imagine the existence of Israel without thinking of Nazi Germany and the holocaust simultaneously. Without an expansionist Israel the Palestine problem most probably would not have arisen. And without US support do you believe Israel would last long? Sustained Western support has given rise to the myth of Israel's military invincibility. On the other hand US support to the Saudi

monarchy—which is not sanctioned by Islam in any case—has produced a suppressed Islamic dissidence. The chain of causation, however, is longer. In the absence of the Palestine problem, it is easy to see, terrorism would not have gone very far. Is it not time that we revert to criticising Zionist State terrorism or any other kind of terrorism instead of feeling enamoured of Israeli methods which violate international law? These questions, which are intimately related to Western policy in the Middle East, must be answered in any effort to understand the causes of the latest Afghan war. Further, to find an internationally guided solution to the post-war problems of Afghanistan the failures of international efforts in the past must be remembered. There is no point in repeating history.

Here it is pertinent to remember that while imperialism, colonialism and the failure of the League of Nations shaped our past the growing impotence of the United Nations threatens our future. The decline of the United Nations and the collapse of the USSR has led to the ascendancy of the US as the single super-power. It is considered improper to criticise the US, and the role of genocide in its making, these days. The 'either you are with us or against us' mentality is a direct consequence of this most unfortunate turn of events since the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989. It is pertinent to note that if the US continues to reduce the space for dissent in a world order which has barely emerged from the Cold War, the danger of war will grow in future. Unless Zionist and other forms of terrorism are curbed and eliminated, Islamism will continue to attract certain vulnerable sections of the Muslim masses. Ultimately the war between terrorisms, one backed by the US and other opposed to it, will become unrestricted in means and scope. It will be waged from the subterranean depths of human consciousness which military technology has always been incapable of destroying.

Wars, it is well known, are usually helpful to the ruling classes. A lot of ideological and identitarian consolidation

results from them. The World Wars, as a case in point, were useful to the western capitalists in a myopic sense of the word. They weakened the older colonial empires, opened the door to decolonisation and indirect colonial domination. They also strengthened the system of nation-states in much of Europe in some ways. New nations and national identities were born of these wars. But whether the destruction of capital and human life, and the traumatising of entire societies in the process, was preferable to the distribution of capital and its attendant social benefits remains an important question. It will be raised and debated as long as the relationship between power, political hegemony, capitalism and modern war lasts. There is no reason to believe that this relationship has ended with the abortive American mission of vendetta in Tora Bora. In addition the point about war being irrational and unethical will always be made by the supporters of peace and development. The opposition to war appears repetitive, banal, predictable and even unfashionable sometimes but nevertheless it is crucial. In this debate between war and peace certain salient features of 20th century wars ought to be remembered. This will help us prove a few more points and make the discussion on Afghanistan more fruitful.

The experience of war in the previous century set serious limits to the wisdom of considering war as the pursuit of politics by other means. As the century progressed war increasingly appeared futile. But the powers which waged war, and ravaged humanity in the process, deliberately refused to acknowledge this futility. To the military-industrial-political complexes of the Western and non-Western world, war is staple fodder. Taking this argument further, I would contend that the limitations of the pseudo-Clausewitzian strategic thought were evident in the 19th century itself. This can be asserted without getting into the details of the Napoleonic, Crimean and even the Afghan Wars of the 19th century. Other examples underline the limitations of strategic thought further. The two World Wars

and the wars in Korea, Vietnam, Latin America, Africa, Palestine, Timor and Sri Lanka underscore the fact that military methods cannot solve problems created in the first place by the local or international concentration of capital and power. Therefore, the modern (or post-modern if you prefer) philosophy of war should, in my opinion, now settle down to concentrate on this aspect of war rather than getting bogged down in details of campaigns, armaments, troop deployment and special forces, etc. That should be left to the military correspondents and reporters. The job of military philosophy is to develop a critique of war and apply the wisdom of a Clausewitz, Tolstoy, Mao or Giap in a creative and humanist perspective. In sum, therefore, military philosophy cannot but be praxological in contrast to strategy which is ideological.

Salient Features

(1) The notion of victory is essential to war. Otherwise there would be no war. But how can complete victory be achieved as the objective of war? At the outset, it is clear that victory cannot be achieved by the annihilation of the enemy's armed forces alone. The enemy can raise these forces again with the help of arms dealers, drug cartels and states willing to, and capable of, defying sanctions. Overcoming the "will to resist" exhibited by the vanquished is crucial to lasting military success; an enemy in flight is not an enemy destroyed. To overcome the "will to resist", cultural hegemony and ideological indoctrination is more important than military technology. If America is serious about stamping out terrorism it must go beyond bombs and retaliatory state terrorism. The US Special Forces have neither found Osama bin Laden nor eliminated the mentality Osama symbolises. Washington's use of force to cobble together an anti-terrorist coalition after 9/11 may well prove counter-productive in the long run. In the ultimate analysis Washington will have to win over the terrorists' constituency. This, in turn, will mean abandoning longstanding, carefully cultivated and

highly subjective policies of the Pentagon and CIA. Peace in Afghanistan and South Asia will depend on the ability of America to shake off the Cold War mentality and the Huntington paradigm.

(2) Hitherto the West has nourished a contemporary military strategy based on notions of conventional superiority and nuclear deterrence. Current military thinking in NATO, despite the end of the Cold War, is predicated upon the following; (a) achieving and exercising conventional military superiority (superiority in air power, general firepower, armour, naval power, etc.) over enemy powers. This would include Rambo-style trouble-shooting expeditionary forces being used to conduct brief operations; (b) great reliance on cutting-edge and devastating technology with a "we can inflict damage and costs" attitude—unfortunately this attitude has also gathered strength in the Indian strategic-military establishment; (c) threat of using nuclear and bio-chemical weapons (this is a game two can play at); and (d) the militarisation of space in pursuit of strategic and economic interests. In sum, these doctrines make our world a risky place. NATO stands for complete Western military domination in the economic and political interests of the US and its allies. This doctrine, however, has been periodically challenged by some so-called "rogue" states like Iraq and Libya. Unfortunately this opposition has often consolidated equally harmful ideological aberrations in these countries.

(3) The limitations of modern war do not rule out military success in exceptional circumstances. History has witnessed the success of popular wars against overwhelming odds. While analysing these wars the reasons for a side's ultimate victory should be mentioned, otherwise they are in danger of being hijacked and misinterpreted by warmongers. The following examples will suffice. During the Great Patriotic Russian war against Nazi Germany (1941-45), the Chinese war against Japanese occupation and Kuomintang corruption (1937-49), the Vietnamese war against Japanese, French and later American

occupation (1942-75) and the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan (1979-89) popular wars triumphed over foreign domination and colonial exploitation. These wars were imposed upon the countries concerned, were long drawn and often received valuable support from external allies. Hence, wherever unpopular military regimes reign against popular will protracted war begins after some time. In favourable conditions the popular forces have a great chance of succeeding against oppressive and foreign regimes. In unfavourable conditions many of these wars, like the Spanish civil war of the 1930s, have ended tragically for the masses.

(4) The conditions of chronic war give rise to events and processes which threaten the very notion of modern civilisation. War, more often than not, breeds war. Wars inveigh against human development, human rights, environmental protection, historical heritage, women and children and the movement for gender equality. Wars often lead to ethnic cleansing, genocides, communalism and ethnic rivalries. This has been evident in Cambodia, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Yugoslavia, Africa and, closer home, in Sri Lanka and Kashmir. The list of places where war is epidemic is growing longer even as our modern world order is failing to contain and eliminate the scourge. In fact the prevalence of war and the proliferation of arms has produced a state of affairs sometimes described as a "world at war". There is no count of the millions who are either dead and or maimed for life. This has often led to a radical questioning of modernisation. In many political camps which are critical of the West the subtle but significant differences between modernisation, modernity and westernisation have either vanished or are in danger of vanishing soon. This has led to an unnecessary and parochial firming up of identities across the globe. The road from there, as the victims of communalism in India know very well, leads to cultural revivalism, religious chauvinism, exclusivist nationalism, and ultimately more war.

Concluding Remarks

A modern history of war tells us that a foreign or domestic policy which does not eschew conflict as a means to solve social and political problems focuses on the effect and not causes of the problems to begin with. This is clear in the case of Pakistan's failed enterprise in Kargil and Afghanistan and the nuclearisation of the Indian sub-continent. The reliance on military means to solve geo-strategic problems poses a grave threat to political stability and human life across the world. In Afghanistan, which is almost totally mined, this has been evident since 1979. Once the military process starts, the familiar cycle of attacks, invasion, occupation, exodus of refugees, bombardment and violation of human rights repeats itself with consequences familiar to everyone. Ultimately the means and ends become confused as more and more effort goes into sustaining the military offensive.

In addition the media is mobilised by the concerned states to spread and legitimise propaganda in the name of patriotism. This media aspect of war was best seen during the latest American offensive in Afghanistan and the Gulf War of 1991. War is started as a vested interest and is pursued and justified in the name of national interest with media collusion. While the media does its best to foist upon the public the identification of national interest with military aims, conflicts are sold over the cable networks at a considerable profit. On the other side of the screen consumers are shown a sanitised and palatable war. A war which others are supposedly conducting for their benefit. A war in which they are purportedly not involved unless their flags or armies appear on the screen. Footage of cluster bombs safely dropping from a B52 on unseen enemies fuses the vision of the bomber pilot and the audience. How different the image of war in Afghanistan would have been had some of the cameras focussed extensively on the Afghan children physically and mentally crippled by twenty years of relentless war.

While state policy generally emanates from hegemonic groups and the establishments they control, its analysis cannot be divorced from a critique of the governing ideology of the ruling groups and their strategic elites. This is true of ethnically divided Afghanistan as it is of anywhere else. The latest Afghan war can be understood only in the context of long-term Western policy in the region and the role allocated to Pakistan and its dictators by the US in South and Central Asia. From this it follows that future stability in Afghanistan will depend upon what the US desires in Central Asia and Pakistan. Beyond this concluding assertion are debatable questions. Will the Northern Alliance hold and ethnic strife and anarchy abate in Afghanistan? Will Islamabad continue to shelter the remnants of the Taliban in the hope of using them elsewhere? Will Washington's anti-terrorist ardour cool down after Osama is finally captured or killed? How will New Delhi's attempt to develop friendly relations with Kabul sit with its attitude towards the Indian minorities? Will American policy towards Pakistan and other states like the theocratic Saudi Arabia and Zionist Israel change in the long term keeping in mind the real causes of this Afghan war?

Winning the peace in Afghanistan ultimately depends upon the answers these questions inspire. The war against the Taliban in Afghanistan has ended but the campaign against terrorism, and not merely Islamic terrorism, is far from over. Unlike the war in Afghanistan, where all factions united against the Taliban, the coming battles against terrorism can hardly afford to be one-sided. But, in this writer's opinion, these battles can be fought most effectively by the people interested in, and movements designed to strengthen, civil society. The answer to terrorism is not counter or state terrorism but democracy and economic development based foremost on an honest assessment of history.

8

Limitations of Western Warfare: American Military Operations in Afghanistan, 2001

Kaushik Roy*

11 September 2001 will remain a black date in American history. The biggest terrorist attack killing about 5,000 men occurred on that day. The terrorists were probably personnel of Al-Qaida led by Osama bin Laden and sponsored by the Taliban regime of Afghanistan. Never before, any foreign power, not even Hitler's Germany was able to inflict so much loss in the American homeland. In response to the attack the first days of October witnessed the concentration of a naval armada in the Indian Ocean. After the Gulf War, it was the first time that so many aircraft carriers entered the Indian Ocean. October 7 witnessed the beginning of the Operation Enduring Freedom as part of the American-led Western coalition's Limited War against Afghanistan.

Limited War: Theory and Praxis

Despite differences between the various Western states in their approach to warfare, there exist some overarching principles that are inherent in the way the West has conducted warfare from the rise of Hellenic Greece. An emphasis on discipline, technology, a tendency to theorise military experience and finally a sophisticated method for financing war has

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characterised the Western warmaking for the last two thousand years. This Western method of conducting warfare is termed as the Western Way of Warfare.[1]

The post–Cold War Western warfare witnessed a transition from the Clausewitzian concept of *der totale krieg* (Total or Absolute War) to *kleinkrieg* (Small or Limited War). Due to the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution, from the age of Napoleon, the trend in the West was towards the totalisation of warfare. Total War involved mass mobilisation of society and the economy for maintaining million-strong armed forces and the aim was complete destruction of the enemy's armed forces. In Clausewitz's expression, this would lead to 'complete overthrow of the enemy' which indeed is the real aim of Absolute War.[2] The two World Wars and the Mutually Assured Destruction Strategy of NATO and the Warsaw Pact Alliance till Gorbachev's Glasnost and Perestroika are examples of Total War.[3]

On the other hand, Limited War does not aim at total destruction of the enemy's armed forces and complete annexation of the enemy country. Military power is to be projected to achieve specific objectives in tune with political demands.[4] While Total War was symmetric, i.e. between more or less similarly equipped standing armies of the opposing nations, the Limited Wars occur between asymmetric opponents—between conventional standing army versus the stateless actors like the lightly armed militias.

The transition to Limited Wars is due to the collapse of the USSR which has resulted in the rise of new kind of threats that require different political and military responses. Emerging nation-states with unsettled borders are one example of threat.[5] Ethnic migrations, religious fundamentalism in the weak or failed states are other danger spots. The most likely theatres of Limited Wars are the peripheries of Afro-Asia and Latin America.[6]

While Total War was bound to be attritional, the aim of the

military specialists at the end of the twentieth century is to achieve limited aims through a short and decisive campaign. This is because from the 1980s, the Western armed forces realised that they could no more rely on attritional campaign since their host societies would neither allow mass mobilisation of the males for protracted service nor would tolerate enormous casualties. The solution came in the form of a Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) which involved radical shift at both the conceptual level and at the level of hardware. RMA has occurred at various moments in history that enabled the Western Warfare to triumph in the extra-European world. One of the most significant RMA occurred in the eighteenth century, in the form of emergence of firearms-equipped infantry which enabled the European maritime powers to construct sprawling empires in Afro-Asia.[7]

What indeed are the theoretical components of RMA that swept through Western military landscape in the last two decades of twentieth century? First, the new theoretical formulations are not directed towards a particular theatre and against a specific enemy but geared to meet the varied challenges of the post–Cold War era.[8] The aim is to conduct Combined Manoeuvre Warfare and the focus is on command, manoeuvre and firepower. Unlike Attritional Warfare theory of the Total War, Manoeuvre War doctrine aims at disruption rather than destruction of the enemy. Disruption is to be done by dislocating the command system of the enemy. Rapid physical movement of the military assets backed by a faster decision-making cycle catches the initiative from the enemy. The enemy is outmanoeuvred both physically and mentally because the enemy's decision-making procedure will not be able to catch up with a rapidly changing battle scenario.[9]

The decision-action cycle is termed by the British military theoretician Colonel B.R. Isbell as tempo. Tempo could be raised by achieving surprise over the enemy. Surprise creates 'startled rabbit' syndrome within the enemy mind set. And then

the enemy refuses to react to the rapidly changing battle scenario. Thus, surprise which functions as a force-multiplier is the product of deception and security.[10] A faster tempo of operations could be achieved if information flows faster from the battlefield to the command set up and then back to the forward edge of battlefield. This requires removal of several intermediate layers of command apparatus for a flattened command structure.[11] Further, the command structure needs to be flexible for adapting itself rapidly to the 'speed of battle'. This requires initiative at all levels so that the improvisations are made faster than the enemy in order to get inside its decision-action cycle.[12]

Penetration into the enemy's decision-action cycle is made possible due to access of large amount of information by means of advanced technology. Quick analysis of this information requires setting up of a joint command.[13] Access to 'real time' information combined with the broad range of weapon systems available, enables the joint command to pose a variety of threats to the enemy. This in turn stretches the enemy's defence to the maximum possible limit. Jointness allows simultaneous operations for neutralising interaction among the rival military system's various components. These operations need to be synchronised, which means the various random combat activities are to be unified for gaining a single operational aim.[14] The joint commander should achieve unity of purpose amongst the disparate parts of his command.[15] It could be achieved through cross talks within the different component commanders of the joint force, for cross-fertilisation of ideas.[16] The Americans first set up joint command structure. Aping the Americans, the British Army also implemented jointness. In Britain, joint headquarters have been set up in 1996. Then Joint Services Command and Staff College are designed to develop the joint ethos required for future operations.[17]

And how does the flexible joint command system conduct Combined Arms Manoeuvre? Instead of establishing stationary

bases of firepower like Monty's artillery concentration at the Alam Halfa position in 1942, the aim is to create mobile bases of firepower. For maximum effect, firepower needs to be synchronised with mobility and requires coordination at all levels for target acquisition. The aim of mobile firepower is to hit the rear of the enemy. So, the concept coined is 'Depth Firepower'.[18] The function of Depth Firepower is to avoid the enemy's strong points and hit his vulnerable joints (communications net, headquarters, etc).[19]

Manpower problem has been the imperative behind equipment modernisation like the introduction of Precision Guided Munitions (PGMs), Cruise Missiles and theoretical shift as postulated in the RMA. The aim is to maximise firepower with no increase of manpower.[20] One feature of conducting Limited Wars is that small number of highly trained men who are to operate and maintain the sophisticated weapon systems replaces the mass conscript armies of the Total War.[21] To meet the varied threats emanating in the post–Cold War era, the Western world has come up with Rapid Reaction Corps armed with the above-mentioned military hardware and trained in the advanced Manoeuvre theory for conducting Limited Wars.[22]

An example of a successful Limited War conducted by the US is the short campaign in Panama in 1989 for the removal of Manuel Noriega's dictatorship. To some extent, the present attack on Afghanistan is similar to the Panama campaign, as the American aim is to bring Osama bin Laden to trial in America just like Noriega.[23]

The conduct of Limited War could theoretically be divided into several phases. In the first phase fighter-bombers from aircraft carriers are to carry out precision bombing against military installations like airbases, military dumps, bridges, etc. in an attempt to gain air superiority. The US Navy's (USN) F 14s and FA 18 Hornets flew at 500 miles per hour and used 500-pound laser-guided munitions for destroying the Taliban's air-defence net as part of precision bombing.[24]

Simultaneously, the long-range heavy bombers from the bases provided by the American allies are to carry out carpet bombing. For the Afghan campaign, the American B 52 heavy bombers used Diego Garcia, Britain's base in the Indian Ocean.[25] Carpet bombing aims to destroy the enemy's electricity grids, railway systems, factories and centres of political activities.[26] The theory of carpet bombing could be traced back to Guilio Douhet's theory of Strategic Bombing. Douhet, an Italian military thinker, argued in the 1920s that massive bombardment of the enemy country's cities, ports, industrial centres would result in the disintegration of the enemy's will to combat. Popular fear resulting in labour strikes and public disorder would cause total chaos and complete disruption of the enemy's war machine. Douhet assumed that then the enemy would sue for peace on any terms.[27] The United States Air Force (USAF) in Afghanistan dropped the biggest conventional bombs available in its arsenal—BLU 82S, each of which weighs about 6.7 tons.[28]

During the second phase fixed-wing aircraft along with helicopters armed with missiles and machine-guns are designed to fly low in order to provide fire support to the advancing ground forces in cross-country tracked vehicles. Known as Close Air Strikes (CAS), this aims at dislocating the enemy's defence system. The Americans deployed Apache helicopters equipped with sophisticated electronic counter-measures like passive radar warning receivers and infrared jammers. Hence, the Apaches unlike the Soviet Mi 24 Hind helicopters did not fall victim to the Taliban's stinger missiles.[29] The US 10th Mountain Division in Uzbekistan and the British Royal Marines were used for conducting high-altitude operations.[30]

For conducting fast Manoeuvre Warfare, large amount of information is required which in turn necessitates extensive reconnaissance.[31] Hence, the US used JSTARS radar carrying aircraft for monitoring the enemy movement over a wide radius.[32]

The present Limited War has certain similarities with nineteenth-century Britain's Small War. To make sneak attacks on enemy's military installations with the commandos and then to withdraw them is an integral part of the tactics of Limited War. This technique was also part of the 'Butcher and Bolt' expedition, which emerged in the nineteenth-century British Army engaged in imperial policing of Afro-Asia.[33] The American Special Operation Command possesses about 50,000 commandos armed with night vision equipment and whisper microphones. They are of varied types. The US Army maintains 25,000 special forces and the most famous of them is the Green Berets which carry out raids in 12 men teams. Then there are about 7,500 Army Rangers who are airborne troops. Night-stalkers (commandos) are carried in the gunships to the fire-swept battle zones in advance of the infantry. In addition, the USAF maintains about 12,500 special forces.[34] In the third week of October, small groups of special forces were inserted into Afghanistan to gather intelligence and designate targets for the USAF.[35] General Tommy Franks, the US commander in charge of the Afghan operation asserted in mid-November that the American-led coalition was using special troops for capturing and repairing vital airports. Around the same time Britain used about one hundred commandos in an attempt to capture Bagram airport north of Kabul.[36]

One feature of nineteenth-century imperial policing was to collaborate with some communities of the country attacked for overthrowing the regime. This tactic remains a feature of Limited War. From the last week of October 2001, the US provided ammunition to the Northern Alliance.[37] In order to assist the ground forces, the USAF carried out bombing at Kunduz by both heavy bombers and fighter-bombers like F-16s.[38] On the eighteenth day of Operation Enduring Freedom, the USAF used cluster bombs at Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif for aiding the ground advance of the Northern Alliance. Armour piercing charges dropped by parachutes at Herat were aimed

against the troops and military vehicles. These charges did not explode on impact but remained on the ground and functioned like anti-personnel landmines. They exploded when disturbed.[39] In the third week of November, the Northern Alliance attacked the cornered Taliban militias with mortars, machine-guns and tanks, while continuous CAS by the USAF continued.[40] This seemed to be a perfect example of joint air-land operation.

Besides deploying brute force, another aspect of Limited War is to conduct subversive activities for fomenting rebellions within the enemy ranks. About two thousand years before the advent of the Prussian military philosopher with closely cropped hair, the Chinese military theorist Sun Tzu was the first to elaborate on wars with limited objectives. Sun Tzu asserts, 'Warfare is the way of deception. Display profits to entice them. Create disorder in their forces and take them. If they are united cause them to be separated.'[41] From the third week of October 2001, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the US special forces operated in southern Afghanistan in an attempt to encourage defections within the Pashtun leaders of the Taliban by bribing the tribal maliks.[42]

The Limits of Western Warfare

Battleground Afghanistan: Mission Impossible for Uncle Sam?

As the Taliban surrendered at Kandahar in early December 2001,[43] there are two possible future scenarios: the emergence of a radical Islamic regime, the mirror image of the Taliban which would carry out a protracted insurgency operation from southern Afghanistan against the 'liberal' government at Kabul imposed by the West; or the moment American military power is removed, infighting within the Northern Alliance. Faction fight within the Northern Alliance might start even before the withdrawal of the Americans. Within the Northern Alliance, warlord Rashid Dostum leads the Uzbeks. And the other component of the Alliance was the Tajik community (Persian-

speaking Sunni Muslims) who constitute 25 per cent of Afghanistan's demographic base.[44] A tussle between the Northern Alliance and a post-Taliban fundamentalist regime basing itself on the Pashtuns (who constitute about 48 per cent of Afghanistan's population) of Southern Afghanistan will have all the ingredients of a fratricidal ethnic conflict. The result would be somewhat similar to the scenario of the early 1990s.

It must be noted that Washington's control over the Northern Alliance remains very shaky. Despite the American military officials liaising with the Northern Alliance forces, Washington virtually has no control over the operational aims of the Alliance troops.[45] Despite Bush's assertion in early November 2001 that as the Northern Alliance has no Pashtun base and because of its rabid anti-Pakistani stand, it should not be allowed to march to Kabul, the Alliance did march to Kabul.[46]

An amalgam of cultural, political, economic and social factors along with physical geography makes Afghanistan a potential theatre for ruthless guerrilla warfare led by the Islamic fundamentalists. American Limited War doctrine is against maintaining a large ground force in Afghanistan indefinitely. And the latest technology and limited manpower of the Western armed forces cannot eliminate the guerrillas.

Let us examine the imperatives behind the possibility of Taliban-like successor movement conducting attritional guerrilla warfare. Afghanistan is a highly militarised tribal society. Each tribe is divided into clans which are further subdivided into families. The Pukhtunwali code governs the Pakhtun society. It stresses egalitarianism and the right of the individual to resort to violence to settle disputes and to support the personal pursuit of power, status and honour. Every male is a law unto himself and actively pursues his violent aims unrestricted by any communal control. As a result the tribes always exist in a state of permanent conflict. Continuous feuding and warfare make the individual tribesman a marksman from childhood. They are always armed to prosecute feuds with their neighbours.[47]

From the nineteenth century onwards, the Afghans are religiously motivated to fight the intruders in their country like the British, Russians and finally the Americans. Islam provides the spiritual force to combat the materialistic Western culture. And even now there exist numerous madrasas in Pakistan where hatred against the Kafirs is preached. And the students from these madrasas are ideal recruits for carrying out war with the West. During mid-November, Pakistan sent 1,500 madrasa students to boost up the Taliban's defence at Kandahar.[48] There are about 10,000 madrasas in Pakistan churning out jehadis[49] and they could be ideal recruits for any future fundamentalist movement.

The influx of the Taliban fighters into Pakistan's north-west frontier has already started.[50] As the United Nations (UN) pressure will increase in southern Afghanistan in the near future, the ex-Taliban fighters would retreat into the frontier of Pakistan. This area could become a base for the rise of the post-Taliban radical Islamic movement for several reasons. First the Taliban-like successor regime would gain recruits and sympathy due to ethnic affiliations. Both southern Afghanistan, the power base of the Taliban and Pakistan's north-west frontier region is largely inhabited by the Pashtun tribes. Secondly, the Afghan-Pak border known as the Durand Line, itself a colonial legacy, is disputed by both Kabul and Islamabad. Hence, the Western-sponsored Kabul government would not dare to chase the ex-Taliban fighters in this region for fear of violating international boundaries. Thirdly, it is in Pakistan's interest to support a Taliban-like successor regime because of the intimate relations that exist between the Northern Alliance and India and due to the inner dynamics of Pakistani society. The point to be noted is that the Musharraf regime is coming under intense pressure from the atavistic radical Islamic movements of Pakistan. Then, Pakistan had supported the Taliban for the last ten years in the hope of a friendly Afghanistan that would increase Islamabad's strategic depth against Delhi. Even if the

United States pressurises Pakistan to tighten its hold over the ex-Taliban supporters along its north-west frontier, Islamabad will probably not be successful. This is because her north-west frontier is largely autonomous and ruled by the tribal chiefs under loose supervision of the central government at Islamabad.[51]

The terrain of Afghanistan limits the effectiveness of America's sophisticated weapons. The American M tanks possess sophisticated computerised infrared and laser targeting system capable of hitting targets at long range even in the night.[52] These armoured vehicles decimated the Russian-equipped Iraqi armoured divisions like the Republican Guards and the Hammurabi Tank Division. Any post-Taliban regime's armoured units will be composed of the T tanks supplied by the Russians to the Northern Alliance and the leftovers of the Taliban's 55th Armoured Brigade. In a future battle the American armour would easily destroy such armoured units. However, it would not be a great loss for the post-Taliban regime because Afghanistan being a hilly mountainous country with poor communications[53] offers very little scope for armoured operations. The concentric pincer operations of the US M tanks as were possible in the plains of Kuwait are just impossible among the steep valleys and wooded hills of Afghanistan.

How effective is the American-led Western coalition's counter-insurgency force? Several American attempts to foment rebellions within the Taliban rank have mostly been failures. The CIA's attempt to stir up the Pakhtuns in Jalalabad by supporting Abdul Haq (an ex-Pakhtun guerrilla leader) came to a naught with his execution by the Taliban towards the end of October. A humiliated Bush administration then disowned the whole operation.[54] Mullah Omar's decision to surrender was due to the pressure exerted by the Pakhtun tribal leaders in the first week of December. Washington had no part in it.

For counter-guerrilla operations, the Western arsenal has

Britain's Special Air Service (SAS) Commandos. However, the SAS's past record is not that impressive. An attempt to hunt down Iraq's Scud missile launchers was a flop.[55] One commando raid by about 100 US Army Rangers at Kandahar in late October 2001 failed. The commandos landed from the helicopters but failed to raid the airport and then they had to retreat.[56]

The military assets of the Taliban destroyed due to the carpet bombing are insignificant. Carpet bombing could only be successful against a highly industrialised country with a capital-intensive military, for example the Iraqi Army. Actually the civilians of the villages and the cities of Afghanistan are the real sufferers. The American carpet bombing demolished villages, mosques, and hospitals at random. The bombing of Jalalabad, Herat and especially Kabul resulted in heavy civilian casualties and devastation of 80 per cent of the houses. The net result is generation of anti-Western feeling within the hitherto neutral public. All this would further fan the force of pan-Islamism to continue the fight[57] (just as Strategic Bombing of Germany's civilians during the Second World War strengthened their determination to fight on) and encourage the emergence of a post-Taliban radical Islamic regime.

And the USAF's arsenal has no answer for eliminating the elusive band of future guerrillas. The latest Stealth bomber proved itself a failure in the Serbian War. The Serbs were even able to down one B 2 with their antiquated anti-aircraft guns. For hitting small mobile targets, like the guerrilla bands, the USAF requires fast mini-bombers. The American Defence Secretary is thinking of converting the fast fighters into mini-bombers.[58]

There has been some realisation within the Western decision-making circle that the war in Afghanistan would be a long-drawn one. In early November, Jack Straw, the British Foreign Secretary, openly admitted that the death of Osama bin Laden would not result in the end of global terrorism.[59] A long-drawn

war will result in the collapse of diplomatic consensus that America has forged with many of her reluctant allies. In addition, pan-Islamism will be accentuated and the international community will be alienated. Sporadic mobilisation of sympathy for the Taliban within the greater Muslim world became evident from late September. Some 85 per cent of Indonesia's 212 million inhabitants are Muslims. In Java, anti-American demonstrations have been reported and 200 youngsters volunteered to fight in Afghanistan. The ulemas of Indonesia have also given a call for jehad against America.[60] The Islamic Movement (IMU) in Uzbekistan emerged in the 1990s and received the Taliban's patronage. About 3,000 IMU personnel fought with Mullah Omar's forces against the Northern Alliance.[61] Any hardline post-Taliban Islamic regime will not only profit but would also be able to generate more such pan-Islamic sympathies in the near future.

After 15,000 soldiers of the Taliban were surrounded at Kunduz, there had been a shift in their strategy. Apart from Kunduz, the Taliban had not sustained any major manpower losses. At Mazar-e-Sharif, the Taliban lost only 300 soldiers against the Northern Alliance and then vacated the city. With 50,000 troops left with Mullah Omar, he carried out a strategic retreat from Kabul into the mountainous terrain of southern Afghanistan. It seemed that his aim was to encourage the Northern Alliance to pursue the Taliban into the hills of southern Afghanistan where the Alliance's raw recruits were to be annihilated in a sudden counter-stroke. Then the Americans would be forced to send ground troops who were to be engaged in a lengthy guerrilla war[62] that would finally sap the Western will to wage war. The American public just would not stand the sight of body bags coming home from overseas.[63] However, this did not occur in reality. Omar and his soldiers surrendered to the Pakhtun leaders. According to the Afghan refugees moving into Pakistan during late October, the Taliban forces were merging with the civilians of southern

Afghanistan and stashing their equipment in the mosques and in the schools.[64] It is naive to assume that all the weapons and munitions would be handed over to the UN's supervising officials. Omar's strategy of attritional guerrilla fighting in southern Afghanistan could be implemented by the post-Taliban Pashtun regime either against the Western-sponsored Kabul government or against the UN peacekeeping force. In such a case how would the Western armies perform?

What Ails the Western Armies?

In the 1980s, the Soviet Union even after deploying 100,000 infantry failed to decimate the Mujahideen.[65] The United States and her allies are in no position to deploy such a large number of infantry. In early November 2001, Germany had offered merely 3,900 troops to America but Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder was not eager to engage them in ground war.[66] This is because neither the American nor the allied armies unlike Russia are willing to accept numerous casualties that are bound to occur in a long-drawn guerrilla campaign.

The Manoeuvre War theory assumes that mere application of overwhelming firepower from sophisticated weapon platforms would negate the necessity of close quarter combat by infantry.[67] The RMA of the 1990s provides an increasing range of methods of distancing the soldiers from the enemy to achieve the objectives quickly, easily and safely.[68] Instead of training with live ammunition which is dangerous, the Western forces use computers and simulators as part of combat training. This denies the soldiers blood, toil, sweat and fear, the real ingredients of the killing zones.[69] Here lies the biggest deficiency of the West's doctrine of Limited War. The inability of the Western armies as regards close quarter combat became evident in one of the Limited Wars of the post–Cold War era. Even after the intensive bombardment campaign by NATO, the Serb Army remained intact. And in March 1999, NATO was reluctant to deploy troops in Kosovo. This was due to the

unwillingness of the West European nations, including America, to accept casualties and also for the fact that NATO lacked adequate number of troops for destroying the Serbian infantry in the hilly terrain of Yugoslavia.[70] Precision bombing on which the theorists of RMA have put so much faith still remains a chimera. During mid-November 2001, American officials accepted that their laser bombs used in Afghanistan suffered from guidance malfunction.[71]

And why are the Western armies unwilling to sustain battle casualties in large numbers and even unable to deploy infantry on a massive scale? This is due to 'Civilianisation' of the Western armed forces. Civilianisation stands for intrusion of civilian ethos into the ranks of the armed personnel. The Western governments being democratic are unable to separate their respective armed forces from the values of the civilian society. The armed forces ought to be a distinctive community within the larger society. It requires its own cultural mores comprising of ideas, symbols and beliefs that enable the military personnel to cope with the stresses and strains resulting from combat operations. The military rituals that include heel clicking, saluting, bright brass buttons and polished shoes are all components of the military culture.[72]

The contradiction between civilian ethos and military value system is increasing with the passage of time. One result of this contradiction is the falling popularity of military service in all Western countries. Since conscription has been abolished in all Western democracies, the armed forces have to depend on volunteers.[73] Volunteers are unwilling to serve in the military because they find aspects of military culture ridiculous. Every army has to be a hierarchical organisation. So, respect for rank is an integral component of discipline. But this regard for formal rank and authority is fast decreasing in the present society. The new generation believes that values based on deference, hierarchy and collective loyalty are old fashioned. The civilian corporate organisations function mostly on the basis of

informality. From the late 1980s, Sergeants are appalled at the changing attitudes of the recruits. The Sergeants complain that the new entrants just do not understand the formal hierarchical authoritarian structure of the military. Personnel even go to courts for what previously were regarded as trivial matters, like not getting promotions, proper postings, etc.[74]

The privation of military life is another source of discouragement. The prevailing ethos of successful commercial enterprise runs contrary to the military norms of volunteering for hardship, danger and personal risk.[75] Service in the infantry is regarded as most dangerous. And recruitment for the infantry of the British Army has sharply declined in the 1990s.[76] Military service just could not compete with the monetary rewards that are available in the corporate sector. The British government admits that in the near future recruiting problem would be accentuated.[77]

The unattractiveness of military service is reflected in the Premature Voluntary Retirement Rate which among the regular officers of the British Army is increasing by 10 per cent every year. And the number of officers applying for regular commissions is diminishing.[78] Most of the officers joining the British Army are on Short Service Commission. They follow the profession of soldiering for three years and then leave the army.[79] In the USN only 18 per cent decides to re-enlist.[80] The point to be noted is that the Short Service Commissioned Officers and Short Service Recruits are more susceptible to civilian values and charms of corporate lives.

The net result is fall in the quantity and quality of recruits.[81] Currently, the theoretical establishment of the British Army is 120,000. And yet the army cannot maintain its frontline strength.[82] For the Third World armed forces, the scenario is better because of the huge demographic base at their disposal and due to the underdeveloped nature of their economies. Further, countries like India tap the military service families who for generations have supplied soldiers.[83]

One way to solve the manpower shortage that has gripped the British and the American armies is to induct women and the Blacks in larger numbers. Due to their poor economic conditions, the Blacks are willing to join the armed services. Nevertheless due to racism and machismo of the white male personnel, both the British and the American armed forces have failed to integrate both the Blacks and the females within the ranks.[84]

Not only is the West unable to deploy large number of infantry but the combat efficiency of the small infantry forces they possess is also questionable. Combat effectiveness of the armies is to a great extent product of group solidarity. The British Army tends to construct group ethos on the basis of regimental traditions. Due to influx of civilian values, the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) who constitute the backbone of the regiment find the officers' mess (a component for propagating traditional ethos) an anachronism. The NCOs are no more interested in socialising in the mess.[85] Growing contradiction between the Commissioned Officers and the NCOs in the American Army manifested itself in fragging during the Vietnam War.

Small unit combats are part and parcel of scattered counter-insurgency operations against dispersed lightly armed guerrillas. And the Western armies are ill-suited for conducting small-unit actions conducted by a section (5 men) or a platoon (30 men). This is because small-unit action requires solidarity within the small band of men which in turn necessitates friction-free work teams. But rampant adultery and homosexuality within the soldiers of the Western armies pose obstructions. Homosexuality creates conflicts within the soldiers and stealing affection of the wives of brother officers harms the ethos of officer camaraderie.[86] The basis of the British Army's fighting spirit is the regimental ethos and in the American Army close 'buddy relations' within the personnel. In the killing zone, cohesion among the soldiers is due to the trust they have on

their close friends. If 'Gay Pride' exists among the homosexuals, then group spirit based on this sort of sexual identity alienates other members within the sections and the platoons. The net result is diminished trust and social cohesion within the members of the small units which in turn seriously impairs the fighting spirit of the armies.[87]

Conclusion

The fall of Kabul and Kandahar is not the end of low-intensity operation in Afghanistan. In fact, the collapse of organised militia of the Taliban might just be the beginning of dispersed 'Hit and Run' raids by the lashkars. Bullets and bombs cannot kill an ideology. The search for a military solution to terrorism is a knee-jerk reaction of ignorance. The causation behind pan-Islamic terrorism are the American support for Israel, maintenance of the military bases in the Middle East and Washington's support for the corrupt monarchy of Saudi Arabia. To sum up, before activating Operation Enduring Freedom, Bush should have remembered Generalfeldmarschall Von Moltke's dictum: '*Erst wegen, dann wagen*' (Look before you leap).

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9

Civilisation, Civil Society and Citizenship: A Case of Nation-Building in Afghanistan

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Introduction

This paper discusses three interrelated concepts which are directly relevant to Afghanistan as it embarks on the road to achieving modern nationhood, as indeed they are to any other society and political system at different stages of their existence as nations. These are particularly important for a politico-geographic entity which is 'becoming' a nation as understood in the current context. Afghanistan, after a long and traumatised history of civil war and a fundamentalist regime of medieval mindset, has finally embarked upon the process of acquiring nationhood. A nation requires more than political and geographical boundaries. It needs a set of institutions, its citizens and a civil society in the background of a civilisational and cultural heritage. Above all it needs shared goals and socio-cultural and political ethos.

This process is not going to be an easy one in a country which had witnessed deep ethnic, regional and intra-religious divisions. It has inherited a devastated economy, a people brutalised and deeply divided by long years of war and ruled by a fundamentalist regime which displayed unprecedented medieval barbarism on its people. These forces have been militarily defeated and dislodged from the seat of power.

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However, their ideological and even political influence will take a much longer time to be obliterated. In this context it becomes important to discuss the issues of civilisation, citizenship and civil society. Civilisation may broadly include the culture, religion, ethnicity and traditions of a people. The paper seeks to discuss as to how these are relevant to Afghanistan as well as to other nations. The concept of citizenship refers to the politico-legal membership of a society and a nation in a relatively standardised form, a common minimum denominator cutting across primordial identities and loyalties, which the new nation is bound to introduce with a new set of laws, Constitution etc. Civil society has come to become a salient feature of all modern contemporary democratic societies and its importance in relation to Afghanistan can hardly be ignored. Thus the paper attempts to discuss these issues and highlight certain relevant questions and characteristics.

Civilisation

The revival of civilisation as a key category in political studies has taken us back to temporal and spatial referent points in order to understand the present and the future. The present in the third millennium is being interpreted and reinterpreted through the lens of the past. A glorious existence of a golden age of yore and the specialised distinctions it engendered in a socio-cultural and political sense within specific geographical settings separated by natural boundaries of given physical entities like seas, oceans and mountains are being invoked to understand the today. Thus in an age when Reason is thought to have triumphed over Unreason, Science over Metaphysics, Humanism over Barbarism, civilisation and civilisations are being resurrected in a particular fashion to explain the socio-cultural and political problems and dilemmas of today. This is not to say that civilisation may not have some relevance to the socio-cultural and political ethos obtaining in several societies today. They may not however be necessarily for good of

modern-day society. It was an escapist and mythical understanding of so-called Islamic civilisation that led to an attempt by forces like the Taliban to turn back the wheels of history and social advancement.

Several strifes are rooted in such perceived distinctions. Primordial loyalties like caste, community, religion, ethnicity, etc. have civilisational basis and background. Thus there is a thread of continuity between the past and the present. This continuity is often exploited and interpreted in a certain manner by revivalist and dark forces of history to attain their sectarian political interests. Certain intellectuals and scholars provide a helping hand by constructing the ideological basis through selective use of the history of civilisations.[1] However, claiming that civilisations and distinctions they engender, will be or are primary motive forces of the dynamics or the movement of history henceforth is far-fetched, to say the least, if one wants to be charitable towards the proponents of such a view. It is downright mischievous if one wishes to be straightforward. Such a view leaves one to suspect the intellectual honesty of its advocates. Prima facie it appears to be an attempt to provide a renewed ideological basis and a conservative one at that, to strengthen the hands of dominant politics and powers in the international arena, and perpetuate and justify such a dominance.

The immediate context for such pernicious theories and interpretations is the end of the Cold War. The aftermath witnessed an ideological and political divide of a different type. The earlier divide had as its basis a contest of competing ideologies rooted in modern and rational approaches and systems of a more contemporary kind. These did not look too far into the past to understand the present and claimed to be modernising and progressive forces of history with all their limitations. They claim to have emerged on the basis of the historical development of society and politics. These vouched to possess a scientific, modern, progressive, emancipatory,

egalitarian, secular, humanistic and rational basis and were forces of Enlightenment. The end of the Cold War was seen as a triumph of one over another. Triumphalism and triumphalistic sense do not, however, last long. None seemed to have won. Rather, the resurgence and revival of subterranean primordial identities, including the ones resurrected and crafted on civilisational basis, reasserted themselves to fill in the vacuum created by the end of the Cold War.

Civilisations and cultures got redefined and codified with exclusivity emphasised and superiority underlined. Civilisational, cultural and religious identities were sculpted on their basis. People were told that ancient heritage, civilisation and culture would give them confidence and a social meaning to their life. The economic dimension was separated from one's socio-cultural persona. The latter was to determine the nature of one's politics with the former having no role to play. Thus an individual's class and professional identities were subsumed by their socio-cultural identities. The economic life was to have no bearing whatsoever on one's existence as a social and political being. Social and cultural identities and therefore political identities were supposed to be rooted in some remote past; in civilisations of yore; in religions with ancient historical origins; in social-cultural formations like caste which emerged thousands of years ago; or in texts written a few thousand years ago. These were meant to provide the ideological-intellectual basis of thought to interpret and understand the problems and the issues of today.

This is not to say that everything from the past, the traditions and heritage ought to be discarded. The central issue here is as to what ought to be retained and what decisively rejected? Everything, whether good or bad, progressive or retrogressive ought to be made known to understand and come to terms with our past. However, whatever is modern, rational, and progressive and could add to the overall progress of mankind should be highlighted. Finally, the judgement of good or bad

ought to be left to the audience of history. Because of revivalism, codification and exclusivity of cultures and religions, ignoring the humanistic dimensions of these categories, conflicts ensued and divisions engendered, making the post–Cold War decade one of the bloodiest since the Second World War. The modern, secular, rational identities were the casualty. A legitimate and healthy recognition and pride in one's civilisation, culture, heritage, traditions or legacy, whichever way one may put it, and its interaction and coexistence with modern, progressive, rational, secular, scientific and reasonable was replaced with a decisive conflict between the two. The former attempted to triumph once and for all over the latter. It was a negative push to go to the past, search for roots, find answers for the problems and issues of the present in that golden era when all was well. This was a blatant attempt to turn back the wheels of history. This was precisely what was attempted in Afghanistan in a particularly extreme form and at several other places with lesser intensities depending on the strength of the democratic forces internally that could resist such attempts.

It should however be reiterated once again that past has much that is instructive for the present, imparting wisdom for the new epoch. Yet the past is past and for all its usefulness the present cannot be always viewed through the prism of the past. The present and the future can under no circumstances be moulded according to the imperatives of the past, although the imperatives of the former can be informed by the experiences of the past. A coexistence and interaction that had existed between civilisations and cultures from times immemorial, along with the conflicts, which are primarily engineered and also between them and modern, progressive and secular-democratic values is evident from history. Convergence and universalisation of certain basic values have been happening amidst all the conflicts and distinctiveness. The acceptance of basic human rights, inviolability of life, freedom and dignity of an individual, promotion of secular values over sectarian

divide, a quest for socio-economic justice and equality/ egalitarianism are some of these.

Citizenship

Citizenship is a concept defining the position of a rational modern social being in a political society. It imparted a legal-juridical status to an individual in a society with defined rights and responsibilities. It made an individual human being a legal persona. Taken to extreme legalisticism, this concept could make an individual an automaton caught in the vortex of a political system depriving him or her of the spontaneity that ought to characterise a human being. A certain degree of rational legal persona may be a 'necessary evil'. However the political systems are led by men/women who may be imperfect as human beings are expected to be. Their missionary zeal or an ultra-legalistic approach often takes 'civicism' or the concept and practice of citizenship to the extent of exorcising human beings of all their natural component if one may put it that way, and have standardised juridical-legal individuals as members of a social and political order. A mechanistic approach to the issue of citizenship and 'civicism' has been attempted in several places with disastrous consequences. This is not to undermine or belittle the concept of modernity and its rationality, the necessity to have broader rights and responsibilities of the members of the society and its vitality against primordialism and other inward-looking identities. Thus a nationalism and identity based on ethnicity or other primordial factors like caste, creed, race, religion and so on cannot form the basis of membership of a modern, democratic society. It is precisely this type of dilemma and conflict that the new leadership of Afghanistan will have to encounter.

When a nation-in-making embarks on a process of constructing civic nationalism and its citizens, it encounters tremendous resistance from pre-existing identities based on religion, caste,

race, etc. The conflict between these has been one of the main causes of passive and active strife in the modern era. It has been amply demonstrated in the civil strife all the world over. It is this clash of identities that has led to pernicious theses like the dark predictions of the 'clash of civilisations'. Communal, caste, language, race and other such conflicts are indicators of these living contradictions generating bloody clashes at times. Therefore the forces of modernity promoting rationalism, sometimes at the expense of human content, are in contradiction with pre-modern or primordial forces. Several times there is some legitimacy when the forces of modernism tend to impose a rationality which may be perceived as insensitive to human sentiments. Sometimes there may be a revivalism of mores or values that have outlived their social role and are resisting reforms to bring them in tune with the ethos of the time. At other times, a cultural heritage or a language might be in danger of becoming extinct. Perhaps a past may be reconstructed in a selective ahistorical way or the new impulses and contemporary way of life may be dislodged from its rightful place by pandering to the primordial instincts of human beings. Thus the political identities constructed on these bases are very relevant to the issue of citizenship. How flexible or accommodating can the latter concept be to accommodate other identities so that the citizenship evolves and is not imposed? On the other hand, can this concept be so flexible so as to permit primordial loyalties to dictate its texture and meaning? These questions remain relevant.

A fine and dynamic balance ought to be struck between an 'appropriate civicism' and the legacy of the past for harmonious social and political existence. This issue has become vital in last five decades of the post–Second World War era, when the conflict between mighty powers and the ideologies they professed, has been replaced by more localised ones, with the revival of all that was wrong in our global heritage. Therefore the attempts to evolve civility; rationality; a least common

denominator of social existence; an order based on human and humane values; individual freedom; egalitarianism; a just socio-economic-political order taking into account what was good and valuable in specific heritages of different peoples of the world and the rich diversity of human civilisation and civilisations, culture and cultures in a much broader sense, not in as restricted a sense as proponents of 'clash of civilisations' would have it, are of primary concern. Civilisations and cultures are not as restrictive and inward looking as some would like one to believe. Thus the identities based on citizenship may not necessarily be in contradiction with these. There may be a golden mean. As it happens in case of 'realpolitik', this golden mean keeps on being elusive and the right balance commensurate with the maturity of the epoch is hard to obtain.

Homogenisation is a persistent tendency of modernity and modernism, and comes into conflict with the heterogeneity and diversity of given primordial political identities. This basic distinction has been the cause of social, political and civil strifes. At the turn of the century, these got submerged by and large under the larger political and ideological conflict of liberalism versus socialism and communism with periodic revival of conservatism as practice of ideology and politics of a sort of anti-modernity. This conflict marked the most distinctive political competition of this era. The former were the projects of modernity. The closing decade of this century marked a loss for both the '-isms' and a revival of subterranean primordial loyalties and commensurate political identities.

Citizenship is a politico-social and not merely a legal-juridical concept and comes in conflict with other political identities of varied and diffused 'character'. The latter does not necessarily conform to the standardised notion of citizenship. The 'mismatch' between the two is a constant source of tension in any political society. These two are generally in conflict but may influence each other. The concepts of citizenship have varied from an Islamic state to a liberal-democratic

to a socialist or a communist state. Although the political institutions generally tend to influence and mould other political identities to its rational logic and uniformity, these seem to coexist in different combinations. In Afghanistan, this contradiction is particularly visible.

Civil Society

Afghanistan will need a civil society to sustain a democratic political dispensation and prevent a relapse into an authoritarian, if not a downright autocratic regime. With elections in a few months' time, the process of constructing such a political system will begin. Thus the question that arises at the outset is as to what, after all, is civil society? What will it comprise? Can the entire society not be referred to as civil society? Is it distinct from a given 'political society', which usually means a distinctive group of individuals of different political persuasions who either govern or lead a political system, whether as a ruling group or in opposition to them, if one may be permitted to use this rather odd terminology? Is not civil society a political society too in a larger sense and vice versa? Are these two abstracted and separated from one another? This term has been defined in many distinct ways. But then one always thought that civil and political are synonymous in a wider sense. At best one may be deemed to be passive and abstract whereas the other active and interventionist. Can one have an apolitical 'civil' identity? Presently civil society is seen to be very politically active, influencing the politics and policies of the day. How can this dichotomy be explained if there existed one! Is civil society a set of active and aware people? Are they those who, by virtue of their education, upbringing, cultural and civilisational influences, proximity to people rather than political institution are more sensitive and articulate as far as the felt problems of society are concerned? Do they and their voluntary groupings, that may be issue or issues-based and not necessarily subscribe to a more comprehensive world view,

value-systems or perspectives, acquire particular identities and influence the political society urging, coaxing or cajoling them to act in a particular way? Do those who prefer to stay outside the framework of institutional politics and institutions of politics, and yet play a vital and substantive non-institutional political role, constitute civil society? These questions become relevant while discussing civil society. Are they a kind of moral or ethical opposition to the rulers of the day who would rather not be in the 'profession' of politics? Is this going to be possible in Afghanistan in the near future and would it be tolerated by the ruling classes?

Identities inspired by 'Civil Society', a very nebulous, ill-defined concept, which could mean many things to many different people, may be transient as they may be issue-based. These may be merely interest-based too. But then these may play a real role in generating a debate on issues, raising consciousness, educating the society and the political society, if you will, and are therefore very much political identities. We can perhaps then tentatively define civil society as comprising individuals constituting its social vanguard. They may prefer to stay outside the pale of institutionalised politics and institutions of politics. Mobilising opinion to influence the policies and politics of the government of the day on an issue or set of issues which may relate to the problems confronting a part or whole of a society or a political system is then their key activity. They may also be voluntary guardians of the political values of a particular type, for instance, liberalism or egalitarianism or democracy or socialism or communism, and so on. Thus their actions may not merely be confined to transient issues but may have a much larger socio-political dimension as well. The identities of the activists of a civil society, and they indeed are activists, are essentially political in nature. In Afghanistan, political identities consistent with cosmopolitan values will have to supersede those based on primordial loyalties like ethnicity, tribalism and so on. Socialism or communism is of course not on their agenda!

A pertinent question here is as to whether those individuals and organisations that militate against such socio-political advancements that mankind has made can also be deemed to be a part of civil society? Can individuals and organisations supporting the revival of pre-modern socio-political order be considered part of civil society since they have certain issues, a popular following, or a skewed justification for an obsolete cause? If not, then civil society is a value-loaded term and would mean different things to different people. Is it only a liberal concept? If not, do we have a conception of a socialist or a communist civil society? Will these have their own identities? Can there be a Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Jain, Buddhist, Dalit, Pashtun, Hazara, Uzbek, Shia, Sunni civil society? Should the foregone definition be limited and partial? Can only individuals and groupings who raise issues of more contemporary nature and are directly relevant to the immediate context rather than, say for instance, that of reviving 'the golden past of yore' through some fanciful means, the one that perhaps exists, if at all, in mythologies and cannot stand the test of time, reason or historical experience, be included in this concept?

Is the idea of civil society consistent only with cosmopolitanism and modernity or also with an acceptance of pre- or post-modern diversities? How should the concepts of civil society, citizenship and civilisations relate to each other? Members of civil society, after all, are citizens in a modern democratic society, and vice versa. They also have civilisational and cultural heritage. Why do we then need a distinction between the former two? If citizenship is a rational, standardised concept which defines the legal persona and 'technical' identity of a member of any society, then the citizen also is and has been an idea of individuals with civic awareness who question their political representatives and those who comprise the 'political society'?

The concept of a citizen was never deemed to be a passive one with a passive identity in deep slumber. An ideal citizen is supposed to actively participate in the society and the politics

of the day and raise issues confronting a society. He or she is law abiding, 'respectable', 'gentleman/woman' citizen who abide by reason and rationality but also one who is an 'aware and conscious' citizen. Wherefore then was the need of a civil society? It seems the project of forming citizens out of a motley and diverse crowd of people was not very successful. This is not to say that the idea of citizenship is irrelevant and of no use. In every modern society the concept of citizen is relevant to define the least common denominator of a legal person with rights and responsibilities. To what extent will the modern and rational political legal identity of a citizen remain? The socio-cultural and civilisational diversities cannot be ignored and citizens cannot simply be manufactured through political-legal engineering in social factories and within the four walls of the institutions of the state. This dilemma will emerge in much sharper relief in the context of nation-building in Afghanistan.

Larger society is an inherited real entity, with history, traditions, cultural and civilisational values and identities based on them. No ideas of citizenship can thus be imposed on the components of society by political or legal social engineers. Only a protracted and a very-long-drawn process can ensure the emergence of an acceptable form of citizenship and concomitant identity. Even then it may have to cohabit with other forms of identities, social, cultural, civilisational and of other types reflecting the diversity of a society, for a very long time to come. Thus a duality or a multiplicity of identities would continue to exist.

Socio-cultural and civilisational inheritances emerge over a very long historical period and therefore may mutate only in a long-drawn evolutionary process without causing 'distress' in a given society. Coexistence of identities, political and others, is necessary. Hence, the relevance of civil society. Citizenship may be commensurate with the building of a nation, although in a highly globalised and rapidly globalising society of today the idea of nation may have undergone major changes and may

be a rather fluid concept, since the time of its inception. This is then about the institutions of the state and its legal juridical dimensions as also of the members of a society within a specific politico-geographical boundaries.

It is also about the conduct of politics and statecraft, particularly in global arena. It is about the citizens, the parliaments, presidencies, the law courts, the police and the military, the bureaucracy and the educational institutions. Civil society can be the catchment areas of other identities, although in this case the issue as to whether the manifestations and agencies of pre-modern and traditional negative identities be deemed as part of this wider concept, will always remain. Perhaps, a distinction could be made between the negative and positive segments of civil society. Suppressing those individuals and agencies articulating negative social and political identities may not necessarily be a healthy thing for a democratic society, which should be allowed to die their natural death as a result of their own socio-political morbidity and pathology. Several social, cultural and civilisational identities with political manifestations may actually articulate the injustices and crimes committed on a people in the past. Thus an assertiveness of these identities and their aspirations may not necessarily be a negative feature. It may, after all, be a part of 'healing process' which a people and a society may have to undergo. Civil society then can be a non-state, but not non-political or apolitical entity. It may permit articulation of those social, cultural, civilisational and other identities, distinct from the one engendered by the idea of citizenship, or a political-legal membership of a nation in a modern political system. The two concepts can together perhaps take into account the complexity of modern-day life and times, which now consistently refuse to become explicit and intelligible through simplistic and sanitised concepts, meant more to make prejudicial statements rather than explain. The emphasis is shifting and has to shift from 'conformist concepts' to truly 'scientific concepts' which may be able to explain the

intricacies of phenomenon and human existence in all its diversities, interconnections at a point of time and across time and space, history, and multidimensional manifestations. Then and only then can we comprehend our social existence and its political manifestations in totality. Thus the idea of civil society, citizenship, cosmopolitanism, modernity, traditionalism and so on, become increasingly relevant to the study of the issue of political identity formation. These are as relevant to present-day Afghanistan as indeed they are to any other place.

Conclusion

Civilisations are one's heritage. There is continuity between the past and the present. Thus it becomes important to retain, eulogise and build upon the positive aspects of the heritage. Civilisations cannot be codified as a monolithic whole with definitive traits. Civilisations and cultures have intermixed with each other for ages. Thus there is no 'pure' civilisation or culture in that sense. Any attempt to codify and impose certain civilisational or cultural values has imperilled the normal socio-cultural intercourse and exchange amongst people of different origin, something that has gone on since times immemorial.

Civil Society should come to mean larger society or society at large which is aware, conscious and interventionist. It cuts across primordialism displaying an activism questioning and seeking to rectify the mistakes of those who are enjoined to constitute the 'political society' of a country.

Citizenship, in the broadest sense, ought to define the socio-political membership of an individual in the society he or she belongs to. This again supersedes an individual's membership of smaller constituencies of origin and birth. It may not preclude one's belonging to these, or, for that matter, to the larger international community.

All the above attributes have uniquely come into play in Afghanistan as the country struggles to come to terms with its

traumatised past and takes tentative steps towards building a modern and democratic nation and its institutions. Merely conducting elections, electing popular representatives, and building representative institutions will not suffice. The notion and practice of citizenship and civil society will have to be strengthened while grappling with the imperatives of the civilisational heritage.

Notes

[1] In the last decade of the last millennium, scholars like Samuel P. Huntington have resurrected the haunting spectre of 'clash of civilisations'. This has been an attempt to provide a new ideological basis for a different world order based on the value system propagated on the basis of a revived 'Western civilisation', if there was any monolithic entity like that! It further raises the fear of clash of different civilisations like that of Islamic and 'Western civilisation' as the basis of new conflicts replacing those based on the ideologies of liberalism and Marxism which had marked the earlier decades. The motive force of the future world order and its dynamics would therefore be the 'clash of civilisations', according to such a theory. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of the World Order*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1996 and Interview with Samuel P. Huntington by Michael Steinberger of the *New York Times*, "So Are Civilizations at War?", *The Observer*, 21 October 2001.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

K. Natwar Singh (Chairperson for the morning session): We have had three very distinguished participants or panelists who have spoken on various aspects of the Afghanistan crisis and how it affects us in our relations with US and Pakistan. Now the papers are open for discussion.

Himanshu Rai (Teaching Political Science in Delhi University): I have a question to Ambassador Bajpai. The question is a straightforward one. Are we not in a position to take decisive action against Pakistan?

K. Shankar Bajpai: I was going to say that this we should ask ourselves, as a general public. Military strength of India is certainly superior to that of Pakistan, whether we have the superiority necessary to make a decisive strike, which is a question I was just going to ask Prof. Satish Kumar when he was talking about what he considered to be a missed opportunity in Kargil. Was it missed, because we did not have the political will or was it missed because we were short of military capability or was it missed or rather deliberately avoided because we did not want it to escalate to the point of nuclear confrontation? I personally feel that the nuclear risk is not there; but no wise government can ignore it.

A short answer to your question is I do not think that our military capability is of the nature to make a decisive action on Pakistan. I think, it may be capable of local gains of a greater nature than we have known. I am confident in my own mind that we can do the kind of work that Prof. Satish Kumar was referring to and we ought to be capable of, regardless of whether we do or we do not do; the capability should be there. I do not think that capacity is there, not so much only in terms of our

military equipment or strength—I am sorry to use the world 'sloppiness'—our sloppiness as a State.

Prem Shankar Jha: This is a question that has been there for some time. From August 1999 after Kargil, the rate of loss of our Indian security forces went up by four to six times. I said then that we were losing in three months as many people as we lost during the entire Kargil war and that within two years the Indian Army would say that it could not go on bearing this kind of loss indefinitely. Sooner or later we would be forced to consider taking the war across the border.

We have satellite reconnaissance over Pakistan and POK. The satellite resolution is of one metre, which is pretty good. So, targeting or knowing where to go is not such a serious problem.

As far as the camps are concerned, to the best of my knowledge, the camps are all either in the Pak-administrated tribal areas or in Afghanistan. They moved out of POK a long time ago. What you do have in POK is jump off points—launch pads from where the militants are sent across immediately after the snow melts. For example, there was a major concentration this year; there is concentration every year. Those are well known and the Army has, I believe, assured the Government that they can be taken out in a few hours. Now, the Army may be slightly over-optimistic. But we should not underestimate its capabilities either.

My soundings with the military in Kashmir suggest that a frontal assault on the line of control on Pakistan would be very very expensive and would probably fail. The reason is that the Pakistanis have built their defence there single-mindedly in the way that we have not even contemplated anywhere in the whole of India. First of all, anyone who is on the offensive loses a lot of troops. In POK a large amount of the bunkers—I am led to believe—are even nuclear-proofed. In the northern areas around Kargil the advantage of terrain lies with them because the

northern slopes are far gentler than the southern ones. So, their access to the line of control is far easier than ours, which of course explains what happened to us in 1999.

In sum, I think it is possible to inflict severe damages on them along the Jhelum Valley, generally in the whole Jhelum area. It is certainly possible to take out the launch pads. That is as far as one would go; and it is quite enough to deliver a serious warning to them. I just want to conclude by saying that I really completely agree with both Prof. Satish Kumar and Shri Bajpai. If you are a weak country, you have no option but to adjust. Power is all important in these relations. But if you are a larger country and if you pretend that you are a weak country, then it is the worst of all situations. If you are a strong country and you use your powers, then it is the best of all, and then, others will adjust to you. We are a much stronger country than Pakistan, which pretends constantly that we are the weak country. In Kargil, again with all the military soundings that I have made—and made directly with the people who were involved—it was not true that we would not have thrown them out without the Americans' help. We were well on the way of throwing them out. By not doing so we allowed the Pak army to pretend it had been winning, had been betrayed by Nawaz Sharif and dug his political grave.

There is a simple rule in battle. Only the losers leave their dead behind. Apply that to Kargil and you have all your answers.

I would like to make one last point. We do not seem to understand the difference between complaints and threats. When you back a statement with power, it is a threat; when you do not back a statement with power, it is a complaint. All that we have done on Kashmir is complain. We have never threatened, which is why the Americans do not take the threat to India in Kashmir seriously. If you want the Americans to take the threat in Kashmir seriously, then make it abundantly clear that you are going across. You have to make it abundantly clear. This is a very good moment to do it because the Americans' immediate

need from Pakistan is—shall we say, very drastic. At the same time, whether General Musharraf is in tune with the ISI or not, the point is that Pakistan is put in an impossible position vis-à-vis the attack on the Parliament House. That is why, he was so quick in condemning and dissociating himself from it. It is a good moment to do something and I hope that something will be done.

Satish Kumar: The question has been answered very effectively. I just want to underline that the nuclear threat—most nuclear experts here in India agree that this is a bluff and any opportunity to call it the bluff would be very much welcome. Firstly, they would think a thousand times before attacking us because the retaliatory second strike would be disadvantageous to them and it would be many times much more beyond the limits of tolerance and acceptability. Secondly, the manner in which Mr. Jha has just referred to war—it does not have to be an attack of a full-fledged war. It can be a controlled and measured threat of a kind that conveys the message. At every step, you have to measure your initiative, and call back and drop when you find that the escalations are slightly different. Then, drag it on and keep doing it so that the message is put across that we are prepared for an escalated full-scale war. After all, it is a threat to the nation on a day-to-day basis. So, you have to be prepared; we had enough time since the time of Kargil and even before Kargil and at least now, we should be.

Lastly, it is basically the political leadership across the spectrum, which has to make up its mind. Particularly, there has never been an all-party meeting to sit down and think in terms of the real strategy that India should pursue; and then keep it under the wraps until it is implemented, whoever is ruling the country.

K. Natwar Singh: About the all-party meeting, etc., it is quite hilarious.

Uma Singh (Professor, South Asian Studies, JNU): I have a comment to make on Prof. Satish Kumar's paper. He began his presentation by saying that there has not been any qualitative change in India-Pakistan relations.

I would like to say that there has been a big change in India's position on Pakistan, which is that India has successfully brought to the attention of the international community about the threat which we are facing from Pakistan and particularly, the cross-border terrorism. I think, that is a very positive change in India-Pakistan policy.

The second question that I have is for Mr. Jha. I would like to find out how relevant is Pakistan now in the present scheme of things as far as the Great Game of Afghanistan is concerned.

Sneh Mahajan (Indraprastha College): Prof. Satish Kumar talked about war-like situation. For example, measured steps towards war. What is our target then? I feel that it is difficult to start a war against Pakistan because our purpose is not to take POK or any other territory. When you are pursuing persons or a party, then it is very difficult to end the war at any point. At least, America has one individual whom it is pursuing; we do not even have that. So, how can we pursue it or start the war without any target? That becomes very difficult. Secondly, so far as lack of firmness is concerned, now internationally it is accepted that the foreign policy reflects the domestic front. Unless there is firmness in the political leadership in the country backed by economic growth, etc., then the Government at the top cannot be very firm.

There is one more thing that I want to say. Prof. Satish Kumar said that Pakistan's behaviour is irrational. To us, Pakistan's behaviour appears to be irrational. But so far as Pakistan Government is concerned, it is serving the purposes of Pakistan excellently all through with very limited resources at its disposal, depending on the foreign country for help. So, to us, its behaviour appears irrational, but I think, with limited

resources, Pakistan's leadership is doing an excellent job so far as serving the interests of their country is concerned.

K. Mathews (Department of African Studies, University of Delhi): I would like to just raise a fundamental question that was raised by Prof. Satish Kumar as well. He said that India is a timid Republic. I tend to agree and Ambassador Bajpai also pointed to something we study at the international relations, in the preliminary stages. Mr. Jha said that if we are weak, we should adjust and we should accept our weakness. This is a very dangerous and a defeatist attitude that we are taking. We are comparing India which has 5000 years of civilisation, the legacy of Ashoka, Mahavira, Gandhi and Nehru, with a country which has 225 years of history and which by accident became a super power and which is in a position to commandeer and hijack the whole world. That is the reality and we should follow it because we have no alternative. This is the wrong attitude, which we are having.

My question is this. You can comment on this attitude. We need to change, in the sense, look at the global situation; unipolarity is one factor; globalisation is another factor. Do we have to go along with it? Don't we have an alternative? There is powerlessness of power also. If the powerless of the world can combine, they can create a power. India has lost a golden opportunity to lead countries which was probably, in 1947. Shri Natwar Singh knows this very much. I want your comments only.

K. Natwar Singh: I will reserve those comments for another occasion!

Bimal Prasad: I want to ask this question from Mr. Prem Shankar Jha—whether the dichotomy between the ISI and Pakistan's Chief Executive is really as great as he has painted and whether it has any substance. Have not the Chief Executives

of the past dismissed the ISI Chiefs and changed the structure of the leadership according to their requirements and perceptions? Now, to put General Musharraf in a situation where he is helpless—ISI is a part of Pakistan's Army—this is a game which Musharraf is playing and I do not know whether we are correct to presume this. I am a student of Pakistani history and politics. But we took a stand at the time of Kargil and now, we are again explaining about ISI. All the same, there may be differences, but it is like saying that if this Minister in India does something, then what Mr. Vajpayee can do. This is all a propaganda type of thing. It would depend. But to make it as a dichotomous type of thing, I do not think there is any substance in it. You can examine it.

Another question that I want to put to Ambassador Bajpai is this. He has made an excellent presentation. When he was making a point about the need of adjustment to reality, channeling our forces accordingly, then the same applies to the Indian literate classes and the newspaper editors and electronic media persons. They constitute an ignoramus class; and on everything, they ask, what did India get. This is a total lack of understanding of foreign policy. I must say here that marks must be given to our Prime Minister for understanding the situation because after all, we cannot ignore the position vis-à-vis the USA; it is not the same even today. Pakistan is strategically so important for the US in the present situation, and I can say that its importance will not cease even after the Afghan crisis. Therefore, we must keep things in perspective. However, given the circumstances, it is in our interest to get closer to the US, provided there is no attack on our self-respect and dignity.

I do not know why he did not make any comment on this. There was a news and Shri George Fernandes admitted it in public, that the Americans had asked for the temporary use of the air bases and the naval bases. In that situation, was it a correct policy when you are trying to occupy a position in the American scheme so that the value of Pakistan comes down a

bit, by a few points? Was it a wise policy to decline that offer because of the trouble which might occur in Parliament or some news that might appear in Editorials? America is such a country that for the best interests of India, you should have friendly relations with them. So many people lay their hands and say that this is slavery, repudiation of Nehru, etc. They do not know the history of Nehru's foreign policy actually. When need arose he solved the Chinese crisis in 1962. It was not a demerit of Nehru; but a merit of Nehru. So, I would like you to answer this question.

Partha Mukherji (Senior Fellow, NMML): I have a somewhat different level of comments to make which will also have questions for future presentations.

K. Natwar Singh: They will try to meet your level.

Partha Mukherji: In this serious discussion, I find that we have strayed away from Afghanistan to Pakistan. Somehow, I think we are missing a critical element in the context that Afghanistan provides. I would like to pose the problem from a social movement perspective. We have reached a stage when we need to reconceptualise social movements to incorporate phenomena such as the Taliban. So far we had been dealing with social movements relating to students and youth, peasants and farmers, women and so on. What is new in the Taliban phenomenon? There is the convergence within the 'geographic' space of Afghanistan and Pakistan, a much larger 'social' space of people from a whole host countries—in Africa, Europe, South and Central Asia!

K. Natwar Singh: Can you frame your question because he wants to answer.

Partha Mukherji: Yes. Actually my questions are inherent in my comments. The problem, as I see it is that a social movement

situation, which earlier used to be largely confined within nation-states, has become significantly global. It has implications for India as well as Pakistan; it has implications for the Central Asian Republics, for Somalia, and so on.

This brings me to the question of Kashmir, which is again being discussed. First, Kashmir is becoming important today because it has changed considerably since the efforts towards Talibanisation of Kashmir. Second, the withdrawal of Pundits from Kashmir has made Kashmir very homogeneous and non-plural as of now. Therefore, pluralism and the concept of *azadi*, which was the original intent of the Kashmir movement, is getting hijacked by a Taliban model of what Kashmir ought to be! This is my point. We have to understand the changing objective realities of Kashmir, via Afghanistan and Pakistan, and through this entire process of Taliban ideology and its concept of Islamic State, vis-à-vis the concept of *Azad* Kashmir which now is non-realisable, because the substance of the concept is lost. In the absence of the substance of the concept of *Azad* Kashmir and the prevailing objective conditions in Kashmir, there is now fight against international terrorism! If there is an international and a global movement context in Afghanistan, then, I think, logically, there has to be an international counter movement. It is in this context that I would like Mr. Prem Shankar Jha and Bajpai, who made excellent substantive points, to clarify where do they fit this context of the movement, which can no longer be captured within the existential framework of social movements.

Mollica Dastider (Junior Fellow, NMML): I would like to make a small observation that if we see India's immediate response or reaction to the September 11 issue, it can be divided into two levels—one is that of the BJP Government, the allies, etc. and the second is that of the Opposition, the so-called secular voices and the Left, etc. When it comes to the first level reaction, immediately we saw that they were going for an

unsolicited support to the US action or fight against terrorism. But soon realising that America was not happy with India and that America is keen on Pakistan, they, changing the voice, said that we have to fight our own battle; they are disillusioned so on and so forth; destroying camps in Pakistan should be our objective, etc. Secondly, at the other level—the Congress, Left, the so-called secular forces—they kept on saying that we should be more cautious and we should not go all out to extend help to America; we should keep in mind the non-aligned principles, especially of the independent, sovereign country like India.

My question to the learned panel is, given the situation of the tremendous geo-political and geo-strategic repercussions that Afghanistan or for that matter Pakistan has, and any turmoil that these two countries have, for a country like India, which is the largest country in the region, would you agree with me that we did behave in a more naive fashion and gave to the world an impression that our foreign policy focus has become completely Pakistan-centric, while claiming in the same breath, that Kashmir is not the central issue between India and Pakistan?

Satish Chandra (Former Chairman, U.G.C.): I would like to say something about this question. The new Great Game about Afghanistan with terrorism and oil in the background. My point is the present boundaries of Afghanistan are reset. This was not the boundary of Afghanistan during medieval times. The area beyond the Hindukush was a part of Afghanistan; it was included in Afghanistan by the British for their purposes. Similarly, Kandahar was sometimes a part or sometimes was not a part of Afghanistan. Mr. Prem Shankar Jha has pointed out that there is a growing possibility of conflict, disparity between Northern Uzbek Tajik area and the southern Pushtoon areas. Do you expect Afghanistan to remain united or do you expect that there would be formally a kind of Pakistan Government, but the region would go in its own direction? This has a great bearing on the oil politics which is likely to develop.

Nirmala Joshi (JNU): My question is addressed to Ambassador Bajpai. He has given an excellent presentation and the opportunity has opened up for Indo-US relations. In this I would like to know your reaction or comment. There is lot in common between India and Russia also on this very issue like terrorism, the crisis in Afghanistan, what is happening in Central Asia, etc. Don't you think that from our national interest point of view, our policy with the US also should be coordinated with Russia because Russia has a powerful say in this region? It would also help us in understanding or engaging China and I tend to agree with Prof. Satish Kumar that improvement in Indo-US relations is certainly not going to help us or the US is not going to help India vis-à-vis Pakistan. It is Russia which has always come to the help of India, in UN on the Kashmir issue and last year, when President Putin visited India and the strategic partnership was signed, he came closest to the understanding, which was put in black and white on Kashmir issue. So, the Russian factor should not be totally given up at this moment.

S.S. Misra (Junior Fellow, NMML): This is a question to Mr. Jha with reference to the Koenigswinter Conference on Afghanistan or the UN's conflict resolution talks. You said that there is no hierarchical power structure that is emerging in the post-Taliban conflict resolution mechanism which has been broadly worked out by the UN Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi. But the point is Brahimi is using the Mozambique model rightly after certain UN failures in Kosovo, Cambodia and in East Timor also. Therefore, the whole model that Brahimi had before him long after the failure of Mestiri mission, that started with Perezde Cuellar, and in between Norbert Holl's. That is how, the whole UN involvement in Afghanistan has been going on for the last so many years. The point is for the first time, they are using economic aid as incentives for conflict resolution. So, the Trust Fund which had met in Japan two days

back and decided about this. They decided about disbursement of those funds and have all the elements—Pashtoons, Tajiks, Uzbeks and others—interact etc. In this six-month transitional government till they have the Grand Assembly the UN peace-keeping operations and reconstruction operations by UNDP are going to play a major role. Meanwhile, assuming that all the forces will work out the plans for modalities to switch over to a constitutional model like the Mozambique model, where in fact they are lacking?

Baren Ray: My question is of a historical nature and somewhat related to what Prof. Satish Chandra said. I would like to pose this to Shri Jha because he gave the long historical background since the first Afghan War. After all the Durand Line was imposed by the British and all were not in their favour. In 1919, particularly, they acceded to some kind of Afghan victory which was given in the form of recognition of their right to have foreign policy and so on. My question is that India's relation with Afghanistan could have been far better than it actually became after 1947 because there was a long background of goodwill between Afghanistan's liberation aspirations and the national movement in India. But unfortunately in 1947, the question is the extraordinary assertion of the Nehru Government about the juridical justification and rightness of the Durand Line was the most unfortunate. This prevented Indo-Afghan relations to fructify and go in a different direction from that time onwards. This is particularly more inexplicable because the advantage that this assertion of Durand Line's rightness gave not to India, but to Pakistan; but yet, we did this.

If anybody wants the details, it happened from the end of 1946 to 1947, on several occasions. The biggest documentation of this is in the oral testimony left by Girdharilal Puri which are preserved here.

K.S. Subramanian (Former Senior Fellow, NMML): I will

resist the temptation to make a big preface to my comment. The whole discussion has been premised on the question of security. I feel that a policy dialogue should also bring in the concept of human security. I was recently in J&K, studying the impact of conflict on children. I did a report on it for an international agency. I could not come across any precise figure as to the number of children affected by the conflict and the nature of the impact. The conflict has been going on for more than 10 years and the impacts have been extremely severe. According to one estimate of BBC, the number of children rendered orphans as a result of the conflict over the last ten years is 100 thousand; and most of the children are involved in child labour. Now, my submission is, if you look at the conflict between India and Pakistan from the point of view of its impact on the people, we may find a way of ending the logjam. My comment is that we must bring in the concept of human security rather than national security, though national security is quite important.

Satish Kumar: I will be brief. I have only one specific question put by Dr. Sneh Mahajan. The first question was about the target. Our definition or the identification of the target is whether we agree that terrorism, which is coming from Pakistan, is fully state-sponsored and the State of Pakistan is fully responsible for it. If that is so, then the identification of the targets would be as follows: First, the training camps—whether in the POK or elsewhere; second, if possible, for the sake of effect and for the sake of conveying the message, the forward posts of the Pakistani Army, as much as feasible, within the POK. I would stop there as far as initial or preliminary targets are concerned. I would be prepared for an escalation of the conflict on a full-scale sense, if the situation so demands. That is my answer to the first question.

My answer to the second question is why did I say that Pakistani behaviour is irrational. The irrationality of Pakistani

behaviour is proved beyond any doubt with regard to its policy with regard to Afghanistan. Pakistan will regret it for decades to come for that policy. As far as the irrationality of its policy towards India is concerned, a state, which is terribly full of inter-contradictions, is committing this and it would have proved its irrationality if only the Indian Government would also have given a matching response to the irrational behaviour of Pakistan. That irrationality would have been brought home to Pakistan in the same manner in which it has been brought home with regard to Afghanistan policy. But unfortunately, we are not doing enough.

K. Shankar Bajpai: The man at the middle seemed to comprehend both right and the left. Prof. Mathews and somebody else also mentioned about the question of adjustment to power. I was not expressing defeatism much less advocating appeasement. I was trying to point out the fact of life. I am not saying that India is weak and should behave as a weak power. I am saying that power exercises itself in ways to which you must react according to your own power. I do not see how one can controvert that. If I may say so, the need to bear that in mind comes out from Prof. Mathews' observation that the powerless might constitute a group of power. I am reminded of the famous saying of H.S. Suhrawardy when he was the Prime Minister of Pakistan and he was criticised for not going to the help of Egypt with Pakistani Armed Forces. He said zero plus zero is still zero. So, I would say that it would be the league of the powerless. You may disagree and you may have your own view. I just point out that we must react according to our capability. I would like to underline the fact that India is not a small power. We sometimes act as the waver because we think we are and we do not know the role of power. We are frightened of it. We find all kinds of intellectual excuses for denying the use of it.

Bimal Prasad: My question was not related to India. I was

saying about the policy which our government at the highest level is following for getting better adjustment to USA and by coming closer to USA. That is one method that may not succeed wholly but to some extent, we can make a dent on US backing to Pakistan on everything. My question was, was it a wise thing to refuse temporary use of naval and air bases in this situation.

K. Shankar Bajpai: Let me say that the American strategy for dealing with Afghanistan was very carefully calculated to do without any bases in India. I am not even sure whether they asked for it.

Bimal Prasad: But Mr. George Fernandes is on record saying that.

K. Shankar Bajpai: Okay, Mr. George Fernandes is on record on so many things and I do not want to get involved with them! The fact of the matter is that the American strategy for dealing with Afghanistan was based on naval task forces, the carrier forces in the Persian Gulf plus whatever bases they could get from Pakistan. I am not even sure whether they asked for our bases. There is some controversy on this. If they did, I suggest that it was to test us rather than to actually need it. What they needed from us was transit points and ports, which we have never objected to. I might add that I do not think, even if you had gone further in support of this, it would have affected their need of Pakistan. So, it does not make too much difference. We can differ on this.

I would like to get back to the question of the Great Game. Let us be very clear as to what it means. Prof. Satish Chandra said about the new Great Game. May I digress historically from what he said? The Special Great Game in Asia was started in 1924 by an Oxford Professor called H.W.C. Davis, at a lecture at the British Academy where he referred to the contest for control of overland routes to India. But the original name was

coined by the French Foreign Minster, Theophile Delcasse in 1898 at the time of Fashoda incident—we have lost the Great Game of colonial expansion. Great Game is just a nice phrase to cover the struggle for mastery in the world. It does not matter whether it is in Afghanistan or anywhere else. Afghanistan, if I may say so, was a base for operations against India for the Russians and the British intervened to keep it out of it. But only when there is no base for attacking India, when nobody is interested in entering India, and having defeated the Russians, nobody wanted to use it. That is what left a vacuum, which Pakistan made it as a base against India. Our only interest in Afghanistan—by the way, we have excellent relations with Afghanistan despite what you said—is that it should not be again used as a base of operations against us. It should not be an ally of Pakistan, in spite of our not recognising the Durand Line, we had excellent relations. But also please note this. We never backed Afghanistan in its demands.

It was left alone, except the fact that it has now come to light that it could be a channel for the pipeline. But there also, let us not forget that the natural route is from Bandar Abbas. Once Iranian and American relations revert to normal the Afghan route is far too expensive. So, let us wait to see how the configurations change. As far as our working with the Russians is concerned, we are doing so. But there are two or three things we need to bear in mind. First, Russia—and this became evident in 1965 and it continued long afterwards—is not wholly with India in regard to Pakistan; if it could have good relations with Pakistan, it will not eschew it. Secondly, Russia is not the power that it was—its capability to be of help to us is limited. Thirdly, the Russians themselves are making extreme efforts to collaborate with the US on a wide range of issues. So, of course, we should try and continue to collaborate, coordinate and do all kinds of things together, but let us not think that it can possibly help us become a counter-poise to the American-Pakistan nexus.

Partha Mukherji wanted to put us in the wider context, beyond the security interests. I cannot agree with you more. I started by saying that Afghanistan, to everybody, is only a phase in a wider war against terrorism. Nobody has yet come up with a strategy for dealing with this. There is a great deal of rhetoric about democracy, pluralism, tolerance, religious freedom and all kinds of things. But I am afraid of this; because in fact, the opposite trends are at work; that international consortium or community, whatever you like to call it, is also coming to the view that no regime can crack down better on terrorism than an authoritarian one. Even democratic societies are resorting to it; leave alone POTO; America as you know, the whole campaign against terrorism has meant that military courts for the first time in history have been given the right to try suspected terrorists. So, we are facing a situation where in fact, the need to counter this wider phenomenon is encouraging and a lot of governments limit, if not sacrifice the traditional freedoms.

Prem Shankar Jha: Six questions have been put to me. Three related to Afghanistan—past, present and the future. I am coming to the future relevance of Pakistan to US design. I have to disagree with Shankar, not completely, but partially. Yes, it is quite true that the best route is Bandar Abbas. We know that and we were trying to establish a northern corridor from India through Iran to Russia. The Americans doubtless noticed that it is better to deal with a stable government that does not really like you, provided you can do the dealing on the basis of the common economic interest, rather than deal with a totally unstable government. There is no question that Afghanistan will be for quite a long time, an unstable government. But do not also underestimate the avarice and paranoia of the great powers. No one wants only one route to the "treasures" of Central Asia. The Americans will not under any circumstances want to give too much power to Iran and certainly do not know how cooperative Russia will remain if it continues to grow at 6–7

per cent per annum. How long will it be before they get new ideas about themselves? So, there will always be an attempt to have a second and even a third route to Central Asia, possibly from Turkey. So, I do not think Pakistan's relevance will disappear; let us be very clear on that. The key to that of course is a stable Afghanistan and all manoeuvring that you are seeing there is designed to create a situation in which some kind of a permanent role for the great powers under the guise of the UN can be worked out.

On the question of Musharraf and the ISI, let me say that here we really have got to understand and get away from the traditional concepts of how you regard the state, its capacity to execute policies. Pakistan is not an old state; it is not even a settled state; it is a new state, 50 years is not a long time and thanks to the secession of Bangladesh, today's Pakistan is only 30 years old. Pakistan has constantly been a prey to conflicts between three embryonic state structures trying to capture power. One is the national security state, the second is a democratic state and the third is an Islamic state, of which the seeds were laid by Zia in 1977. In that conflict, you have had some formal stability so long as two could ally themselves against the third. So, for instance, you had Zia creating the third Islamic leg, in order to strengthen the national security state against the democratic state; then, later on, you have had the democratic state identifying itself with the Islamic in order to fight the national security state.

In 1979–80, on Afghanistan there was no conflict between the three embryonic states. All wanted to use it to cement ties with the US, drive the Soviet infidel out and strengthen Pakistan against its ultimate enemy, India. Today, in relation to Afghanistan, there is a violent conflict between the NSS and the Islamic states, the two elements of the embryonic state that needed to stay together to keep down the third, the democratic state. That combination which was working very well till September 11 had been torn apart. So, to recognise that

this has not happened and try and think of Pakistan as a unitary state concept, in your formulation of policy on Pakistan, would be a disaster. We can disagree about how you factor these contending polarities in Pakistan into India's relationship with Pakistan, with Afghanistan, with the USA over Kashmir and with terrorism. We can discuss about that; but to say that you will not even recognise that the National Security State and the Islamic State are at loggerheads with each other, would be unproductive.

Bimal Prasad: I had a specific question. The Pakistan Chief Executive had earlier dismissed an ISI Chief and even Musharraf had done it. Now you are drawing this.

Prem Shankar Jha: I said, whether Musharraf likes it or not, he has started down a road which is putting him increasingly in conflict with the hardliners in the ISI. I am specifically looking ahead six months, nine months, one year, two years and I am predicting that this split will grow. In June 1999 I had predicted in an article in *The Hindu* that by agreeing to American pressure to letting Pakistan get out of Kargil instead of driving it out of Kargil, we had ensured that Pakistan would have a military dictatorship. I am looking ahead exactly the same way. Pakistan is a state in the making with conflicting embryonic state structures. The conflict between two embryonic states which has emerged after September 11, is going to continue. That is all I am trying to say. I may be wrong in my prediction this time. But you cannot ignore the fact that there are these internal cleavages in Pakistan that did not exist before.

Lastly about the Mozambique model etc., I would like to say that we should not look at other models. Afghanistan is not Mozambique. But there are great dangers in imposing a power structure on Afghanistan that has not evolved from within. As I have already said, that is what the West is trying to do with the UN Peace Keeping Force. Richard Haas made this clear

when he was here. If they do that, from the Afghan point of view, they would delegitimise whatever government comes into being. The Americans seem oblivious of Afghan history. In 1841 the slaughter of the British in Kabul began because the Mullahs and Gazis raised the cry that the British soldiers who were there were spoiling "our women", because a new class of prostitutes had come into being in Kabul. That is exactly what will happen tomorrow, if you put in a peace-keeping force. My impression is that Americans did not like to be reminded. They are also simply not thinking far enough ahead. In the process, there is a danger that Hamid Karzai will become another Shah Shuja.

K. Natwar Singh: I just want to thank Shankar Bajpai, Prem Shankar Jha and Prof. Satish Kumar for their presentations on the topic which is of great importance and relevance not only to India, but also to the world. Their insights and overview are extremely valuable and useful to all of us.

I think, Indira Gandhi understood the power game and in 1971, it was handled brilliantly by her, by her colleagues and also by the Civil Service, who were advisors. As far as Afghanistan, the Afghans are at peace only when they are at war with each other. This is the fact of life. Now, whether Pakistan will be divided into three, we do not know. It could be. How long would this go on? December 22nd is the D-Day for them to take over.

I had something to do with Afghanistan, 10–12 years ago. I also went to see King Zahir Shah. Everybody was very much excited about him. He was not a leader; he was not a risk-taker. He wants to get buried in Kabul and he is welcome to come and get buried. But he is not the answer to their prayers because he was not just in a position to do it. I spent 90 minutes with him in 1988 and he got nowhere because Najibullah had invited him. He used us to convey his invitation that evening. At that time, he was a little under the influence of his son-in-

law, Wali, who has close links with the ISI. Where do we go from here?

I think, the government has done a very wise thing in selecting S.K. Lambah as the man to deal with Afghanistan. He has worked with Shankar and in Pakistan also, he has worked with me and also in Delhi. He is a very sound person who understands things. He was born in Peshawar. He is good and I am glad that he had taken the initiative to go to Afghanistan quite early. Iran was the first and we are the second. We have started relations with them. The most difficult situation is going to come. I think, Shankar, Satish Kumar and Jha had dealt with the complications and the hazards in the Indo-Pak relations. They are accident-prone; and these accidents will keep occurring. And they will depend on both sides, how we handle the situation.

The resolution of the Kashmir issue, I think, the pressure will mount both on Pakistan and India to come to sort of an understanding. I do not see the Americans abandoning Afghanistan and going away. They have the technology and they will bomb everybody out; but I think, they were looking for a foothold. They have got it now. As Prof. Satish Kumar said, oil and gas are very attractive and the Japanese are there; the Britishers are there, the French are there.

Finally, at this juncture, it will be inadvisable for us to even remotely think of a confrontation with the US. The simple fact that they can harm you and no foreign policy and diplomacy work towards harming itself for the nation it represents. So, I think, it is in our interest, keeping in mind what the Americans can be up to. It is because they have all the technology, they have all the money, they have all the power, they have all the resources—whether they have the wisdom or other, is a different matter. But they are calling the shots and it is the fact of life. I think the transformation in our relationship, gradual though it is, it is welcome.

A.K. Damodaran (Chairperson for the Afternoon Session): I noticed the dilemma of my dear friend, Natwar Singh at the end of the last session because so much time had been taken up by the questioners and the commentators that he found it very difficult to speak. So, I am going to be very naughty and going to speak for 3-4 minutes in the beginning so that even if I do not get any chance later, I would not go back broken-hearted.

I have just 3-4 points. I think it would be useful to come back to Afghanistan from the US and Pakistan. Let us concentrate on Pakistan; situate Afghanistan in geography, politics, economics and history. I do not want to go into the details. But all of you would know that one of the seminal documents of the 20th century political science was Sir Halford John Mackinder's book on geopolitics which is based upon Central Asia of which Afghanistan is a part. According to that great thinker, the World Island is Eurasia and in the World Island, the heart is Central Asia. I am suggesting that Afghanistan can be understood on a permanent basis; immediate temporary crisis apart, on a permanent basis as a landlocked country and also a land-bridged country. Without Afghanistan, the great movements of people, migrations of individuals—when I am using the word 'individual', I am meaning persons like Guru Nanak—over the centuries could not have happened. It is somehow at the fulcrum of history. So, I think, Afghanistan has got a very important strength of its own in any global discussion.

Second is the problem of fundamentalism which we are going to discuss today; and probably, the country's most urbane and civilised student of fundamentalism is going to talk to us, Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer. The point about fundamentalism, which we should remember, is the extreme development into action of a philosophy, which is normal; and it would be very foolish and parochial to attribute it to only one religion. When

we talk about Islamic fundamentalism, we should always remember the huge sea of Islamic population all over the world, spreading from the Philippines to Indonesia in the East to Morocco and Nigeria in the West. You will find a large area of complete normalcy against which you get some difficulties. That is why, you get into the brilliant ideas of social sciences and action, about which Dr. Partha Mukherji mentioned.

The point is this. The idea of Islamic fundamentalism because of its congruence or synchronisation with terrorist developments in the second half of the 20th century resulted in Afghanistan being in a cauldron. That is what has happened. What I am suggesting is that there is no reason really why we should not forget that modern terrorism with modern technology began in the 19th century in Russia with Nihilism. And in the 20th century, we have examples of terrorism, which had nothing to do with Islam or any other religious fundamentalism. Most of the time, it was ideological extremism, the whole idea of Marxism or Maoism; all these things are really the result of objective conditions in a special country.

The point which Dr. Mukherji mentioned was this connection between global terrorism and the central aspect. When we were young, a much simpler phenomenon took place. In retrospect, it is a sad, wistful failure. That was the international brigade during the Spanish Civil War. That is the sort of example that we always have in history when people were drawn towards idealist principles. People start with idealism and then are drawn towards a certain fight. We have got to understand that and we have got to defend it based on our analysis upon positive elements in this situation. That is why, I notice that not one speaker today in the morning spoke about the most terrible exploitation and suppression by the Afghan Government, of the Afghan women. Once you understand that, once you have been in Central Asia, Soviet Central Asia and know the success of secular approaches with all the faults, in liberating women, once you think about Kamal Ataturk's failures and successes,

you will understand that there is something essentially paranoid, exaggerated about the Taliban phenomenon. I thought, I should bring that also to your attention.

Then, there is the fascinating military aspect of it. The second half of the 20th century has already seen great failures by the Super Powers. The greatest failure was of course in Vietnam and Indo-China; in spite of all the strengths, finally, the US has got to go back by the guerrilla tactics of the revolutionary movement. Isn't it something psychologically, motivationally common between the Vietnamese and the Taliban? Once you get it built beyond a level, then you get madness. That is where we find Pol Pot. These are inevitable in a society, in a communication society where small ideas are given exponential importance by the electronic media; that goes from person to person. I wanted to mention this background because the fascinating military situation inside Afghanistan is extremely important and that is where Deshpande's analysis would come in. It shows the limitations of that. We also heard about, this morning, the new links between the oil problem and Afghanistan. Here again, this is not an exaggerated one. I have got a feeling that the possibility of getting oil out from Central Asia has got 2-3 channels through Kazakstan, through Turkey, Caspian Sea, Iran and then eastwards through Pakistan. Everything is worthwhile. The important thing is to recognise the usefulness of economic needs and economic motivations for political reconciliation.

I was in Pakistan in 1976 with the Foreign Secretary; we were 4-5 of us, trying to resume diplomatic relations with Pakistan. I remember, on the telephone, Mr. Bhutto telling Jagat Mehta that we would love to have a continuous road arrangement across Pakistan, but I would not be permitted by people. This particular problem is there; it should be possible to work out. What I would like to suggest is that when we discuss a major crisis like this, we should not be over-obsessed by our own situation. We are a large country; we are a country with a

lengthy civilisation; we have got remarkably positive relations with Pakistan. That is where, like Natwar Singh said, I also totally disagree with the speakers who tried to find fault with India's record in Afghanistan. Actually, we did a good job for about 30 years; whether you like it or not, there is a certain linear continuity in very unrealistic circumstances, by which we go on recognising the Northern Alliance. It has finally been proved by a tragic military development. So, there is no reason why we should not do it; we are very much in it.

Our relations with Afghanistan go back to Central Asia, to Kushans, to Gupta period and even before that, to probably the most tragic and beautiful woman in Sanskrit literature, Gandhari, the woman who mourned her children. She came from Kandahar. So, there is nothing at all unusual about it. That is at the high-exalted level. At the lowest level, we have got Kabuli Channa, the Kabuli Heeng, and everything attractive possible, coming from a distance. I think, it is useful to be balanced about it.

Finally, there is a parallel. Mountainous regions in the centre of a sub-continent have got to be neutral. It is a necessity. In Afghanistan finally, you will find a Swiss model. It is not that the Swiss model is perfect. It is in crisis, in some ways. The idea of surviving two World Wars, raging outside themselves, without getting involved in it is very interesting. This is what I thought I should tell you.

We have got a little more than an hour. Now the papers are open for discussion. Mr. Subramaniam will lead.

K.S. Subramaniam: I have a small question for Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer. I must first congratulate him on his tremendous depth, combined with great simplicity. I think it is a great performance. I understand that there are different schools of thought in Islam. One is Wahabi movement. I am told that among the Wahabis, there is a specific focus on violence as an instrument of expanding Islam or whatever you call it. Osama

bin Laden is supposed to belong to that school of thought which is being encouraged very much by the Saudis. I believe that the Saudi ruling family is also a Wahabi follower. So, may be the export of violence starts from there. Can you comment on that?

A.K. Damodaran: We can get the answers together later.

Sanjay Yadav (IIT, Delhi): I have question to both Dr. Deshpande and Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer. Dr. Deshpande's paper applies to every country in the world and it applies to every page of human history. Even if you take it as the Marxist denunciation of war, even then one would have to ask you why Marxists have been amongst the greatest killers in this century. But that is a separate thing and it has nothing to do with Afghanistan. That is my criticism of your paper.

Dr. Engineer, I found your presentation very interesting from the theological perspective. But it had a non-realistic attitude when it comes to politics. If one goes by your presentation, the entire 1,400 years of Islamic history would be a history of misrule and it does not connect the true doctrines of Islam. But from a political perspective, it is very unrealistic. We want to know what the practice is and not the theory or the theology. If one wants to understand political Islam, one has to look at the political practice of 1,400 years and not strictly the doctrinal matters. You talked about guts and extremism in relation to Osama bin Laden. Guts for petty things would not be admired. The distinction that you have drawn is not a very useful one. There is a minor point on Lashkar-e-Toiba and the Tayyiba. I think, we all distort languages when we use foreign ones. I am sure Arabs distort English when they use English. It is a two-way thing, a reciprocal one.

Bidyut Chakravarti (Teaching Political Science in University of Delhi): I have got several questions in the form of footnotes. First of all, I take strong exception to the points made by Prof.

Kalim Bahadur while he drew an analogy between hotel Lux and the Taliban congregating from all over the world. They cannot be put together. Secondly, I see a point about levelling of terrorists. I will draw your attention to the terrorist phase of Indian nationalism. We call it as terrorist phase because if you look at the report, which tried to catch hold of the terrorists — the Sedition Committee Report. Now we tend to eulogise the activities of Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekar Azad, etc. It depends on your position as to how you look at those activities. It is a problem and I do not have any conclusive answer to them.

Similarly, the description of Marxism as extremism and the way they are clubbed together under Islamic extremism—this was told by Dr. Engineer. The question that I would like to put to him is that Islam is probably a benevolent religion; it is agreed. But its practice has undergone changes over a period of time and there, we have to think in terms of what is there in the doctrine and what is happening in reality. Over a period of time, Islam took a different kind of connotation because of the people who nurtured Islam. If we simply leave out the socio-economic and political realities and interpret the doctrine in isolation, we are tending towards a situation which is not good for understanding the urban crisis, as we see today. It is related to the other point that he kept on making. That is, religion and politics are necessarily antagonistic to each other. I would like to draw attention to what Gandhi said. Gandhi utilised religion and Gandhi did not become fanatic like bin Laden or anybody else. How do you reconcile this type of contradiction?

There is another dimension about which you talked but probably did not make a mention. You talked about jihad. I agree that it means utmost effort to fight against desire. But in jihad there is a notion called kafir as well, that is, 'the other'. How do you reconcile a jihad in relation to kafir or 'the other'? Once you relate the two, then it assumes some devastating dimensions. That is why, it has become very serious all over the world.

K. Mathews: It is very difficult not to agree with the conclusions. Prof. Kalim Bahadur said that solution to the problem is democratisation of the world. That itself needs to be explained, I mean, what type of democratisation is needed. It may take a very long time. It has to be defined as to what type of democratisation is to be done. As far as the role of Muslims in the world politics or categorisation of Muslims as terrorists, I think, it is not the truth. Normally we hear more about their supporting Taliban, etc. The message is to be taken further.

Regarding Dr. Deshpande's paper; I liked the paper. It throws some ideas that go much beyond India's syndrome or the Afghan syndrome and it is a solution to the global problem—what role the military plays and what role the army plays. We still think in terms of politics as an extension of war or war as an extension of politics. Then, we are going to end up in a dangerous situation. Here, I am tempted to think of what Nehru said about the armed forces and their role in Indian politics when India got independent. I read it; when the Chief of Army Staff at that time asked for some increase in the military expenditure and went to Nehru and said that we want this and that, Nehru asked, "Why do we need an army? We do not need an army. Army is wasteful; and to deal with internal problems, probably, police and internal security are enough." This is what he said and repeated it a number of times. Later on, of course, it was modified. My other point is that national security has to be combined with—as Mr. Subramaniam in the morning pointed out—human security. I mean, it is the security of the people and what problems they have. This also relates to the point raised earlier—how terrorists are developed, what is the root cause of terrorists? Military solution is not the real solution to deal with the problem. Mr. Wilson talked about how to make the world safer for democracy in the earlier years, in 1940, when he talked about the objectives of the First World War. That is still very valid, how to make the world safe for democracy. We should see whether through military means we

can establish democracy. Even in Afghanistan, I think it is very doubtful.

Ravinder Sharma: While endorsing the feelings of Dr. Bidyut Chakravarti, I will put a very straightforward question to my teacher Prof. Kalim Bahadur. He used the phrase "scientific Islam". Can you explain what does it mean?

S.K. Behl: My question is that in an Islamic state, religion and politics cannot be separated and they have to go by Sharia, whether it is constitution, whether it is law. I think it is easier said than done. My second question is addressed to Dr. Engineer. I really appreciate you; rather I can see the honesty in you, when you were talking about Islam. But the ground reality about jihad and all that, it is very different. I have also been a student of Islam; I have studied the Koran in verses and all that. There is the reference of kafirs; jihad against kafirs. These are certain very uncomfortable things. My last point is, is there any scope for dissent? I asked many scholars even privately. They admit privately that there is no scope for dissent in Islam. The Koran cannot be debated. These are my humble submissions.

H.P. Bhatnagar (Former D.G., BSF)**:** I have a question that flows from many of the observations made here. The primary observation was that the Taliban may have been defeated militarily in Afghanistan. As an ideology, it has not been either contradicted or defeated. Particularly the observations that were lastly made that in this ideology, religion and politics are not easy to be separated. We are also aware that it is Pakistan which was really the basic primary force that created it. We also draw a distinction between terrorism as arising out of a situation whereas the Taliban is a religious or a social ideology. In this context, particularly when we saw in the papers yesterday that over 5000 Pakistani people fighting alongside the Taliban in

Kandahar are being taken as prisoners, my feeling is that this social ideology, even if it is ousted from Afghanistan, it is likely to come back to roost in Pakistan. Particularly, this social ideology with an emphasis on Shariat or the Koran, and a setting up of a tribal society, to my mind, it appears as this. My submission in the question form would be: how far do you agree with this type of an observation that this is likely to have a potential of creating for Pakistan, a possibility of split in the sense of the entire Baluchistan being swallowed by the Taliban ideology and Punjab and Sind resisting it.

Himanshu Rai: Dr. Anirudh gave an excellent paper that is close to my heart. The question is in the discussion on Afghanistan, rarely the social background of the Taliban is discussed. Are they peasants? What is their social background? Secondly, what is the composition of the ruling class in Afghanistan? Which segment constitutes the ruling class?

To Dr. Engineer, I have a question. It is a small query. How and why burka came to be associated with Muslim women? Secondly, religion as I understand, particularly, Islam and Christianity, in the initial stages, were revolutionary ideologies. But in course of time, as history passed by, they became a sort of religion. So, rituals and other things got associated with them.

Shabnam: My query is to Dr. Engineer. He talked about jihad-e-Akbar, as something related to self or one's desires. I would like to know about the concept of jihad-e-Asghar.

Devasia (University of Netherlands): One of my points is that Dr. Engineer was talking about idealistic Islam, theological Islam, normative Islam, egalitarian Islam. But it is not relevant to politics. This point has been made by many of our friends here. It is a valid point. Globally, Islam has to undergo the kind of renaissance that India underwent, partly during the nationalist revolution, which Europe underwent and rest of the

world underewent during the modernisation process. There is a resistance in Islam. Fundamentalisation is a resistance here. We have to address the problem in a global sense.

Dr. Deshpande's presentation is a very brilliant presentation. One of our friends here referred that he went beyond the terms of reference. I think, it went into military stick, a kind of ideological intellectualisation, which I thought, is not a reality. They are supposed to be realities, after the two World Wars. We have come to a stage of central deterrence to make a global war that is impossible. We have regions, like in Europe, the whole transatlantic, that is, America, Latin America, etc., where war is impossible. I think, if we are able to resolve the problems in this sub-continent, between Pakistan and India, we will also come to such a stage. So, my conclusion here would be that this kind of threat perceptions that they are painting here is probably not an ideological reality of the 21st century.

Partha Mukherji: It was a pleasure to hear our good friends Kalim and others. They are really refreshing as always. Therefore, I begin by saying that I have enormous appreciation for the presentations that have been made here by all the three. Let me make a few observations. Dr. Engineer points out that there are variations. If there are variations, I do not think there is much of a problem as long as they are consistent. If they are inconsistent then there is a problem of understanding why there is inconsistency between the ideal- typical and the real. This is where most of the discussion is taking place.

Secondly, the concept of terrorism, as we are all using that word, has its nuances. Obviously, we have not conceptualised terrorism. I think, this has become an open question. The Prime Minister said that the UN has not discussed, debated and conceptualised terrorism so that there can be some kind of consensus on what is terrorism that should not be followed by any country or any group. The third point is about fundamentalism. The way it has been conceptualised in the social sciences,

it is the rigid following of a text which provides all the answers in the text. This is the strict way in which fundamentalism is being more or less used in the jargon of social science.

There is a point relating to Prof. Kalim's paper. There is a very implicit understanding that the Taliban concept of Islamic State arises out of the training in the madrasas where it has been probably conceptualised. I do not know what this conceptualisation is. But I think, it is very implicit and we probably ought to know what this is; from that, the behaviour patterns have followed in the Taliban dispensation.

There are two more observations. This is addressed to Dr. Engineer. Firstly, I have been led or misled by the Deobandi element. It is time that persons like you should clarify the Deobandi element that is being attributed to the Taliban madrasas. Finally, without a methodological and theoretical understanding, I do not think we can really comprehend these happenings. Dr. Ali raises the question, why is it that there is no democratic Muslim State? It is a very important question. May be this is due to the confusion between the religion and society. They are getting mixed up and it is a mix-up which is almost universal in all the Muslim countries. So, I would like to end with this that some kind of theoretical methodological outcome is important in comprehending the very fast changes, transitions, transformations and the reactions that are happening in the world.

Is Bangladesh a theocratic or Islamic State, so being democratic?

A.K. Damodaran: We have this dilemma—Algerian dilemma—I do not want to go into the details.

K. Mathews: You were talking about the ideal Islam and the real Islam. I am reminded of one thing. I am not talking about scientific Islam; I am talking of ideal Islam and the ideal world and the real world. I am reminded of what Kennedy said once.

You see things as they are and say why. I see things as they never were and ask why not. This is the comment of Dr. Deshpande's paper also. We never see things as they never were and ask why not. We are used to the things as they are and not as they ought to be. Therefore, still we are thinking of the balance of power deterrents, and not able to go beyond and see things as they ought to be. That is where we come to the theoretical realm of idealism vs. realism. Unless we give place to idealism, we have no future and we will end up in a nuclear war or something. If we give sufficient space to idealism and discuss idealism, and create a beautiful world out of which probably something can come out. Unless you create that, it is a very dangerous trend.

Baren Ray: What I wish to say is, very simplistically speaking, the kind of movements which are calling themselves fundamentalists and thereby doing two things, one is by getting the sanction of religion and secondly, saying that the kind of dynamism they are supporting, what they are endangering is the only path to break through in a situation where there are no openings. Now, the whole point about terrorism is that if there is any justification in terrorism, it can be there in the absence of democracy. As soon as the possibilities of people participating in democratic decision-making are opened, this path of a terroristic way out or the dynamic way out should be closed. But it does not happen. Why does it not happen? The answer to this question would also include the basic question which Dr. Engineer has put before us, why, in spite of all the good ideas in Islam, Islam being a religion of peace and brotherhood, in practice, in most times of history, Muslim polities were not doing any of those things? One of the answers to this question looking into the recent past is that it was the rise of colonial powers who were their neighbours, which had a bearing on them. They made it such that this peaceful democratic path is for the people to decide, which was closed and political interest

within the Islamic societies was aided to continue with their dictatorship by these outside powers. This is the most important thing as far as recent history is concerned.

The question really is that we will not solve the problem of fundamentalism or terrorism as a way out, merely by defeating one expression of terrorism in a particular country, that is Afghanistan today or some other country tomorrow. This will be possible only when the possibilities of such democratic growth or democratic processes are opened in those Muslim societies.

Asghar Ali Engineer: There have been many questions and comments which are quite interesting. To sum them up, I will react.

Mr. Subramaniam put a query about the Wahabi movement. It is not true that Wahabism glorifies violence. Its emphasis is on the purity of Islam. They feel that the most fundamental thing in Islam is Allah, the concept of Allah. If you associate any person, howsoever great including Prophet Mohammed himself, it is Shirk, that is, polytheism. That means, even if you say Yah Mohammed, that is also against Islam. You have to say only Yah Allah. You can invoke Allah and no one else. There is a great divide in India itself between Deobandis and Barelvis. Barelvis believe in visiting mausoleums and invoking the intercession of the Sufi saint. But this is considered as haram by Deobandis. So, kafir is not only non-Muslim, it is Muslim also. And Muslims have declared there are more kafirs among Muslims than non-Muslims. This is the essence of Wahabi teaching. Wahabism appeared in what is now known as Saudi Arabia, when saint worship went to its extreme. So, there was a lot of, in a way, corruption, because for everything people would go to the mausoleum of saints and pray and invoke their intercession for solving their problem. It is in that backdrop that the Wahabi theology appeared. This is a distortion of Islam and the real Islam is only invoking Allah, having faith only in

Allah and no one else, this is the essence of Wahabism. That is why, millions of Muslims go to Mecca and Medina and want to kiss the grave of the Prophet. They are not allowed; they are whipped. They are not allowed to kiss, but even if you pray before the Prophet's grave, they are whipped or pushed away from there. Soldiers always stand near the grave of the Prophet and push you away if your eyes face the grave of the Prophet. Once I did so and started reciting prayers, then the soldiers came and turned my face in the other direction. So, that is Wahabism. But it has nothing to do with violence as such; violence is always a product of a situation.

Now, Mr. Yadav made some comments about this. I said that there has been some misrule in the history of Islam. So, I mean, I do not understand, why one can blame Islam for that. There has been misrule because of political interests. I mean, there were politicians who always misused in contemporary periods also and in the past also, and within 30 years after the Prophet, the whole fate of Muslim society changed. There was repeated resistance to that. The first resistance began with Karbala, where Imam Hussein was martyred. He fought against the distortion of Islam by Umayyads. That was the main issue, why he did not submit to Yazid. Subsequently also there were so many uprisings against Umayyads, against Abassids, but they were always crushed; they never succeeded in the face of formidable powers enjoyed by Umayyads, Abassids and others. So, misrule has been not because of Islam, but because of powerful vested interests represented by rulers and the first tragedy which Islam faced was the feudalisation of Islam. That was the first tragedy. Once Islam was feudalised, everything got corrupted and it lost its revolutionary thrust. In the early Muslim society during the Prophet's time, you will see that there was no accumulation of wealth, there were no injustices and by the time of the Third Khalif, the accumulation of wealth started. Three Khalifs were murdered out of four pious Khalifs and only one died a natural death. So, you can understand the

dynamics of society. This question has been put by many people here, why there is difference between the ideal and the real. To understand the real, we have to analyse the society. Here, I was only speaking on Islam as a factor. I did not attempt to analyse the society, because it was not my presentation here. I have analysed societies, Muslim societies, origin and development of Islam, Islamic State in my various books. In all these books, I have attempted an analysis of those societies, why the ideal never came into practice.

Another thing that we have to understand is that Islam originated in certain circumstances in Arabia. Those circumstances did not prevail in other parts of societies. Once Islam spread outside Arabia to Iran and Rome—I mean, parts of the Roman Empire—it got feudalised and these debates started in the very early history of Islam and there were companions to the Prophet who fought against those who were accumulating wealth and power and recited Koranic verses. Abuzer Ghifari was one great revolutionary who was with the Prophet for his whole life. When he saw that wealth was being accumulated enormously, he used to recite verses and say that those who accumulate gold and silver, and do not distribute in the name of Allah, give them warning of painful punishment. He would recite this and tell them that they were all acting against the Koran. This happened within thirty years of Islam. When societies go haywire and do not follow ideals at all, all these things will happen. Naturally, feudal practices, for example, Muawiya who converted the Islamic Republic into a monarchy for the first time, he used to sit on the throne and people used to stand before him with folded hands. The second Khalif reprimanded him, saying, "What are you doing? You are destroying all Islamic ideals; Islam believes in equality; how can you sit on a throne and ask people to stand before you with folded hands?" He said, "Look here, in this area, Romans have ruled for hundreds of years and if I rule in a democratic way, I cannot rule". He gave this reason. So, societies also distort

ideals. All societies do not conform to the ideals; societies have their own dynamics. Ideals have their own dynamics. It is often difficult to reconcile the two. In Hegelian philosophy, we read a lot about real, ideal and why ideal is not real and real is not ideal, etc. One question was about this—you cannot compare Marxist extremism with Islamic extremism. I do not understand why we cannot compare the two. Extremism is extremism. It can be in any ideology whether it is in religious ideology or political ideology. Extremism is always harmful because you lose the balance of the factors in society. So, it can very much be there.

Now, about kafir and jihad, first let me tell you about jihad-e-Asghar. Asghar means small. Jihad-e-Asghar means, small jihad. They divided jihad into two categories—jihad-e-Akbar, the great jihad, great control of one's desire, as Sarmad has so beautifully put it; and jihad-e-Asghar means fighting with weapons. So, it is very easy. You can fight for your lust, you can fight for your power. But jihad-e-Akbar is the most difficult to control all selfish desires. Now jihad and kafirs both are highly misunderstood because kafir has also been split into two categories—you find this in the Koran also. It does not say that you fight against kafir. It says fight against those kafirs who fight against you. That is the formulation of the Koran; it is not fight against kafirs per se. So, theologians divided kafirs into two categories—harbi kafirs and ghair harbi kafirs, means warmongering kafirs and non-warmongering kafirs. So, you do not have to fight against non-warmongering kafirs. Similarly, theologians also divided the world into darul harb, darul Islam and also into a third category darul Aman, that is where the Muslims live in peace. So, there is no question of any war or fight there. For example, Deobandi Ulama declared India as darul Aman; it is a land of peace for Muslims, as an independent nation. Under the British, they declared it as darul harb, that you must fight the British and throw them out. But once the British leave, they said, 'this would be darul Aman because

the Congress in its programme has included freedom of religion'. So, Muslims will be free to practise their religion and so, it will be darul Aman and there is no question of any fight. So, fight against kafir is not there in the Koran per se. Only warmongering kafir is there. It is again a misnomer that a Hindu is a kafir. The Koran divides people into three categories—believers, people of the book, and non-believers. Christians are the people of the book and many Sufi saints in India, including the one buried in Delhi, Mirza Mazhar Jane Janan, unka fatwa mashoor hai ki Hindu ko kafir nahin kah sakte. Wo bhi ahlekitab hai. Isliye unke paas Ved hai. He uses the word Bedha. They possess Vedas. Ek shagird ne unse ek saval poocha ki Hindu but parast hai, kya unko kafir kah sakte hain? He said, 'No. Hindus cannot be described as kafirs because they possess Vedas.' What they call Brahma, we Muslims call him Adam. And again, he makes one very significant observation that the idol worship of Hindus is very different from idol worship of pre-Islamic Arabs. Arabs worshipped idols as God itself whereas Hindus see the reflection of God in these idols. So, they are not worshipping these idols as Gods, but as reflection of God, reflection of the glory of God. Aap dekh sakte hain, letter maujoodh hai unka, Persian mein aur Urdu translation bhi uska ho gaya hai. But English, I do not know; Urdu translation is definite; I think, Khalil Anjum has done the Urdu translation of Mirza Mazhar Jane Janan's letter. So, even about Hindus there is a debate, whether they can be called as kafirs or not. So, many Sufi saints called Hindus also as people of the book. Non-believers are called kafirs.

They also have religious freedom to practise their religion in Islam. Lakum di nakum waliyadin. Injunction of the Koran and it is addressed to kafirs—for you, it is your religion and for me, it is my religion. Even kafirs have freedom to practise religion. It is a very wrong notion that kafirs are to be killed or beheaded or you have to wage a war against kafirs. About jihad I had already said what it means.

Now, about burka, there is no concept of burka in the Prophet's society. There is no concept of burka in the Koran. All the Koran says is wear dignified dress. It is a very clear injunction of the Koran. You cannot display your adornments, except what should be displayed. These are the words of the Koran. So, what should be displayed has been debated at length. And Ulama agree that the face can be displayed along with collirium in the eyes and rings in the fingers. So, these two hands can be displayed and face can be displayed. This is also cultural interpretation, according to me, because Ulama lived in a particular culture. So, they interpreted this way because hiding hair—hair was considered to be a sexual stimulant—should be there; hair should be hidden. The Koran does not say that. The Koran leaves it wide open for different interpretations. What should remain open should remain open. Now, Tabari, the great commentator of the Koran quotes 52 different traditions about the meaning of this 'except what should be displayed'. There was a wide range of debate among Muslims of those days, what should be displayed. So burka was not there: it was not there in the Koran; burka was a cultural practice adopted from the Roman and Sasanid empires. There was already a practice of haram in the Sasanid empire and the Roman empire. From there, one ruling class copied from another ruling class and so burka came into existence. Hiding of face is not the requirement of the Koran or hadith, both.

Another last thing is there, text and context are very closely related. You cannot understand any text without context and any text is understood only in a certain context. That is very valid for the Koran also. That is why, there is modern interpretation of the Koran and a big debate is raging between modernists and orthodox. And new commentaries are being written on the Koran and modernists are appreciating those commentaries rather than the classical commentaries because classical commentaries were also written in a feudal environment. That is why, the understanding of the Koranic text was

very different. Today, it is very different. It is like Gandhiji's interpretation of the Gita and the other orthodox interpretations of the Gita. One person said that Gandhiji justified use of religion in politics. I know that Gandhiji has made several statements. One of them is that religion and politics are like breath to nose. Religion is as necessary for politics as nose for breathing. He has said that; he was on record. But he also said that the State should have nothing to do with religion and the State should solve only the problems of societies, only the problems of citizens; it should not meddle in religion. That is what I mean, when I said about State and religion. We should also make a distinction between politics and state because politics must be guided by values and whenever Gandhiji talks of religion and politics, he refers to religion in terms of values and not in terms of rituals and dogmas and orthodox, etc. No. It is in terms of values. Iqbal also has said it means values, of equality, justice, compassion and all that. If the State associates itself with rituals, dogmas, beliefs, you can imagine what harm it will do. Thank you very much.

A.K. Damodaran: You said about Islamic category kafirs; I mean, theologically, it is Sunni and the other Islamic category. It is a part of jumma.

Asghar Ali Engineer: Many militant Sunnis have declared Shias as kafirs. Many murders are taking place; but it has nothing to do with the teaching of the Koran. I do not think that Hindus should feel offended anyway by this. For Marxists, for example, anybody who deviated from the official line was a revisionist. So, every ideology has its terminology. It all depends how narrowly you use that terminology. So, let us not take the example of the Taliban or militants or these people. They use that terminology in an extremely restricted way.

Anirudh Deshpande: I would like to refer to three questions which were put to me. I would like to add a little preface to my

answers. At a particular place in one of the essays in *Power and Prospects*, Leon Trotsky says very clearly that it is not enough to speak the truth; it is important to speak the truth to those to whom truth actually matters. Now, if Dr. Yadav found my paper a Marxist denunciation of war, I can only take it as a compliment. As far as other details about Afghanistan are concerned, I am not going to repeat. I do not want to load people with more details because enough was already said in the first session.

As far as the question of the social background of the Taliban and the ruling elite of Afghanistan is concerned, I think, it can be safely assumed in the absence of industrialisation and capitalism in that country that these people would be rural peasants or come from small towns where certain influences would be at work and at their best.

As far as the third question about my going beyond the frame of reference, I have always held a framework, theoretical or other framework, or terms of reference to comprise a guiding format that is not a straitjacket.

As far as deterrence is concerned, I hold that it may have worked so far in Europe. But it necessarily does not follow that it will work in future. South Asia is a place which is very very dangerous at the moment and there are all sorts of risks; and the nuclear establishments are not risk-proof. That is all.

Kalim Bahadur: So far as Hotel Lux is concerned, you have been sentimental about that hotel. It was just an example of being sentimental. It was a hotel building where people used to stay. But you must remember what used to happen in that hotel during the time of Stalin, how many people were so unjustly executed and how the outstanding leaders of the movement were executed by Stalin. Why do you become sentimental about a building? Again, so far as sentimentalities are concerned, you may look at Kabul. The first independent Government of India in exile was set up in Kabul and led by

Raja Mahendra Pratap. Now Kabul is the centre of terrorism and centre of all types of things.

Partha Mukherji: I would like to put the record straight. I was not sentimental for the sake of being sentimental. I was trying to point out that it was based on false assumptions. It was about that hotel. I do not know about that and I was told by you, in fact. That is the hotel that had people who are revolutionary communists, etc. and you are talking about camps in Afghanistan who are terrorists, mercenaries, brought from all over the world; and who are used for a particular narrow ideological purpose. The analogy is simply wrong. That is my point and I was not sentimental, that way.

Kalim Bahadur: It is a matter of opinion. The second question so far as scientific Islam is concerned, I think, Dr. Engineer in his answer to the last question, used the words 'text in context'. That is what I meant, when I said you have to read religion or religious text in a more scientific manner. The Koran has been interpreted ever since the time of Prophet Mohammed to the modern times. There is a commentary on the Koran by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. There is a commentary on the Koran by Maulana Maududdi; there are so many commentaries written. Thousands of commentaries have been written; what angle do you like to your commentary? How do you understand? Every line of the Koran was written in a context. Dr. Engineer will be able to better enlighten you on this. How does one understand the meaning of the lines of the Koran? It has to be understood at the time when it emerged. Some lines were written in the context of, when the Prophet was in Mecca and migrated to Madina and then, there are certain interpretations even for the term jihad. It was considered to be a compulsory duty equal to Namaz, Roja, etc. But this concept of jihad, the 6th compulsory part of Islam was a post-Islamic creation. The Hazarites were the persons—another group which emerged after the death of

Prophet—they propounded that the jihad is a sixth compulsory duty of a Muslim.

Then again, in many Communist movements I know—the Algerian Communist Party's General Secretary once said that we go to the people with the Koran in one hand and *Das Kapital* in the other hand. How do you explain it? Similarly these things have to be taken into scientific methodology. When you talk of studying history in a scientific manner, you have to study religion also in a scientific manner, in a manner in which it can benefit the people; Hizbul Islami, Salahuddin the militants also have a concept of Islam. Maulana Azad had a concept of Islam. Now which one do you want the people to accept? Religion is a necessary part at present; it is a very important part of human personality, particularly in the Third World countries and especially in India. You can say that you do not believe in religion. I have the freedom to say that. But the point is whether the common man is willing to reject that. If he has to accept religion, he has to accept it in a more constructive and useful way.

The third thing that I would like to say is that as you said the Taliban is swallowing Baluchistan and NWFP. The creation of NWFP was because of the British policy in Afghanistan. It is they who under a particular agreement with Afghanistan separated many areas of NWFP from Afghanistan. Afghanistan had never accepted this Durand Line which divides Afghanistan from Pakistan. The very first day that Pakistan was created, Afghanistan refused to recognise Pakistan; they even opposed Pakistan's membership to the UN because they said, in 1947 under King Zahir Shah, the Durand Line was the creation of the British. Now, that the British have gone back or withdrawn, the Durand Line does not exist and therefore, NWFP and such other areas should go back to them. Every Government that has been there in Kabul, every Pushtoon Government which will be there in Kabul, will not recognise the Durand Line. Even the Taliban in spite of the fact that it was the creation of

Pakistan, did not recognise the Durand Line. The Pakistanis felt that probably because of their support, etc., the Taliban would say, 'All right, Durand Line is acceptable'. They will not; they will never accept the Durand Line, in spite of whatever has happened. So, there is every possibility, Taliban or no Taliban. If there is a strong Pushtoon Government in Kabul, they will not accept the Durand Line and they will claim NWFP and those areas of Afghanistan, that have been taken away by force; should be returned to them.

A.K. Damodaran: Was it not sensible, speaking at the beginning? It has been a very very good seminar. I was only charmed by the delightful argument about the Hotel Lux! I was in Moscow for six years and I never came across this horrible place. I came to know, when you were talking about; it was a lovely building across the Maskva where the British Embassy is now placed and where M.N. Roy used to stay. If you read M.N. Roy's memoirs, you will find that quite a number of these revolutionaries were huddled together there. The place where the Great Communists were brought was called the Great October Hotel.

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