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Security Challenges in South and Central Asia

K. Warikoo

Quest for New Asian Security:

Regional Cooperation in Cultural Perspective

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Role of Women in Peace and Conflict Resolution

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Editor's Page

With the unfolding of the post-Cold War era and the process of globalization, profound changes have been taking place in the world and Asia in particular. While regional conflicts still exist, issues of non-traditional security threats such as religious extremism, terrorism, proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), and organised crime (illegal human trafficking, narcotics, money laundering etc.) have now come to the fore. Furthermore, large-scale natural calamities (earthquakes, floods, droughts etc.), environmental degradation, epidemics (HIV/AIDS), poverty, unemployment and disparity in incomes, which if not properly handled, could prove to be a serious challenge to the security of states. Hence, the importance of the concept of “comprehensive security”, a holistic means of dealing with security problems entailing inclusion of force as one of the options, is emerging.

Notwithstanding the US-led campaign against global terrorism (Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan since 2001 and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq since 2003), both Afghanistan and Iraq have been experiencing continuing bloodshed and conflict. Various factors like the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan, continued presence of Al Qaeda and the Taliban elements in Pakistan, radicalization of Islam in countries across Asia and elsewhere, have been the main contributing factors to this worsening security situation.

Impoverishment, discrimination, hatred and disharmony have led to instability and conflict in society. Establishing peace and cultivating democratic values is the need of the hour, as it improves governance and strengthens the rule of law.

Empowerment of citizens, particularly women, is a pressing need to influence the government policy, to protect human rights and to achieve all round socio-economic development. Internal instability, which leads to violence, arises from gender, caste and ethnic discrimination, unequal distribution of resources, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and exploitation of weaker sections.

While pursuing the goal of peace and equitable socio-economic order, sovereign states and governments need to enforce their legitimate authority and provide security to their citizens from the menaces of terrorism, criminalisation of politics and subversion of the rule of law, drugs and arms trafficking, money laundering, corruption etc. Whereas NGOs and peace-makers involved in Track - II initiatives have of late been quite active in dialogue, peace-building and conflict resolution, there is tendency to capitalise on these conflict situations rather than working at the grassroots level to interact with the affected people, to understand the true dynamics of the situation, identifying the problem areas and addressing them accordingly. There can be no short cut to the arduous search for sustainable peace and stability and just solution of the problems to the maximum satisfaction of the parties concerned. So NGOs, academics and social activists need to listen to the voice of the oppressed and deprived rather than be influenced by the strong, articulate and politically dominant communities and pressure groups.

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SECURITY CHALLENGES IN SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA

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India and Central Asia have shared a geo-cultural affinity and a long tradition of historical contacts dating back to antiquity. Notwithstanding the physical barriers of high Himalayan, Pamir, Kuen Lun and Hindu Kush ranges, there existed close socio-economic and cultural ties between the people of India and Central Asia. Stretching from the Caspian Sea in the west to the western frontiers of China in the east, Central Asia has played important role in the history and politics of Eurasia. In its past history, the Silk Route system provided a trans-continental bridge facilitating multilateral exchanges between Central Asia, Russia, China, West Asia and the Indian sub-continent.

Taking the case of Kashmir and Ladakh, it enjoys a unique geo-strategic location, being bounded by Xinjiang in the north, Tibet in the east and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in the west. Enjoying a central position in the network of overland caravan routes that were linked to the Silk Route, Kashmir and Ladakh acted as an important gateway in the Indo-Central Asian exchange of men, materials and ideas through the ages. However, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the extent and pattern of these exchanges was influenced on the one hand by the state of diplomatic relations between three empires – Britain, Russia and China, and on the other hand by the level of influence exercised by the Dogra rulers of Jammu and Kashmir. The Dogra rulers followed a pro-active policy towards Central Asia, as they despatched several secret missions to Yarkand, Kashgar etc. through Ladakh to maintain friendly contacts with the neighbouring Central Asian chiefs and also to acquire political intelligence about the rapidly changing course of events in Central Asia. The British used Kashmir, Ladakh and adjoining areas in Gilgit, Skardo, Hunza and Chitral as ‘frontier listening posts’ to monitor the

developments in Central Asia and Xinjiang throughout the Dogra period.

Western Himalayas even served as the gateway to India for numerous invasions and influences from Central Asia and West Asia. Even in contemporary times, India has had to experience successive military aggressions from Pakistan in 1947, 1965, 1971, 1999 (in Kargil) and now in the form of proxy war in Kashmir that has been going on for the last sixteen years now, besides the Chinese military offensive in 1962 from across the Himalayas.

The very fact that boundaries of Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Xinjiang and Tibet provinces of China, Pakistan and India converge along the western Himalayas, lends a unique geo-strategic importance to this region. Its potential for instability and conflict is furthered by the ethnic-religious jigsaw prevailing in the Himalayas and trans-Himalayas where people of Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic faiths are concentrated in various areas and are vulnerable to extraneous influences. Major international land frontier disputes pertain to this area. Whereas India and Pakistan have been locked in a conflict over Kashmir since 1947, the Sino-Indian border dispute remains to be settled. Any cross-border fraternisation of people of Xinjiang and Tibet in China, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indian Himalayas from Kashmir upto North East, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar, on ethnic and religious lines is a potential source of conflict in the region and a threat to the security of concerned states. With the disintegration of erstwhile USSR and the emergence of newly independent Central Asian states - all having predominantly Muslim population, a new geopolitical situation has arisen across the north-western Himalayas. Its geo-strategic proximity to Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and China, and being a distinct geopolitical entity, developments in Central Asia and adjoining regions have a direct bearing on India. The Central Asian Republics are engaged in building new national identities forming new patterns of alliances and associations and finding their place in the changed situation. The rise of Taliban to power in Kabul in September 1996, which turned Afghanistan into the centre of Islamist extremism, global

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terrorism, drugs and arms trafficking, brought the region into the focus of global attention. Establishment of an extremist Islamist order in Afghanistan and the active involvement of Islamist Afghan *Mujahideen* in cross-border terrorism and *Jihad* (Holy war), whether in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan or some other CIS countries, adversely affected regional security, peace and stability in the Himalayan and adjoining Central Asian region.

Emergence of radical and extremist Islamist movements in South and Central Asia is the main source of instability and conflict in this region. Radical Islamist groups like *Lashkar-e-Toiba*, *Jaish-e-Mohammad*, *Hizb-ut-Tehrir*, *Hizbul Mujahideen* etc. emphasise that political power is indispensable to the establishment of an Islamic state. Though Muslims like any other non-Muslims have multiple identities – religious, ethnic, tribal, linguistic or territorial, the emphasis by the Islamists on the Islamic communal identity puts them in collision course with the state and other groups. Islamist intellectuals, *ulemma* and activists have been seeking to blur the distinction between Islam as a religion and nationalism. They prop up the Islamic political consciousness by politicising already existing religious traditions and practices and by resisting change and modernisation. The concept of *Ummah* or *Millat* is being invoked to abet, support and legitimise the secessionist movements of Muslims living in non-Muslim states. A booklet by *Lashkar-e-Toiba* declares “the US, Israel and India as existential enemies of Islam” and advocates global *jihad* for restoring “Islamic sovereignty to all lands where Muslims were once ascendant, including Spain, Bulgaria, Hungary, Cyprus, Sicily, Ethiopia, Russian Turkestan, Chinese Turkestan etc.”¹ Islamist extremists pose a challenge to the secular and democratic polity, pluralistic social order and inter-religious harmony. Their practice of pan-Islamism which is based on the concepts of *Ummah*, transcending national boundaries is at the root of violence and turmoil in parts of South and Central Asia and elsewhere.

Afghanistan crisis influenced all the Central Asian Republics. Rise of Taliban to power variously affected these countries, which seek to

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build secular democratic states. Though the Central Asian Republics they followed different approaches to the Afghan conflict, there was unanimity among the Central Asian Republics over the threats posed by Islamist extremism of Taliban, terrorism and drug trafficking. Security of Tajik-Afghan border remained the crucial issue. Tajikistan witnessed bloody civil war and conflict during the early and mid-1990s, which fragmented the society and polity, besides causing severe economic damage to the country. In the late 1990s, the country moved forward towards reconciliation between opposition and the government. Afghan conflict accompanied with trans-border terrorism, arms and drug trafficking caused instability in the region. The crisis deepened during the Taliban period when Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda turned Afghanistan into the hub of international terrorism and narco-trafficking, adversely affecting security in the entire region.

The threat posed by Osama bin Laden and the Taliban to world peace and security was universally recognised and UN sanctions were imposed against the Taliban. The Taliban sought to reaffirm Afghanistan's lead role as a puritan Islamist state in South and Central Asia and also to set an agenda for radical Islamist forces. Afghanistan remained a fractured and turbulent country posing great challenge to peace and security in the region. Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network played a key role in the terrorist attacks in South Asia, Central Asia, South East Asia and also in the west. However, it was only after the spectacular and dreadful suicidal terrorist strikes on World Trade Centre and Pentagon, that is the commercial and military nerve centres of the United States on 11 September 2001, that the United States and its Western allies realised the severity of challenges posed by Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Now the United States mustered sufficient political will to lead the global war against terrorism. The US-led forces have severely mauled the Taliban and Al Qaeda, destroyed much of their military machine, bases, etc. Even after the Taliban appear to have been vanquished, elements of the Al Qaeda network still exist both within and outside Afghanistan. Leaders and thousands of supporters of Al Qaeda and the Taliban militia have shifted to Pakistan.

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So ensuring sustainable security and stability in Afghanistan is a great challenge facing the international community. This can be achieved only by total elimination of the Al Qaeda network, their supporters, financiers, safe havens and training camps in various parts of the world.

That the Islamist ideology and terrorists have been used as tools by Pakistan to expand its strategic, ideological and even economic frontiers in South and Central Asia, is a major cause of conflict and instability in this region. In the words of a well known Pakistani scholar, “The reason so many Islamic radicals from all over the world congregated or passed through Pakistan was the strategic decision by Pakistan rulers to use *Jihad* as an instrument of influence in Afghanistan and Kashmir.”² The extremist Islamist groups have now begun to devour Pakistan itself. The *Jihadi* groups openly defy government in Pakistan and pose serious threat to its law and order and social equilibrium. The Pak-US campaign against terrorism in Afghanistan and on the Pak-Afghan border in the aftermath of 9/11, did not deter the Taliban or its sympathizers in Pakistan.

Central Asian Republics have been in transition passing through a stage of transformation into a new political, social and economic order. At the dawn of independence, these republics were faced with numerous problems of nation and state building, rural unemployment, environmental degradation and inter-ethnic problems. Ethnic complexities in Central Asia, its colonial past, historico-cultural identity of titular nationalities, different ethnic groups settled across the borders, problem of Slavic minorities and competition for pipeline routes and energy resources have been the key issues prevalent in post-Soviet Central Asia. As the borders of Central Asian Republics do not coincide with the linguistic and cultural affinities of different groups living in respective states, there have been lingering inter-state territorial disputes. Though the problem of borders and disputes over water sharing remain, yet no Balkanisation of the region or secession of any one part has taken place. However, concerns have been expressed over the progress of democratisation and sustainable economic development. Apprehensions of any breakdown of the sovereign

statehood of the Central Asian Republics have been proved wrong, with the consolidation of their national identity overcoming the difficulties of transition. These countries successfully completed their transition to sovereign independent statehood.

Though, post-Soviet Central Asia did witness rise of Islamic militancy, trans-border terrorism, inter-ethnic tensions and ethno-religious resurgence, the conflict in Afghanistan and in Tajikistan helped in blunting the appeal of Islamic fundamentalism and its politics in Central Asia. Language, race and religion are seen as symbols of nationhood and necessary components of cultural revivalism that has taken place throughout the region. Local writers, artists and academics have idealised local history and culture. Old leaders/personalities who were either purged by Soviets under Stalin or discarded for corruption have been resurrected as national heroes. Whereas public squares, institutions and streets have been renamed, local languages have been declared as official language. Nation-building process in Kazakhstan has banked upon consolidation of Kazakh ethnic-national identity in terms of their demographic growth, new emphasis on Kazakh language, shifting of capital from Almaty to the north and marginalisation of non-Kazakhs from the power structures. But due to several decades of secularisation and non-existence of clerical hierarchy, Islam remained generally limited to spheres of spiritual faith and cultural identity. Economic and infrastructure development is gaining primacy in policies and programmes in Central Asian Republics.

Though the present governments in Central Asia have managed to control the Islamist extremist eruptions, there is turbulence in parts of Central Asia. Islam has deep roots in Uzbekistan. Even during the Soviet period, structural relationship between religion (in the form of Mufti) and state was retained. The clergy is strong and can influence society and politics in Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan has become a target of Islamist radicals and *Hizb-ut-Tehrir* as it has been a centre of traditional Islamic theology. Though the Islamist groups have gone underground due to strong and tough government measures, yet one female suicide bomber blew herself up at Char Su Bazar in Tashkent in the year 2005.

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Islam Karimov, the President of Uzbekistan in his prognosis of the situation in Central Asia, dilated upon the 'deceptive attraction'³ of Islamic fundamentalist Wahabi ideology to a section of Muslims in Central Asia ascribing the same to its populist ideas of justice, rejection of luxury, greed and corruption. He, in unambiguous terms, rejected the ideas of 'politicisation of Islam and Islamisation of politics,' drawing a clear distinction between the cultural and spiritual values of Islam and its misuse for gaining and exercising political power. Karimov views Islamic fundamentalism as a threat to Uzbekistan as it would disrupt peace and stability, civil and inter-ethnic harmony, and also discredit democracy, secular polity, multi-ethnic and multi-religious state of independent Uzbekistan. In an interview to a Russian journal, President Karimov recognized that Islamic fundamentalism and the extremism being represented by *Hizb-ut-Tehrir*, *Al Qaeda*, *Muslim Brotherhood* etc. are getting stronger.⁴ He stressed the need to promote traditional Islam in order to neutralize the threat of Islamic fundamentalists and extremists. Islam Karimov's prognosis of the situation in Central Asia demonstrates the fact that the leadership in Central Asian states, is alive to the threats to security and stability of these newly independent countries.

The accuracy of Karimov's diagnosis of the challenges in Central Asia is borne out by the experience in the Jammu and Kashmir state of India, which has been reeling under the atrocities by armed Islamic extremists, terrorists and foreign mercenaries, all trained from across the border. These terrorist acts and secessionist moves were preceded by the dissemination of fundamentalist Wahabi ideology through a well-funded network of *Jamaat-e-Islami* institutions, *madrasas*, mosques and black-board literature hung in mohallas and streets throughout the valley. This fundamentalist ideology branded the Indian system of multi-ethnic secular democracy and development efforts as un-Islamic. The Wahabi and *Jamaat-e-Islami* ideologues and their foreign mentors thus built up an aura of egalitarianism and quick justice based on summary trials of the *Shariat* courts and unity based on Islamic solidarity (*Ummah*). They ridiculed the affluence and economic benefits

generated by development initiatives in Kashmir over the years, by highlighting the corrupt practices of Kashmiri Muslim bureaucracy-politician-contractor/business class. It is the *Jamaat-e-Islami* ideology which prepared the ground for open intervention by Pakistan in the form of cross-border terrorism and ethno-religious cleansing of minorities in Kashmir valley. As a result, the pluralist and democratic societal order and culture of peaceful existence received a death blow in Kashmir.

Syed Ali Shah Gilani of the *Jamaat-e-Islami* of Kashmir and prominent secessionist leader has been unambiguous in his statements saying that “The Muslims (of Kashmir) were part of *Millat*.... This very feeling of being part of *Millat* attracts *Mujahideen* from Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan etc. to Kashmir.”⁵ Gilani’s practicing of pan-Islamism which is based on the concept of *Millat/Ummah* transcending national boundaries, is at the root of ongoing violence and turmoil in Kashmir. Gilani and his group are invoking the suzerainty of Muslim *Millat* in repudiation of lawful democratic and secular polity and liberal and composite cultural tradition of *Kashmiriyat* based on indigenous history, culture and ethos of Kashmir.

Two important events that have shaped the course of events in Kashmir during the past 26 years, are the Khomeini revolution in Iran and the Soviet armed intervention in Afghanistan (December 1979). Whereas the success of the Khomeini revolution and the dissemination of the ideology of Islamic revolution did influence the Muslim peoples in Asia, the Soviet armed intervention in Afghanistan brought home to them the threats still looming over the Islamic countries. It was in these circumstances of Islamic victory and despair, that the *Jamaat-e-Islami* and other Muslim fundamentalist groups of Kashmir like *Students Islamic Federation, Islami Jamiat Tulba, Muslim United Front*, etc. through their sustained efforts of indoctrination and preaching in mosques, *madrasas*, Friday congregations and social and political assemblies ignited the Islamic passions among the majority of Kashmiri Muslims and built the “youth cadres to achieve the objective of Islamicisation of Kashmiri society.”⁶

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The possibility of establishing a new Islamic Caliphate running from Kashmir to Pakistan through Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia was being discussed by the Islamist extremist groups in Kashmir at a time when the Soviet troops had withdrawn from Afghanistan and the Muslim Central Asian Republics had emerged as independent states following the disintegration of USSR. They were echoing the ideas of the Amir (Chief) of *Jamaat-e-Islami*, Pakistan, Qazi Hussain Ahmed, who speaking on Kashmir Solidarity Day in Rawalpindi in February 1992 declared that “a great Islamic state, spreading from Kashmir to Central Asia would emerge after the independence of Kashmir.”⁷ Soon after new groups like *Tehrik-i-Ahyay-e-Khilafat* (the movement for revival of the Caliphate) and *Tehrik-e-Khilafat-e-Islamia* (the movement for Islamic Caliphate) announced their presence in Kashmir.⁸ They propounded the ideology of trans-national Islam and the Caliphate. *Tehrik-e-Khilafat-e-Islamia* asserted that “Islam did not recognize nationalism or territorial patriotism. The slogans based on ethnicity, race, gender or nationalism were false... The real Islamic ideology was the ideology of the Caliphate... The slogan that future of Kashmir would be decided by Kashmiris has given rise to an evil, which was distorting the Islamic identity of present movement, and reducing it to a mere democratic movement.”⁹ It is against this backdrop that there emerged close linkage between the Islamist insurgents from Kashmir and the Afghan *Mujahideen*, with the pan-Islamic ideology binding them together. That thousands of such Kashmiri militants exfiltrated to Pakistan and Afghanistan to undergo training in arms and guerrilla warfare, with some of them later fighting alongside the Afghan *Mujahideen*, lent new dimensions to the militancy in Kashmir. The war cry of *Jihad* brought about the ideological unity between the Afghan *Mujahideen* and Kashmiri militants.

Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region of China occupies a pivotal position in Asia with its borders touching Mongolia, Central Asian states of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan; Afghanistan and the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, part of which is under the illegal occupation of Pakistan. Holding the distinction of being the largest

province of China, Xinjiang is still the only autonomous region where Muslims are in majority. Such a curious interplay of geography and history has turned Xinjiang into the crossroads of Central, South and East Asia.

Chinese fears of rise of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkic consciousness among the Muslims of Xinjiang are compounded by the recurrent clashes between the Han Chinese and local Uighur / Kazakh / Kyrgyz Muslims in Xinjiang. Though there prevails an aura of general peace and stability in Xinjiang, Chinese sovereignty over this region is being questioned by the local Turkic Muslim separatists, who receive support from the Uighur and Kazakh emigres now settled in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey. China considers herself to be an important player in the new geopolitics of the region not only because it shares nearly 3000 kms. of its strategic frontiers in Xinjiang with the Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, but also due to cross-border fraternisation of Muslim–Turkic population inhabiting this area, which makes China’s borders vulnerable to ethnic religious separation.

In my recent interaction with the Chinese specialists in Beijing including those from Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, I was told that “Xinjiang is a hotbed of separatists, terrorists and foreign Islamic extremists.” The number of mosques in Xinjiang has increased to 22,000. I learnt that some extremist *Imams* preach violence and hatred and some good *Imams* have even been assassinated by the extremists. Prof. Pinyan while referring to bus/car bomb explosions in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang, stated that the separatists act in the guise of religion, killing innocent people. The suicide bombers are convinced that they would go to heaven after their sacrifice. While highlighting the problem of religious extremism in Xinjiang, Prof. Pinyan pointed out that there are very few Muslims ready to stand up/rise against such extremists, whose number is not so large. From 1980s onwards, religious situation in Xinjiang has become more tense. Eighty per cent villagers go to mosques and there is social pressure on people to attend mosques, as the extremists try to isolate non-followers from the community.

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In recent years, daughter or son of a non-follower cannot find a match. In Muslim restaurants, smoking or drinking are not allowed. Religious extremists are gaining foothold in Xinjiang, and they advocate violence, causing tension. Prof. Wu Hongwei pointed out that in Xinjiang even the government organizations have separate cafeteria for Hans and Uyghurs. Prof. Wu informed that in Ili city, an Uyghur Muslim killed a neighbouring Han (even though both lived together for long) at the instigation of some Uyghurs who stated that killing the Hans would be tantamount to making Haj pilgrimage. Prof. Wu affirmed that religious extremists are exclusive, aggressive and opposed to non-Muslims and even opposed to other sects of Muslims.

Dr. Zhao Shuqing, Director, Institute of Ethnic Minority Groups Development Research, Beijing stated that Islamic groups which penetrated Xinjiang in 1980s and joined ethnic separatists, pose great threat to stability in Xinjiang. These Islamist extremist groups have set up Islamic schools, where extremist ideology is taught and arms training is also given. These groups have broadcasting stations and also publish books to disseminate *Jihadi* ideology. Even handwritten material is circulated among the Muslims in Xinjiang, advocating *Jihad* and for establishing an Islamic state. They encourage the people to join this movement. In some cases, school teachers and headmasters from other Muslim countries preach in these schools. Some students are even sent abroad for training, who on their return become the backbone of the *Jihadi* movement. Some religious schools in the name of Arabic teaching recruit Uighur students. Neighbouring countries provide hospitality to the Uighur Muslims. High-tech means are employed to promote *Jihad* in Xinjiang. *Hizb-ut-Tehrir*, the transnational Islamist group has also penetrated Xinjiang, particularly in schools and universities. Whereas in Mainland China, administration is separate from religion, in Xinjiang administration at the grassroots is linked with religion. Islamic extremism is being used as a weapon against Hans and other non-Muslim groups and administration. Islamists believe that it would take them 30 years to achieve their goal of Islamic state in Xinjiang, out of which first ten years would be utilized for indoctrination.

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Even Muslims advocating good Islam are targeted and killed. If Islamist extremists gain strength in Xinjiang, it would cause instability and hamper economic development and even lead to the exodus of Chinese business community from Xinjiang.

Prof. Jin Yijiu, a veteran Chinese expert on Islam, stated that Osama bin Laden will continue to influence the Muslims around the world. "As war against terrorism continues, Islamic extremism will also continue." Pointing to the existence of religious seminaries in Peshawar, Prof. Yijiu stated that these Islamic militants are sent to Kashmir for *Jihad*. In Prof. Yijiu's assessment, "radical Islam will be transferred from generation to generation. *Jihadis* will train female *Jihadi* soldiers. They will attack Western targets and also expand their targets." He stressed that the "radical forces in Kashmir have been thinking of an Islamic state from Kashmir to Central Asia. The Islamist organizations want to set up Islamic state in South and Central Asia and also in Xinjiang province of China where *Eastern Turkestan Movement* has forged links with Al Qaeda."

China has identified three evils – religious extremism, international terrorism and national separatism. China is concerned that national separatists are using religion as a banner to seek separation or independence in Xinjiang. However, China wants uniform standards in fighting terrorism. It is opposed to Western and US double standards of calling some terrorists as freedom fighters.

It must be noted that China has brooked no outside interference on the question of its territorial integrity and under its 'One China Policy', Tibet, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia and Taiwan are integral parts of the People's Republic of China. China is acutely conscious of the subversive role of Islamist extremists trained in Afghanistan and Pakistan in fuelling the Uighur Muslim separatist movement in Xinjiang, which accounted for a series of riots, bomb blasts and killings during the year 1998 and afterwards. Riots recurred in February 1999 in Urumchi, the capital of Xinjiang. But it goes to the credit of the Chinese authorities that they took serious view of external support to the Uighur separatists

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and made Pakistan hand over to them the identified Islamist extremists who are later reported to have been punished by the death squads for their terrorist acts. At the diplomatic level China has seen to it that various countries including the newly independent Muslim Central Asian Republics have committed themselves to this 'One China Policy' and even undertaken not to support or encourage any ethnic-religious separatist movements by Uighurs, within their countries. Applying the same principle, China has since early 1990s shifted its earlier position on Kashmir and recognised bilateralism as the basis of resolving the issue between India and Pakistan.

Terrorism when blended with the fire and zeal of *Jihad* becomes a deadly mix posing a major challenge to security in South and Central Asia. One can imagine the situation that would have been created by the Taliban, Al Qaeda and other *Jihadi* organisations in the region had there been no 9/11 and the consequent US-led global campaign against terrorism. As Masood Khalili, former Ambassador of Afghanistan in India rightly surmised in an interview to a Delhi newspaper: "By end-2001, entire Afghanistan would have been captured by Taliban. By now, most of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan would have been run over by Al Qaeda. Afghanistan would have become a *Khilafat* (Caliphate), training and exporting 50,000 terrorists. The people of Pakistan would have been in jeopardy. The world would have had to recognise the Taliban, welcoming them to the OIC and the UN. With Al Qaeda at India's doorstep, what would have happened to J&K can only be imagined."¹⁰

Both India, Central Asian Republics and China share similar views on major issues, particularly economic development, pursuit of economic, social and cultural rights, threats posed by drugs and arms trafficking, trans-border terrorism, religious extremism and ethnic-religious separatism to the territorial integrity of nation states.

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QUEST FOR NEW ASIAN SECURITY: REGIONAL COOPERATION IN CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE*

Sharad K. Soni

With the onset of the 21st century, every nation, both big as well as small, around the world has already entered into a new stage of development. Asia, in particular, has attracted global attention in terms of economic development by creating constructive bilateral partnerships in trade, joint ventures, and technology especially software and information technology. But what can really be described as the most remarkable achievement in Asia is that the region has succeeded in staying away from inter-state conflicts, whether major or minor. Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go as the countries belonging to the Asian continent have not fully come to terms with the new order as the Asian traditions of international relations are quite different from the Western tradition. And that is where common cultural identity can play a major role so as to bring the Asian countries together in order to achieve overall security-political, social, economic and strategic. The quest for new Asian security, therefore, needs to be discussed in the context of regional cooperation in cultural perspective, and that is what this paper seeks to analyse with particular focus on India's contribution to peace and security in the region, and also the impact of Sino-Indian relations on various efforts for Asian prosperity.

HISTORICO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

The importance of cultural values and traditions in shaping everyday political activities cannot be denied because “everyday practices of politics are filtered and constituted through cultural

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perceptions and historical experiences.”¹ While dilating upon great historico-cultural traditions in Asia, it must be recalled that India is the place of origin of Asia’s most widely practiced religions-Buddhism and Hinduism, and has for centuries also been home to the world’s other two great religions, Christianity and Islam. Buddhism travelled through Afghanistan and Central Asia to China and Mongolia, leaving behind historic monuments in Bamiyan² and Bokhara as well as in Samarkand and Xinjiang. On the other hand, Hinduism spread across the Himalayan mountains and the plains below and into peninsular India, from where it went to Java, Sumatra, Indonesia and the kingdoms of Indochina (Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia). Even today, Hindu temples are found in Vietnam, Cambodia, Singapore and other places in Asia. Singapore is a Sanskrit word meaning “City of Lions (*Singh-a-pur*).” As regards Islam, it spread across many parts of South East Asia from India itself. In terms of dietary habits, the West Asian and Central Asian region are dominated by wheat eaters with various kinds of *nans* and breads being made, while East Asia represents the rice bowl region. India is a region that consumes both.

For centuries, India and China being the two most ancient civilizations of Asia have had great impact on the cultural life of the people of the Asian region. Historically, both the countries had lived as friendly neighbours and there is no recorded history of conflict between any Indian kingdom and the Empire of China. Since ages the two countries have been interacting harmoniously which ultimately resulted in the crystallization of the two cultures. The word “China” was familiar to the Indians in ancient times and this word finds mention in the *Mahabharata* and the *Manu Smriti* and even varieties of Chinese silk are referred to in Kautilya’s *Arthshastra*.³ What is significant to note here is that there had been regular commercial interaction between India and China long before the beginning of the Christian era. The Indian land routes were well connected with the Chinese Silk Route. It has been learnt that bamboo and textile goods from south-western China were first brought to eastern India through Yunnan and Burma and then sold in the markets of Bactria in c.127 B.C.⁴

Evidently, in the second or first century B.C., the sea-route between India and China was quite well known. Even in the Chinese historical sources, there are references to the maritime traders bringing typical Indian products to China as far back as in the seventh century B.C. According to some scholars, Chinese ships used to arrive at the Chera ports even before the coming of Greek and Roman ships. The excavation at Cheraman-parambu has brought to light numerous Chinese shreds mixed with pottery. Sulaiman has mentioned that the Chinese ships on their return from Persian Gulf would anchor at Quilon (Kollam) and that each vessel by way of customs duty had to pay 1000 *dinars*. Marco Polo, the prince of medieval travellers, speaks of the flourishing trade in pepper and spices between the Indian state of Kerala and China. Kerala's trade relations with China further developed during the first half of the 15th century, much before the arrival of Vasco de Gama in 1498 AD⁵ Kerala received several trade items from China including the fishing net. Similarly, the names of several items used even today in Kerala and Bengal have their origin in China, such as, *chinabadam* (groundnut), *chinamati* (Chinaclay, porcelain), *chinapatka* (small stringed-firecrackers), *chinangshuk* (Chinese silk), *chinavala* (Chinese fishing net), *chinachatti* (frying pan), *chinikzhangu* (sweet potato), *chinabharani* (big jars to store pickles), even the word *chaya* in Malayalam (spoken in the Indian state of Kerala) means tea which has its origin in north China where it is known as *ch'a* and so on.⁶ Chinese fishing nets in Cochin still attract tourists. China *bazaar* (market) in Quillon, Chinese jars, Cheena crackers, Cheena fence, Chinese wires etc. are also the evidence of age-old contacts between China and Kerala.

Apart from the socio-linguistic and commercial intercourse, religion and philosophy also overcame the physical barriers. There are several examples of such interaction to illustrate this point. It is said that in 65 AD, the Han Emperor Ming-ti brought from India two Buddhist missionaries, named Dharmaratna and Kashyap Matanga, who preached Buddhism among the people and translated Buddhist texts into Chinese.⁷ Buddhism became a vehicle of transmission of Indian

scriptures and also popular ethics through trendy tales and fables to China. The famous *Panchatantra* tales influenced the Chinese so much that they transcreated ethical tales and fables of their own with indigenous essence.⁸ The Indian epic *Ramayana* did not confine itself within the Indian territory, rather it crossed over the snowy mountains and sea to reach South East Asia. Even today plays from *Ramayana* are being enacted by the people in South East Asia. The impact had been so great that the tribes inhabiting Yunnan in China came up with tales almost similar to those of *Ramayana*, with some tribes such as *Yi*, *Bai* and *Dai* telling stories with characters corresponding to Rama and Sita.⁹

So far as the Buddhist philosophy is concerned, there has been great influence of Indian literature on the Chinese. The Chinese vocabulary became enriched with many Sanskrit terms, either translated or transliterated according to the needs of the time.¹⁰ In China, there is a well known classic entitled *Journey to the West* or *Xi you ji* which is basically a holy scripture dealing with a large number of Chinese Buddhist monks, particularly Hiuen Tsang (629 AD–645 AD) making pilgrimage to India. It is yet another example of close cultural interaction between the Chinese and the Indians. Most notably, the Buddhist scriptures *tripitikas* that were taken to China by Hiuen Tsang and were given back to India with translation can be considered as one of the cultural contributions made by China to India. In the field of art, not only images and pictures but Indian artists also inspired a new school of art which may truly be called Sino-Indian: 60-70 feet high colossal images of Buddha and fresco paintings at several rock-cut caves in Tun Huang, Yun-kang and Long-men stand in testimony to this art.¹¹ Indeed, the Chinese learnt from Indians the art of Buddhist painting, while the Indians learnt the art of growing silk from the former.

REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE POST-COLONIAL ASIA

It was only with the coming of the Europeans in the Asian region that not only India's links with Asia particularly the East got disrupted but also there emerged a new threat to peace, security and

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development in Asia. In the post-1947 period, independent India under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru began to address itself more concretely to the task facing the newly independent countries of Asia and to work out a common approach to ensure peace and security in the Asian continent. This was basically the idea of a new post-colonial Asian identity. Significantly, just before India's independence, the First Asian Relations Conference (ARC) was held in New Delhi from 23 March to 2 April 1947, which stressed the need for Asian unity and declared the arrival of Asia on the world stage. The main objective of holding this conference was to bring Asian nations together to a common platform and to understand their social, economic and political problems and also to promote cooperation among the people of Asia.

For Nehru, the ARC marked "the beginning of the fulfilment of his Asian dream, namely that of reviving the independent personality and identity of Asia and building Asia into a continent of freedom and peace and harmony, radiating these to other parts of the world."¹² The tone was thus set for building a common Asian identity based on equality, mutual harmony and cooperation. But it was in the 1950s that the idea of a new Asia was vigorously pursued. The most notable event that took place in 1954 was the endorsement by both India and China of the strategy of ensuring Asian security through cooperation based on *Panchshila*- the five principles of peaceful co-existence. The *Panchshila* sought to raise a structure of peace in Asia based on mutual assurance by the states to conduct their relations on the basis of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, settlement of disputes through peaceful means, peaceful co-existence and mutually beneficial cooperation. Further in 1955, this approach to Asian security jointly developed by India and China was adopted at the Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian States.

After a long gap, the drive towards Asian security received a boost with the emergence of Shanghai Five, which reflected the commonality of the national interests of Russia and China in Central Asia. With Uzbekistan joining it in 2001, the grouping was upgraded to Shanghai

Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the first regional cooperation organization in the Eurasian region. It is to be noted that the “main spirit behind the SCO is the growing realization among the Eurasian powers that regional security can not be ensured through overseas security structures located far from the territory...[therefore] it is necessary that a group of neighbouring states in a region recognize themselves as a community in which their national identity is complementary rather than adversarial to their neighbours.”¹³ Apart from China and Russia, the SCO includes four Central Asian States of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as its members. Mongolia joined it as an observer in 2004, while India, Iran and Pakistan were given observer status in July 2005.

On 26 October 2005, during fourth heads of government meeting of the SCO in Moscow, the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao proposed five measures to boost economic cooperation among member and observer states. These measures which include good policy, better infrastructure, closer agricultural cooperation and increased regional and international exchanges,¹⁴ provide favourable condition for regional cooperation, which would also lead to promoting trilateral cooperation between China, India and Russia. This is more so because China, India and Russia stand for multi-polar world order and oppose unilateralism in international relations, besides having common views on terrorism and other geopolitical and strategic issues.¹⁵ Of the many other threats to peace, security and development, none has become as dangerous as international terrorism, with its links to religious extremism, trafficking in drug and illicit arms. For more than a decade and half now, India has been a victim of terror attacks that have claimed thousands of innocent lives. In order to contribute to bringing peace and stability not only in the Asian continent but the world over, India calls for united global action against the dangers being witnessed due to international terrorism. It needs to be pointed out here that “if China, India and Russia can develop closer strategic relations it will help the three countries and their neighbours to enlarge the area of peace and cooperation in the East, South, South-East and Central Asia as well as on the Asia-Pacific rim.”¹⁶

Furthermore, the developments currently taking place in Asia in the direction of regional economic cooperation are going well towards emergence of a new Asian security system. The three great Asian powers China, India and Japan have taken important steps towards forging free trade linkages with the ASEAN. The joint statement issued at the first ASEAN-India Joint Summit at Phnom Penh in November 2002 “affirmed that the Charter of the United Nations, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South East Asia, the five principles of peaceful co-existence and other universally recognized principles of international law should serve as basic norms governing their relations.”¹⁷ The Summit also reiterated the common interest of India-ASEAN powers in developing the programme of action for the Mekong-Ganga cooperation with focus on important areas of cooperation such as tourism, culture, education, transport and communication. Individual Asian countries at their own levels tried to seek specific benefits from improved links among themselves. Their mutual efforts bore some fruits including exchanges of high-level visits across the region, patched up Sino-Indian ties, promoted confidence building and transparency measures and India’s inclusion in regional grouping such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).¹⁸ India has also concluded a Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation with the ASEAN in 2003 and with Singapore in June 2005. A similar model has been developed with Thailand, and a Joint Study Group has been set up for conclusion of Free Trade Agreements (FTA) with Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan and the Republic of Korea. Ways and modalities are also being examined to develop regional trading arrangements with China, though the two sides have already speeded up efforts in several directions to facilitate their bilateral trade.

At the sub-regional level, India’s role within the BIMSTEC (comprising Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan and Nepal) as well as the implementation of the proposals of the FTA are significant in the sense that “they enhance the deeper economic ties with the region and they must be viewed as the blueprint for India’s incorporation into the APEC.”¹⁹ From the geopolitical point of view,

India's engagement with the military junta in Myanmar and interest in the Indochina region points toward pragmatism. India's membership of the ARF and the joint military exercises it now holds with several countries of the region, allows it to go alongside each other even if it cannot influence them. These are all milestones on the road leading to the ultimate goal of creating an Asian Economic Community (AEC) that is being foreseen as becoming a reality in the early part of the 21st century, in which India would have significant role to play. Similarly, another very important sub-region is the North East Asia, which includes China, Japan, the two Koreas-South and North, Mongolia and Russia (especially Far East region). Since North East Asia is rich in natural resources, it has a vital economic potential and close economic cooperation among the countries belonging to this area would be a positive factor in establishing peace and security at regional level. It is more so because Japan and South Korea have an advantage in capital and modern technology, while China has labour in abundance, the Russian Far East and Mongolia have rich natural resources, and North Korea is considered as having a large labour force.²⁰ Such a strong balance of production factor implies that the expansion of economic cooperation will bring mutual benefits to all in this sub-region, and hence broaden the scope of not only regional but a wider Asian security as well.

The visit of the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to India in April 2005 has been described as one of the major developments in the direction of regional cooperation in general and in the Sino-Indian ties in particular. During his visit, Wen Jiabao put forward 6-point proposals for expanding the relations between the two sides in every field, which was responded warmly by the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. While expressing complete agreement with the proposals, the Indian Prime Minister stressed that "strengthening cooperation is the common wish of the two countries," and that both sides should work together "to make the boundary between China and India a link of peace and friendliness."²¹ Beijing hopes to host China-India Cultural Month as part of "China-India Friendship Year" which is being celebrated

currently in 2006. Since both India and China share common views on major issues, particularly economic development, pursuit of economic, social and cultural rights, threats posed by drugs and arms trafficking, trans-border terrorism, religious extremism and ethnic-religious separatism to the territorial integrity of the nation states, they can together play a constructive role in maintaining peace and security in the Asian continent.²²

PROSPECTS FOR NEW ASIAN SECURITY

While looking ahead and considering the progress in the 21st century in the direction of regional cooperation beginning from the SCO to Eurasian Economic Community (EEC), Central Asia Cooperation Organization (CACO), SAARC, ASEAN, ARF, BIMSTEC and East Asia Growth Area (EAGA) along with several other long term initiatives, there is no doubt that the concerns for new Asian security would bring positive results in the near future. So far as India is concerned its destiny is interlinked with that of Asia- be it East Asia, West Asia, Central Asia, South Asia or South East Asia.²³ The unique positioning of India in the geopolitics of the Asian continent indeed offers a realistic opportunity to forge mutually advantageous regional cooperation which, in turn, could sustain its endeavours for regional cooperation and integration. What is of course required is to keep alive the spirit of common cultural identity for ensuring peace and security, so that a more fundamental change could take place for the betterment of the Asian people.

It should, however, be emphasized here that although culture is quite a new subject in international relations, it has its own relevance given the current situation of relationship among the countries of Asia. This is not to say that it does not require to be studied further but only to suggest that let philosophy and culture play a role in bringing peace and security in Asia. In the process of economic globalization, the role of culture in international relations is becoming ever more prominent, and Asian countries and regions need to promote cultural cooperation among them. A common vision, thus, is necessary and ancient countries

and civilizations like those of China, India and others can play a constructive role by working in cooperation with each other. If a new Asian security formula of 10+4, i.e., ASEAN + China, Japan, South Korea and India, is developed, it may well be a welcome step in ensuring overall peace and security in Asia.

As regards India and China, they must look to the near and distant future and not allow the past differences of a temporary nature to become obstacles in future cooperation. Since both the countries “get stronger and more stable- economically, politically, and socially- they will have no reason to fear each other but much to gain from cooperation.”²⁴ Friendship and cooperation between these two countries need not be aimed against any third power but it will serve as warning that no third power can interfere in the internal affairs of either of these two countries. Both India and China should also attach importance to possible participation in regional and sub-regional development programmes, besides working jointly for Asian prosperity. This is more so because they have age-old cultural links and, therefore, there is a common understanding in terms of philosophy and religion which could well contribute to playing a significant role in achieving the goals of the new Asian security system. Thus India-China relations must be viewed in the larger perspective of their historico-cultural ties, their perceived long-term national interests as well as their future vision. It now appears that the confidence and understanding which has been currently building up between India and China will ultimately determine the options of other great powers in their dealings with both New Delhi as well as Beijing.²⁵

The first East Asia Summit that took place on 14 December 2005 in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur has laid the foundations for a cooperative architecture in Asia and hopefully, will launch the process towards the possible creation of an East Asian Community. This obviously calls for India and China being the two major powers in Asia to work closely towards progressive realization of such an East Asian Community and eventually a larger Asian Economic Community (AEC) to ensure overall Asian security. Not only a common security

mechanism but also a willingness to establish peace and harmony for common prosperity is the demand of the day. In this regard, the changing dynamics of regionalism and regional cooperation based on Pan-Asianism in various regions of the vast Asian continent may sooner or later prove to be beneficial. In the current scenario, pursuing “Culture of Peace” is the biggest asset for both India and China by taking several positive initiatives in the direction of new Asian security. Both countries need to remember the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping’s famous remarks made to the then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi during latter’s visit to China in 1988: “The 21st century can only be the Asian century if India and China combine to make it so.”

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ROLE OF WOMEN IN PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Mondira Dutta

CONCEPT

Violence against women, including torture, forcible displacement, sexual assault, rape and murder is now being used as method of suppression, persecution and ethnic cleansing. Women and girls are raped, forced into marriages, abducted by warring groups and exposed to the scourge of HIV/AIDS. It is a well known fact that even though states have agreed to international legal standards regarding human rights and the conduct of conflict, more and more women have been caught at the centre of these conflicts. Violence against women is not an accident of war. It is rather a strategic weapon that is being used for spreading terror, destabilizing societies, breaking resistance, rewarding soldiers and extracting information.

The indirect effects of violence against women are well known. Conflict shatters their means of survival, including the razing of crops and destruction of their livelihood and homes. Women are forcibly displaced in their own countries and are also forced to flee to other countries finding refuge in camp settings where they are at further risk of attack and discrimination and are often forced into prostitution, trafficking and criminal activities. Even as women around the world are finding many new platforms to express their ideas and concerns, women in countries suffering armed violence continue to be largely marginalized.

“Forcing warring parties to give women a seat at the table in peace negotiations and post-conflict governments is among the hardest challenges we face.”¹ It is, therefore, important to empower women because sustainable peace requires full participation of women. Their involvement in these mechanisms, which prevent conflict, stop war, and

stabilize regions damaged by warfare, is essential. It is the women who frequently outnumber men after conflict, they often drive the on-the-ground implementation of any peace agreement; they, therefore, have a responsibility to be an integral part of the peace process. Thus there is an urgency for the need to view women as much more than victims.

Bringing the women to the peace table improves the quality of agreements reached and increases the chance of success in implementation. It is a well known fact that involving women in post-conflict governance reduces the likelihood of returning to war. Reconstruction works best when it involves women as beneficiaries, planners and implementers. Women's education is the single most productive investment in revitalizing agriculture, restoring health systems, reducing infant mortality, and improving other social indicators after conflict. Further, insisting on full accountability for actions against women during conflict is essential for the re-establishment of rule of law. Unfortunately the press tends to lose track of the issues related to conflict prevention in general - much less the role of women in this process and yet it is precisely in the midst of crises that these issues should take centre-stage.

Laying the groundwork for post-conflict equality and reconstruction will not be successful unless women are brought to the table to plan for various components such as emergency assistance; using women's NGOs to distribute relief; assigning gender advisers to prevent domestic violence as ex-combatants returned to their homes; and ensuring women a seat at the table in the peace talks themselves. One can't end wars simply by declaring peace. Words alone cannot earn women a seat at the peace table, force financial institutions to provide capital to women entrepreneurs, or ensure adequate protection for women in refugee and displaced situations.

The concept of "inclusive security,"² a diverse, citizen-driven approach to global stability, emphasizes women's involvement, not their vulnerability. Rather than motivated by gender fairness, this concept is driven by efficiency. Women are crucial to inclusive security since they

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are often at the centre of NGOs, popular protests, electoral referendums and other citizen-empowering movements. Their influence has grown with the spread of democracy across the globe. This approach expands the array of tools available to police, military, and diplomatic structures by adding collaboration with local efforts to achieve peace. “Inclusive security” rests on the principle that fundamental social changes are necessary to prevent renewed hostilities. Women have proven time and again their unique ability to bridge seemingly insurmountable divides. The practical ways of translating words into actions to enhance the political and economic participation of women around the world is important. Already the process of drawing women together across political, geographic and ethnic barriers has been particularly flattering, especially at the grass-roots level.

International organizations are slowly recognizing women’s role in preventing war and sustaining peace. On 31 October 2000, the UN Security Council passed Resolution S/RES/1325 on “Women, Peace and Security Summary” urging the Secretary General to expand the role of women in the UN and in field-based operations, especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights workers and humanitarian personnel. This is the first resolution that specifically addresses the impact of war on women, and women’s contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable peace. The 18 point resolution of the Security Council urges greater participation of women in all decision making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes.

DOMAIN OF PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The negotiations for achieving peace are never simple. They are wrapped in history and identity, in the struggle for power and the quest for justice, in personal loss, grief, fear and uncertainty. In contemporary civil wars and internal conflicts, where violence reaches into homes and villages, sometimes pitting neighbours against each other, peace cannot be imposed from above. The burden of peace-making and peace-building must be shared by all members of the society.

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The official peace processes have, however, remained almost an exclusively male domain and little has been done to encourage women's equal participation. It is predominantly the male leaders of the fighting parties who are negotiating an end to war and laying the foundations for peace. The justification often given is that the peace table must bring together those who have taken up arms, because it is up to them to stop the conflict.

While this argument may hold true for negotiations to secure an end to hostilities, it cannot be sustained for the discussions that build the framework for a new society. It is critical to include and take account of the voices of those sectors in society who don't bear arms, but are forced to bear the consequences of armed conflict. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to transitional justice. Ranging from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, the Gacaca Community Court System in Rwanda, the Human Rights Commission in Afghanistan under the Bonn Agreement, or international tribunals where local courts are inadequate, the ensuring of accountability is essential to convince men with guns that there is no impunity in acting against women.

Some of the great philosophers of peace such as Mahatma Gandhi hoped for a peaceful world in the future because of the softening of the masculine force by the feminine qualities of love, affection, service, intuition and moral power. As Mahatma Gandhi put it, "If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with women." The Secretary-General of United Nations, Kofi Anan has emphasized the role of women in peace process in the present times. According to him, "in war-torn societies, women often keep societies going. They maintain the social fabric; they replace displaced social services and tend to the sick and wounded. As a result women are often the prime advocates of peace. We must ensure that women are allowed to play a full part in peace negotiations, in peace processes and in peace missions."

THE WORLD SCENARIO

Although the major agencies of the UN and other global organizations are often sensitive towards gender issues in general, but when conflict arises and millions of displaced persons are in need of emergency relief programmes, women's participation becomes of less consequence. The urgency of providing food to the displaced and injured outweighs the focus on women's participation.

Such a scenario is a common sight whether it be the 'Joint Peace Commissions' for conflict resolutions and peace of the UN or other countries women are hardly involved in such missions. At the Dayton Peace talks that put an end to the Bosnian conflict in 1995, there were no Bosnian women in the delegations, even though the international community was well aware of the trauma that women had experienced and the responsibilities that they would be shouldering during the reconstruction process.

In 1999, prior to the NATO bombings of Kosovo, there was only one Kosovar woman at the Rambouillet negotiations. In Sierra Leone, five and half years of civil war were marked by violent attacks against women and young girls. The 1996 Peace Accord addressed many key issues regarding reconstruction, power-sharing and disarmament, but overlooked the rights and interests of women. In Tajikistan, there is only one woman in the 26-member National Reconciliation Commission, although the war has left some 25,000 widows to cope with the upbringing of their families and the reconstruction of their communities. At the first Arusha peace talks on Burundi, only two of the 126 delegates were women. In East Timor, the recently established Consultative Group of the National Council of Timorese Resistance has only two women representatives out of 15. In Palestine, although the peace process is not yet complete, women are once again experiencing tremendous pressure to return to their traditional roles. Peace activists believe, when immediate dangers recede, men adopt a very patronizing, patriarchal attitude like "good for you, you've done your national duty, now go back to the kitchen."³ In Kashmir, the women's involvement

is being affected by their being targeted by both the extremists and terrorists. By being assimilated in the political mainstream, they would have a voice.

WOMEN AS PROMOTERS OF PEACE

Social science research supports the stereotype of women as generally more collaborative than men and thus more inclined toward consensus and compromise. Ironically, women's status as second-class citizens is a source of empowerment, since it has made women adept at finding innovative ways to cope with the problems. Because women are not ensconced within the mainstream, those in power consider them less threatening, allowing women to work unimpeded and "below the radar screen." Since they usually have not been behind a rifle, women, in contrast to men, have less psychological distance to reach across a conflict line. They are also more accepted on the 'other side', because it is assumed that they did not do any of the actual killings. Women often choose an identity notably that of mothers, that cuts across international borders and ethnic enclaves.

An important first step is to recognize that despite the many challenges they face, women across Asia, Africa, Europe, North and South America are already at the forefront of many peace efforts. Whether or not they are invited to the peace table, women in war zones around the world are mobilizing to assert their right to participate in a process that bears consequences affecting all aspects of their lives. For them, the peace table is a forum not only for negotiating the end to war, but also for laying the foundations of a new society guided by the principles of social justice, human rights and equality.

Women now clearly declare that they will no longer shoulder the responsibility of supporting their families and communities, serve at the forefront of anti-war movements, or fight alongside male combatants without an equal opportunity to voice their ideas in official peace negotiations.⁴ At the grassroots and community levels, women have organized to resist militarization, to create space for dialogue and moderation, and to weave together the ripped fabric of society.

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They have spoken against the use of violence as a strategy for personal or communal gain, and they have fought for recognition of the fact that violence can never be compatible with human development.

Women's commitment to peace also remains critical to ensuring the sustainability of peace agreements signed by political and military factions. The growing recognition that women have a right to participate in political and decision-making process is increasingly supported around the world by positive action programmes and other mechanisms. One needs to recognize the critical role that women play during conflict and in post-conflict reconstruction processes. It necessarily calls for the inclusion of women as key members in the planning and implementation of relief, rehabilitation, peacemaking, reconciliation and reconstruction programmes.

After the Beijing conference, which heightened awareness towards the extent of women's under-representation and marginalization in peace negotiation processes, women's effort to influence these systems have been stepped up. With a clear international mandate and a wealth of knowledge derived from their practical experiences in building peace within communities, women have a strong justification for claiming equal participation at the peace table. Many of the women taking the lead in promoting visions of peace and social justice are emerging through community-based groups, women's movements and civil society organizations. Some are now making their way into the arena of political decision-making. Their efforts in this direction would benefit from increased national, regional and international support.

In spite of the obstacles they encounter, women in all regions of the world are devising creative and effective strategies to advocate for peace and to participate in peace-making processes. In Philippines, women initiated "Village Peace Zones" to protect their children from recruitment by militias and the state army. In the Balkans and the Caucasus, women resisted the military recruitment of husbands and sons through hiding them, lying to the authorities and even arriving at the frontlines to take them home. In Colombia, women walked together

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to the most violent regions in the country as part of the “Peaceful Road of Women” campaign.

The UN report points out that women have historically been at the forefront of peace movements. It carefully documents their courageous and unflagging efforts to end war through the channels available to them, which have been mostly non-governmental.⁵ The report also notes that women, as peace researchers, generally take a holistic approach to peace - based on the assumption that real peace requires the elimination of all forms of oppression and discrimination. This approach is particularly well suited to dealing with the interconnected problems of this age. Yet, as the report notes, “women are virtually absent from the peace process at the official level.”

BUILDING PEACE MOVEMENTS AMIDST WAR

Warfare today has become “inclusive”- with civilian deaths being more common than the soldiers - so too must be our approach toward ending conflict.⁶ Today, the goal is not simply the absence of war, but the creation of sustainable peace by fostering fundamental societal changes.

The chaos of conflict sometimes sweeps aside traditional structures and norms, bringing women into the public sphere. This can occur regardless of whether there is a well-developed women’s movement already in place. The existence of a strong women’s movement can provide important opportunities for women to enter political processes. Where there is a tradition of women’s activism, there tends to be a higher level of consciousness regarding political, cultural, economic and social issues.⁷ This can be mobilized for peace activism, while existing networks and political experience can provide a platform for women to lobby for access to peace negotiations. Women’s civil society organizations are also critical to the development and the realization of women’s full capacities for leadership.

Women often take the lead in movements that arise in the midst of a conflict partly because men are away fighting or face greater risk

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of persecution and arrest. Ironically, because women are regarded as less threatening to the established order, they tend to have more freedom of action. In some instances, they can make public pleas for peace by taking advantage of sexist notions that for the most part discourage retaliation against women.

Once the women reach the peace table itself, as either informal or official participants, they encounter additional barriers. Several survey reports⁸ describe in general, that men have reacted negatively to their presence, and in some cases are openly hostile. Men often perceive women as a threat and deliberately go out to pull them down.⁹

WOMEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE

It is pertinent to reflect upon whether the presence of women influences peace talks and agreements. Is it correct to assume that the increased participation of women at the Dayton talks or in Sierra Leone would have brought the rights and needs of women into the agenda? Rigid distinctions clearly cannot be made about the actions and interests of all men and women in peace talks. Stereotypical notions of women as nurturers and peace lovers have been debated for many years.

Women do bring different perspectives to peace negotiations, some of which may be related to socialization, and others to women's long stint as grassroots activists or as family caretakers. Gender awareness can also make a difference, but for many women, this stems from their own living conditions, not from exposure to particular trainings or theoretical discussions.¹⁰

It is clear that many of the women who survive the difficult path to the peace table are not afraid to speak their minds. The concerns and perspectives on peace that women usually put forth are often diametrically opposite to those being discussed at the male-dominated levels. The official political echelons seem to get bogged down in the historical and political issues. While the women at the community level usually feel that housing, education and childcare are the important things.

If it is difficult to define the qualitative differences that women make at the peace table, it is not so difficult to see the concrete results of their actions. As is the case with women in decision making roles in other kinds of institutions, women at the peace table do bring about change. They propose laws supporting equality for women and other social sectors, and initiate new development strategies and programmes that benefit both women and society at large.

STANDING UP FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Women at peace tables are often the sole voices speaking out for women's rights and concerns. Since the peace and reconstruction process sets the tone for the political, economic and social institutions that follow, women with an understanding of gender issues can make critical contributions to the long-term goal of women's development and equality.

The direct participation of women at the peace table is the only way to ensure that women's demands are incorporated in the agreements. They ensure that not only would they have a place at the peace table, but that they would also be able to use the peace accords to address the fundamental factors contributing to women's oppression.¹¹ As a result, the accord supports women's rights to land ownership, access to credit, health care and participation in political processes.

Women in decision-making processes have the responsibility to ensure that the voices of women as a whole are not lost. Where men can be dismissive or simply unaware, women would draw attention to the problems of other women, and stand firm on the subjects relating to their rights. On issues like violence against women, trafficking, exploitation of women, men are not usually the victims. It is the women who are the victims, so they cry out.¹²

Women who enter peace processes sometimes face threats to their life and personal safety. Besides, regressive social norms deny women opportunities to assume leadership roles. In committing itself to

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supporting women's participation in peace-making, the international community must seriously consider how to express support for women leaders who dare to speak out.

CONCLUSION

Women's participation, whether formal or informal, has contributed to ensuring that social justice and gender equality remain central both to the agreements reached at the peace table and to the ensuing process of reconstruction and reconciliation.

Often the gains that women have negotiated at the peace table are largely rooted in their first hand experiences of the consequences of war. In most conflict situations, women assume expanded leadership roles in providing for their families and sustaining community relationships and structures. Economic hardships, sexual abuse and other human rights violations are among the key factors that propel women to mobilize for peace.

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ROLE OF NGOs IN PEACE MAKING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Bupinder Zutshi

Peacemaking is one of the noblest of all virtues culled from humanism, altruism and religious ethical norms. All religions and major faiths have advocated making peace a supreme duty of all the human beings. *Shalom* is a simple greeting expression in Hebrew which means “peace beyond strife.” It denotes a destination of complete peace. Similarly, *Om Shanti* signifies peace, peace and peace (*Upanishad* 1:3:28) in Hindu scriptures. In Islam, peacemaking is held in high regard. God loves those who are equitable (60:8) and those who act in justice (40:9 *Quran*). In Christianity, peace, which passes all understanding for the human soul, is promulgated by St. Augustine (5th century AD) and St. Thomas Aquinas as achieving the final Kingdom. Dorothy Day, one of the proponents of peace, states, “love is the measure by which we will be judged.”

Peace can be defined as the absence of chaos, confusion and conflict. It encompasses democratic ideals and protection of human rights, freedom from discrimination and establishment of equity and equality based values. Lack of peace often leads to poverty, discrimination, hatred and disharmony in the society. Establishing peace and cultivating democratic values prevent conflicts and instability, improves governance and strengthens the rule of law. When citizens are empowered, they use their voices to influence policy, protect human rights and hold their governments accountable.

Internal violence arises from gender, caste and ethnic discrimination, exclusion, unequal distribution of power and resources, illiteracy and exploitation of disadvantageous groups. Bad/poor governance, corruption and mishandling of small conflicts result in internal violence. People see war and conflicts as hurdle to prosperity and equitable distribution of wealth. Therefore, people are now craving

for peace and conflict resolution through all methods especially through partnerships with Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), who have significant influence among the communities.

A UN report points out that NGOs have historically been at the forefront of the peace movements. It carefully documents their courageous and unflagging efforts to end war through the available channels, which have been mostly non-governmental. The report also notes that women, as peace researchers, generally take a holistic approach to peace - based on the assumption that real peace requires the elimination of all forms of oppression and discrimination. This approach is particularly well suited to dealing with the interconnected problems of this age.¹

It is only too well known that even though states have agreed to international legal standards regarding human rights and the conduct of conflict, but at the same time, more and more communities have been caught at the centre of these conflicts. Violence against communities is not an accident of war: it is a strategic weapon of war that has been used for the purpose of spreading terror, destabilizing societies and breaking resistance, rewarding soldiers and extracting information. Violence against women, including torture, forcible displacement, sexual assault, rape and murder has also been used a method of ethnic cleansing and as an element of genocide.

It is now generally been recognized that conquest and aggression have lost their credibility as means of solving difficult problems and hence peace initiatives are gaining ground across the globe. For peace to take roots, the burden of peacemaking and peace building cannot be borne effectively by any one sector of society alone. It is critical to take account of the voices of those sectors in society who don't bear arms, but are forced to bear the consequences of armed conflict. NGOs have an overwhelming claim to be present in the peace process. It is essential to utilize the qualities in which NGOs are strong, such as the capacity to link intuition to the other rational processes, and their initiatives of networking and cooperation. NGOs are operating

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community projects, raising awareness, building trust and changing attitudes in favour of peace. At the same time, NGOs have become increasingly involved in actively working for peace, responding instinctively to nurture the human race for the sake of its survival.²

According to the UN Security Council statement on 8 March 2000, “the equal access and full participation of both men and women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts are essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.” Thus as increasing numbers of women are admitted into centres of decision-making, enabling new dynamics of problem-solving to emerge. UNESCO has identified eight areas within the programme of action towards peace initiatives. These eight areas are.

1. *Culture of Peace Through Education* - The very concept of power needs to be transformed - from the logic of force and fear to the force of reason and love.
2. *Sustainable Economic and Social Development* - This represents a major change in the concept of economic growth which, in the past, could be considered as benefiting from military supremacy and structural violence, and advanced at the expense of the vanquished and the weak.
3. *Respect for All Human Rights* - The elaboration and international acceptance of universal human rights... calls for the transformation of values, attitudes and behaviours from those who would benefit exclusively - clan, tribe or nation, toward those that benefit the entire human family.
4. *Equality Between Women and Men* - Equality, development and peace can replace the historical inequity between men and women that has always characterized the “Culture of War and Violence.”
5. *Democratic Participation* - This is the only way to replace the authoritarian structures of power which were created by and which have, in the past, sustained the “Culture of War and Violence.”

6. *Understanding, Tolerance and Solidarity* - There has never been a war without an 'enemy', and to abolish war, we must transcend and supercede enemy images with understanding, tolerance and solidarity among all people and cultures.
7. *Participatory Communication and the Free Flow of Information and Knowledge* - [These are] needed to replace the secrecy and manipulation of information which characterize the "Culture of War and Violence."
8. *Internal Peace and Security* – [This includes] peace diplomacy, peacekeeping, disarmament and military conversion (Adams, 2000a, p.261).

Initiating a peace process among the citizens requires internal stability, so that citizens can move forward socially, economically and politically. The social composition of the citizens, security environment of the area and political situations are important ingredients for development of a peace process. The tolerance and resilience of the community to withstand the provocations depends upon their cultural history and surrounding social and cultural situations. The presence of multi-cultural society has no doubt contributed to a better understanding of other cultures as people move, mingle and exchange ideas and goods. While the fusion leads to cross-cultural appreciation and tolerance through the mixing of cultures as bodies of knowledge, but sometimes, it leads to mutual fear and suspicion, if interested parties exploit and distort the situations to achieve political or social mileage. Migrations of multi-cultural societies trigger a long and complicated chain of relationships between migrants, the hosts and their environment. In its most meaningful sense, culture implies tolerance, since openness to others is the condition of creativity and spiritual development. Unfortunately, we have often witnessed culture being used as an alibi for closed minds, encouraging intolerance and hatred between individuals. Current cases of cultural intolerance have translated into discrimination, persecution, ethnic cleansing of minority groups and war.

Thus, a paradigm of peaceful coexistence among the people needs to be strengthened and activated for 'learning to live together.' NGOs

can play a significant role by imparting the values of human civilization as a product of mutual enrichment among cultures and people. They can inculcate the values of tolerance, respect for others and peace in communities from the early stages of life. Through dialogue and non-violence, openness to other cultures transcending national frontiers can be created.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION - TRACKS

In view of the escalation of conflicts, there has been an urgent need for conflict resolution at various levels for ensuring peace. More resources at different levels like government machinery, international organizations, NGOs, religious and community levels are required to harness the participation and cooperation to resolve conflicts.³ Since the government structures alone are inadequate to meet these challenges due to rigid structure and national priorities, NGOs, civil society organizations, religious leaders and community leaders have important role in this regard.⁴

First generation approaches are based upon the tradition, norms and culture of Western diplomacy and operate at the level of the state, while international mediation and negotiation represent stylized and formal communication between official and sovereign representatives based upon zero-sum interests. Such interests can be manipulated and coordinated, but only through the use of coercion, in the presence of ripe moments, mainly engendered by hurting stalemates of the external provision of large incentives, of which the settlement of the Egypt-Israel conflict at Camp David is a good example.⁵

Several actors/categories or tracks have been identified to address conflict resolution effectively and all these categories must work in tandem. The major actors/actions required are official diplomacy. The "Track-II diplomacy" includes education, research and training to identify the root cause of the conflicts, extension of business among the conflicting groups, appropriate funding to overcome the root causes of conflicts, appropriate and positive media coverage, knowledge diffusion through networking and communication, use of community and religious

leaders, NGOs, advocacy groups and citizens. The Carnegie Commission recognized the role of the UN and its agencies in conflict resolutions and peace building initiatives.

Major aims and objectives of the Track-II diplomacy are:

- To reduce or resolve conflict between groups, communities, regions, or nations by improving communication channels, create understanding of conflicts and prepare the ground for cooperation and relationships.
- To lower tension, anger, fear, or misunderstanding by humanizing the “face of enemy” and giving people direct personal experience of understanding the view points of each other.
- To affect the thinking and action of Track-I diplomacy by exploring options without prejudice, thereby preparing ground for formal negotiations to re-frame policies.

Peacemaking, humanitarian approaches and peace building tasks are being delegated by states and inter-governmental organizations to NGOs that have humanitarian, developmental, human rights, educational and conflict resolution orientations. These NGOs are playing a vital role in developing new approaches to end conflicts, particularly in the context of their growing links with transnational organizations and their professed interests in human rights and human security issues.

NGOs AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION CAPACITIES

NGOs have increased in numbers in terms of areas spread among different regions. The mission, activities and objectives of NGOs have also transformed to keep pace with the current requirements and issues faced by the communities. A significant number of NGOs are involved and engaged in works related to:

- Development, relief and advocacy which are of direct benefit to the people. Thus NGOs have achieved goodwill of the people and people have reposed their faith with the NGOs.
- NGOs have highly skilled and trained manpower and are in

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better position to bring conflicting groups together to communicate and understand each others' view points.

- Even the UN agencies have reposed their faith in reconciliation and peace building measures taken up by NGOs and have made them key partners of their agencies as well as other multilateral and donor agencies. The UN has affirmed that NGOs “are an indispensable part of the legitimacy without which no international activity can be meaningful.”

However, NGOs must take note of the following requirements in order to play key role towards peace initiatives and conflict resolution:

- Preserve their identity, neutrality and impartiality. Unofficial status of NGOs provides them with more access to conflicting parties, which helps in the negotiation process.
- The long-term commitment of NGOs is crucial in establishing trust among the people and achieving lasting peace among conflicting parties.
- Familiarity with the area, issues and participants of the conflict.
- They should have indigenous partners and the staff must be well grounded in conflict resolution skills and knowledge.
- NGO workers must understand and accept the personal risks that they are likely to face in resolving a conflict.

NGO STRATEGIES FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

NGOs have to adopt several strategies to provide solutions to the conflicting parties, which need to be adopted jointly to compliment each other for strengthening the peace processes. The major strategies are:

- NGOs are using internet extensively for collation of information on the activities of other NGOs and civil society organizations. The information collected is disseminated for the benefit of other organizations. Hence, knowledge is disseminated to create value addition, and to update other organizations.
- Networking does not involve red-tapism, its goal is to be effective, dynamic and action-oriented. NGOs have made use of the internet not only for the access, sharing and dissemination

of information but also for advocacy, awareness building, consultancy, education and sensitization, identifying resources, impact analysis, knowledge creation, providing mutual support, develop news and even information, provide programme/project support and impart teaching, training and learning capacities to staff and other stake holders. Networking is making, maintaining and using contacts.

- Communication is necessary for every interaction and for working together. Working together can provide us with a wider audience, more political strength, more knowledge and experience. Through constructive communication and dissemination of activities and services, an NGO is able to deliver its message to its constituency. Communication and networking go together.
- The internet has provided the ideal platform for intensive collaboration and partnerships between NGOs themselves and with other organizations. These collaborations have typically been with respect to information, programmes and projects, monitoring and evaluation, research, policy development etc.

NETWORKING THROUGH INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Networking with other NGOs and like minded people and organizations improves the collaboration, participation, partnerships and exchange of ideas to build knowledge for adding value to the operations. Four steps are essential to build up a good network:

- Giving information about your own activities, your own organisation by building a mailing list and mailing regularly, using E-mail and news groups or a website, sending out invitations;
- Showing interest: Phone around regularly, visit activities of other people and organisations, send them a post card when you feel like it, try to remember personal interests;
- Organising meeting points: To build a good network, you need to meet people personally. Invite them to a conference, seminar or social gathering; and

- Common actions/activities: The best way to get to know people is to work with them, involving them in the project and strengthening network links.

Modern information technology and “Electronic Networking”, in particular, can strengthen the organization by boosting its base and its ability to share information and experiences with strategic allies and other partners in the field. It brings people together to build and shape partnerships and a joint programme of action on common themes. It provides a convenient, inexpensive forum for bringing together a number of people to share their experiences and information with one another, enabling them to make better programmes and policy decisions. “Electronic Networking” enables members of a group to remain at their respective offices and “meet” electronically, thus sparing themselves the expense and time of travelling to distant conference halls or training centres.

Networking has been helpful in developing outreach and mobilization of resources to broaden their support base, mobilize their information, share resources, avoid repetition and overlapping, gain access to information from a vast range of sources and broadcast their message both within and beyond their immediate circles. It has also brought together people from various disciplines to discuss common objectives in a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach as addressing peace building and conflict resolution requires building bridges different fields. It has also benefited the organizations towards adopting reforms , focusing on capacity building and strengthening the ability of the organizations to do things for people’s approach that are relevant to local or national circumstances.

Networking has also expanded participation and involvement of local populace due to instant communication and problem solving techniques. The methodologies adopted vary from people’s perspective and cultural ethos. These methodologies are open space technology through the use of information, communication and technology, story telling, after actions reviews and action plan formulations.

PARTICIPANTS FOR PEACE BUILDING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The participants in such programmes of knowledge sharing are selected appropriately to represent respective cultural, social, religious groups from local regions, districts and states. The participants must represent all stake holders covering majority of sectors of peace and conflict resolution. Thus participants should be representing government bureaucrats, NGO representatives, community and religious leaders, peace experts, academicians, IT professionals, women representatives and representatives from conflicting societies/ groups. The criteria for selecting participants should be to include participants with experiences in dealing with peace issues and their contribution towards conflict resolution process.

Some of the issues in Peace Building and Conflict Resolutions which need to be addressed are:

- Analysis of successful approaches that have been adopted for promoting peace and conflict resolution. Efficacy and relevance of such approaches in the present context.
- Examination of challenges in peace building process.
- Sharing of peace building experiences with other stakeholders and learning to update and modify approaches towards peace building.
- Examination of different information and communication tools for managing conflicts and their efficacy and positive and negative influences.⁶
- Identification of challenges on online networking with regard to peace building and conflict resolution.
- Discussion on the dissemination process of peace content with other peace actors.
- Identification of open content philosophies that seem more appropriate for sharing peace content worldwide.
- Identification of different creative online peace building and conflict resolution resource centres and their good practice initiatives.

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THE SHAPE OF THINGS

Saligram Bhatt

This paper briefly surveys the shape of things that affect us as human beings such as our culture and heritage. It also refers to the shape of things for the world order that we live in presently. It draws inspiration from the harmonious cultural, social and scientific heritage of humankind that shapes lives of over six billion people.

WHY KASHMIRI HERITAGE?

I ask myself why we today take a look on the Kashmiri culture and heritage. What benefit do we derive from such a survey and analysis? Firstly, I agree with Prof. Amartya Sen, the Noble laureate in welfare economics, who in his very perceptive book *The Argumentative Indian*¹ says that the greatest contribution of India to present world order is the composite cultural heritage and pluralism. Kashmir has always stood for a composite culture and for harmony of all spiritualism that mankind has produced.

Secondly, India has a variety of cultures of various States and geographical regions. This diversity is contained in the overall unity of our way of life. Kashmir has stood against all forms of fundamentalism in history. It has a variety of its own culture, popularly known as *Kashmiriat*. The world will be poorer if we do not recognise the beauty and harmony of different cultures. All the noble values of Indian way of life of love, human brotherhood, compassion, are contained in *Kashmiriat*. A leading poet of Kashmir of recent times, Ghulam Ahmad Mehjoor (died 9 April 1952) was attracted by the great poet laureate of India, Rabindranath Tagore. Among other great poets and saints of Kashmir we have inspiring roles in history from Kalhana, Habba Khatun, Lal Ded, Sheikh Nur-ud-Din Rishi, Abhinavagupta, Parmanand, Prof. P.N. Pushp, Zinda Kaul, Dina Nath Nadim, Samad Mir etc. The list is very long.

Thirdly, it is the time to bring forth the message of composite culture and secularism to world stage. Arnold Toynbee who has produced an enlightenment for us from his study of history says that humankind has followed long periods of peace with occasional brief periods of turmoil. The world is looking for peace and cooperation among peoples of the world. An event like 9/11 in 2001 was an unfortunate incident comparable to many such ugly incidents of history. But humankind needs a response to this challenge. We cannot agree with the concept of a clash of civilisations. Even the learned Professor Samuel Huntington² does not believe that a war will result due to a clash of civilisations. He, however, laments the factors like terrorism, moral standards, corruption in political life etc. that have created imbalances in world society.

“India has been a multi-religious country for a very long time with Jews, Christians, Parsees and Muslim traders arriving and settling in India over the first millennium. Sikhism was born in India, in the same way that Buddhism and Jainism originated in the country”, says Prof. Amartya Sen.³ Sen goes for a federal concept of identity in a “federation of cultures”.⁴ We have been talking of a plural culture of India which Sen now feels is emerging in other parts of the world like in Great Britain. It may be true of even USA and some other countries where there are pockets of composite culture.

Being a student of international law, I have been studying the making of the world order based on a common law of mankind. We have had visionary jurists and international lawyers like Prof. Myres McDougal and Harold Lasswell from Yale Law School, Dr. Nagendra Singh, the World Court Judge, and Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer who have put forth their efforts for a world order based on common law or mankind. I make a few submissions as to how world community is already moving on a creative path for progress based on the rule of laws.

OUTER SPACE EXPLORATION

First, let us look how space exploration has transformed world society. Space law has created freedom of outer space for exploration, use and scientific investigation. A vast new frontier of cosmic world is open for study. National sovereignty has been denied in outer space and replaced by the common interests of mankind.⁵

ENVIRONMENT MOVEMENT

In the second most important event of contemporary history, the environment movement binds all mankind together on this planet as common species, called *Homo Sapiens*. The Stockholm Declaration of 1972 has produced a world charter for humanity to live in harmony with nature. At the Johannesburg Declaration of 2002, the comity of nations made sustainable development a goal for economic development. This includes the best creative inputs of science and technology and the welfare economics of Prof. Amartya Sen and Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India.

SCIENCE AND SYNTHESIS

A third dimension to world order has been imparted by modern scientists, especially the biologists. In a UNESCO symposium on “Science and Synthesis” in 1971 under Julian Huxley, leading scientists participated providing a biologist view of the world. Thus modern science or knowledge is considered an integrated body of wisdom of humankind to solve all problems of world society. These include problems of peace, a better way of life and removal of poverty.⁶

RATE OF CHANGE

What we are concerned with the shape of things is the fast pace of change. These changes are associated with the globalisation of life on this planet, the making of one megalopolis, new airports and routes, malls etc. Are we changing into a global city state? Does federalism offer us help to maintain privacy and a quieter life? Plato has said that the primitive stage of civilisation is the progressive stage also. Are we prepared to think now for the future of planet and what Plato has said?

CONSERVATION

That brings me to the concept of conservation which is so dear to Kashmiri heritage and culture. Conservation of nature, of our monuments and past cultures, is yet again a worldwide movement. It is our duty to conserve the composite culture of Kashmir, maintain its monuments for which late Ram Chand Kak wrote a nice book.⁷ Conservation also means preservation of all cultural identities as a heritage of humankind. Kashmiri Pandit heritage is a rich part of national and global heritage. It has to be preserved and developed along with the other cultural treasures in Kashmir. Walter Lawrence wrote a very fascinating book on the history of Kashmir in 1895.⁸ It is perhaps a commentary on the progressive stage of Kashmiri society, when the valley was so beautiful and peaceful and the communities lived in harmony and love. It becomes our duty, therefore, to revive the shape of things that represent the glory of Kashmir and its heritage.

REFERENCES

1. See Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian* (Allen Lane, Penguin Books, London, 2005), p.409.
2. See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisation and the Remaking of World Order* (Penguin Books, 1996), p.367 & 321. Huntington concludes that one tolerant global civilisation will be the answer to the progress of world.
3. Amartya Sen, *op.cit.*, p.353.
4. *Ibid.*, p.355.
5. See S. Bhatt, *Legal Controls of Outer Space: Law, Freedom and Responsibility* (1973), p.372.
6. See Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (London, 1988). Hawking says that modern scholars consider all knowledge in one perspective.
7. See R.C. Kak, *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir* (1933) (with foreword by Francis Young Husband).
8. See Walter R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir* (1895), p.478.

THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (58TH SESSION): A REPORT

Sharad K. Soni

The 58th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) took place from 18 March 2002 to 26 April 2002 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland to make a review and have discussions on the state of human rights and fundamental freedoms around the world. It was in 1946 that the Economic and Social Council created the Commission, which is composed of 53 Member States. As the United Nations' principal human rights organ, it carries out studies, makes recommendations and elaborates draft international instruments on human rights. Besides, it also looks into allegations of human rights violations and provides a positive atmosphere for the coordination of human rights activities in the United Nations system. As in previous years, a series of meetings took place during the six-week long session of the UNCHR, which deliberated upon issues ranging from situations in specific countries to the rights of indigenous peoples, problems of racism and challenges of development.

The 58th session of the UNCHR not only witnessed participation by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan but also several other dignitaries at ministerial and higher level as guests of honour especially during the first two weeks of this session. Krzysztof Jakubowski of Poland was elected as Chairman of this session who replaced Leandro Despouy of Argentina. The elected Vice-Chairpersons included Walter Lewalter of Germany, Sipho George Nene of South Africa, and Toufik Salloum of the Syrian Arab Republic. Frederico Duque Estrada Meyer of Brazil was chosen as Rapporteur for the 58th session. While addressing the Commission, Leandro Despouy, the outgoing Chairperson expressed concern over changes taking place around the world all the time. He recalled that last year, even as the Commission met, the Taliban of Afghanistan, who were not listening to the

Commission's pleas, had bombed and destroyed Buddhist statues widely considered to be among the common cultural heritage of all mankind. "Problems in the Middle East had continued unabated, and in fact had intensified over the past 12 months," he said. "Three days after the conclusion of the Durban World Conference against Racism, a complex and audacious United Nations-led international exercise into difficult and pressing issues, the world had been stunned and distressed to see the most spectacular terrorist attack ever carried out, against the World Trade Centre in New York City, which had been followed by the war in Afghanistan," he added

Meanwhile, Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, underlined that the Commission was a forum at which the most comprehensive debate on the state of human rights in the world was pursued. She said that the events of 11 September were not only of monumental consequence for the people of the United States and the victims who came from over 80 countries, but also they were an attack against the very system of international relations on which the Commission and the entire work of the United Nations was based. Stressing that the international human rights standards were at risk of being undermined and there was a particular responsibility on this Commission to defend them vigorously, she emphasized that terrorism had to be responded to not only with legislative and security measures but with the armoury of common values, common standards and common commitments on universal rights.

Emphasizing that human rights were the foundation of peace, justice and development, the newly elected Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights, Krzysztof Jakubowski, said that human rights in governance were crucial to the reduction of poverty, the promotion of growth and development as well as the prevention of conflicts. While highlighting the need for the Commission to increase cooperation and dialogue, he said that the United Nations method was indeed the method of cooperation and that the goal of dialogue was not to impose one's viewpoint. "A dialogue required the recognition of the diversity of the world, and a recognition of the shared values of

freedom, tolerance and respect for human rights,” he added. Besides, in order to make the Commission more effective, he invited the Commission to reflect on what could be done to improve its efficiency so that human rights programmes could perform better everywhere.

In his address to the Commission on April 12, 2002, the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan stated that the attacks of 11 September had expressed a state of mind in which human rights ceased to have any meaning. He said that security could not be achieved by sacrificing human rights. “To try and do so would hand the terrorists a victory beyond their dreams. On the contrary, greater respect for human rights, along with democracy and social justice, would in the long term prove the only effective prophylactic against terror,” he said. “The international community must continue the struggle to give everyone on this planet a reason to value their own rights, and to respect those of others.” Mr. Annan said that there undoubtedly was a hard core of terrorists whose minds were already beyond reach, and against whom there was no choice but for nations and peoples to defend themselves physically — with great vigilance at all times, with exemplary justice when they fell into official hands, and, when necessary, with military force. He, however, remarked that all these things should be done in accordance with the law, and that all should be careful, in defending themselves, not to play into the enemy’s hands, or to act as his recruiting sergeant.

Several issues deliberated at the 58th session of the UNCHR included the Right of Peoples to Self-determination and its Application to Peoples under Colonial or Alien domination or Foreign occupation; Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and all forms of Discrimination; the Right to Development; Question of the violation of human rights and fundamental freedom in any part of the world; Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Civil and Political Rights including the question of Torture and Detention, Disappearance and Summary Executions, Freedom of Expression, Religious Intolerance; Integration of the human rights of Women and the Gender Perspective; Violation against Women; Rights of the Child; Human Rights of Migrant Workers; Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious

and Linguistic Minorities; Mass Exoduses and Displaced Persons; Contemporary Forms of Slavery; Rights of the Indigenous People; Annual Report of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights; Status of the International Covenants on Human Rights; the question of Human Rights Education; the question of Human Rights and the Environment etc.

The Right of Peoples to Self-determination

While debating on the right of peoples to self-determination and its application to peoples under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation, the Commission on Human Rights considered a report on the question of the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination (E/CN.4/2002/20) submitted by Enrique Bernales Ballesteros, Special Rapporteur on mercenaries. The report focussed, among others, on the issues of mercenary activities in Africa, the current status of mercenary activities, terrorism and mercenary activities, problems raised by a legal definition of mercenaries and the use, financing and training of mercenaries. The report underlined the link between mercenaries and terrorism could not be denied. Crimes against mankind such as those of 11 September must not occur again. Resolution 1373 of the Security Council was not unrelated to mercenaries since they were involved in international crime, money laundering, and the illegal smuggling of weapons. One must fight not only individual mercenaries but also their support network organizations. The report recommended, among other things, that special attention be paid to combatting the involvement of mercenaries in illicit arms trafficking, which served to fuel and prolong armed conflicts.

Sharat Sabharwal of India said that India had emerged from the dark shadow of colonial rule through a historic non-violent struggle for independence led by Mahatma Gandhi. The people of India, across the length and breadth of the country exercised their right to self-determination. In their hour of triumph, they had recognized the

cardinal importance of efforts to universalize the enjoyment of this basic right to all peoples still struggling under colonial rule. India had maintained unwavering solidarity with the people of Palestine who had struggled bravely over the past five decades to attain their inalienable rights. He said that interested parties could abuse self-determination by encouraging secession and undermining multi-ethnic, pluralistic and democratic States. “Pakistan, whose own people had been deprived of their democratic rights for most of its history, ruled part of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir illegally,” he said. “Pakistan had occupied it as a virtual colony, and had been indulging in abuse of the concept of self-determination to bolster its agenda of territorial aggrandizement through terrorism against India.” Stressing that the terrorism perpetrated by Pakistan had been responsible for widespread killings of innocent civilians, he said that Pakistan must ensure the right of self-determination for its own people before sermonizing others on it. “Pakistan must also desist from loading its discredited agenda on to the legitimate aspirations of others for self-determination”, he added.

Sardar Shaukat Ali Kashmiri of the *European Union of Public Relations* said that Jammu and Kashmir had been forcibly occupied by Pakistan since October 1947, and Pakistan had failed to comply with relevant resolutions for the self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. “By not evacuating the areas of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan was fully to blame for failing to secure United Nations supervision of both the Pakistan and Indian occupied parts of Kashmir and for denying the right to self-determination for the people of the state,” he added. “The Government of Pakistan was fully responsible and must be held accountable for denying the people of Kashmir their right to self-determination.”

K. Bennot of the *Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity Organization* said that the essence of humanity was to permit people to the freedom not only to articulate their aspirations but also to take the steps essential to achieving the objectives that they set out for their individual lives. It was this desire for self-expression and, more importantly, the articulation and attainment of aspirations that had fuelled the

anti-colonial movements. The practice of colonialism and empire-building was a negation of humanity because it treated the peoples' right of free choice with contempt. He stressed that the discourse about self-determination needed to be focussed on ensuring that people were allowed to choose their leaders and fashion their polity through the exercise of free choice. "Pakistan was in need of the basic freedoms that would enable a collective effort to end poverty, encourage modernisation and development and eliminate the regressive practices that frequent episodes of dictatorship had encouraged," he added.

Milind Waidandey of the *World Federation of Trade Unions* drew the attention of the Commission to the issue of Kashmir. He said that India had declared its part of Jammu and Kashmir as a constitutional unit of Indian Union. But in the other two parts, the Pakistan held Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan was not ready to acknowledge its occupation. Interestingly, Pakistan did not demand the implementation of UN resolutions and the right to self-determination for the entire State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and all forms of Discrimination

Under this agenda item, the Commission had before it a report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.4/2002/21) on the implementation of the programme of action for the Third Decade to combat racism and racial discrimination and coordination of activities. It reported on the activities of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; the international convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination; and the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. It also contained aspects of the follow-up activities of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which included the establishment of the Anti-Discrimination Unit, new OHCHR website activities, technical cooperation, human rights monitoring and protection activities, human rights investigations, inputs to the human rights treaty bodies system and sections on indigenous people, minorities and HIV/AIDS.

There was also a report by Maurice Glele-Ahanhanzo, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, (E/CN.4/2002/24), in which he concluded that “the persistence of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in both subtle and violent manifestations shows that questions of equality, social justice and respect for the diversity of the human rights are crucial to solving the problems with which mankind is confronted in the twenty-first century.”

As discussion on this agenda item began, the Commission on Human Rights heard a number of delegates stressing that while the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action results of last September’s World Conference against Racism had set a useful framework for progress, real success would only come from practically devised national and international efforts to end racism.

Ramanathan Kumar, the representative of India expressed dismay over persistence of racism around the world. He said that among its manifestations were glaring economic disparities; bigotry, chauvinism and violence against diversity, tolerance and pluralism; absence or undermining of democracy and the rule of law; political concepts in which foreigners were regarded as rivals or competitors or threats to local prosperity, culture or identity; racist laws in relation to immigration, citizenship, and refugee flows; and political platforms based on race-related hatred and discrimination. Pointing to the cases of the overthrow of constitutionally established Governments to promote racism and racial discrimination, he said, “there had been a deliberate attempt by some to dilute the focus on racism and racial discrimination by broadening the scope of the issue to include other forms of discrimination.” He stressed that there was a need to use education to battle racism and that the mass media should be encouraged to promote ideas of tolerance and understanding among peoples.

Alfredo Sfeir-Younis, the representative of the World Bank, said that socio-economic development was the most effective and powerful complement to a human rights approach to racism and discrimination.

He said that protection of and respect for minority rights was not only for the benefit of specific minorities but also for the realization of those rights to the benefit of everyone on the planet. Expressing World Bank's readiness to assist any developing country which decided to open space for the elimination of racism and discrimination, he regretted that the World Bank had not always chosen the course that was ultimately right.

Odile Sorgho-Moulinier, the representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), said that the agency had enjoyed several years of close cooperation with the High Commissioner in the integration of human rights with sustainable human development and in advancing human rights in all regions of the world. He said that UNDP had joined other actors in a common endeavour to combat racism and this implied the need to take adequate measures to follow up the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the Durban Conference. UNDP would pursue its actions in favour of indigenous communities, support the strengthening of national mechanisms to promote and protect the human rights of victims of racism, address the sources, causes, forms and contemporary manifestations of racism and support measures of prevention, education and protection aimed at the eradication of racism.

Prof. Tatiana Shaumian of the *International Institute for Peace* said that it was a sad but true fact that among the nations of the world it was the poorer and less developed countries which were far more liberal in permitting human intercourse than the privileged rich and developed nations. She said that the battle against terrorism was a just battle as long as those actually responsible were targeted with evidence and proof. She stressed that one must be extremely vigilant in analysing crisis situations in different countries so that the existence of a crisis did not become an excuse for the perpetuation of discriminatory policies. She urged the Commission to take the lead in cautioning nation-states against any tendency to use moments of tragedy as pretexts for the institutionalization of discrimination. "A corollary to such an exercise must be to examine the legal, constitutional and institutional structures

of States so that they were restrained from providing official sanction for discriminatory practices,” she added.

C. Abdelbagui of the *World Federation for Democratic Youth* said that young people belonging to every racial, ethnic or religious background were often the prime victims of racism and discrimination, in particular during times of insecurity and acute crisis. Stressing that the rapid proliferation of destructive forms of racism could not be remedied by mere lofty pronouncements or intellectual methods, he said that the reality of the experiences of the victims of racism and racial discrimination required practical and proactive measures, apart from sustained anti-racism and anti-discrimination educational campaigns.

Right to Development

Before opening up a discussion on this agenda item, the Commission considered a series of documents, including a report of the open-ended Working Group on the right to development on its third session (E/CN.4/2002/28). The report noted among its conclusions and recommendations that there is a need for an international environment conducive to realization of the right to development and that it is important to identify and analyze obstacles. It said that particular attention should be placed on financial issues such as international trade, good governance and equity at the international level, and reduction of the debt burden of developing countries. The report stressed that national efforts should focus among other things on poverty eradication, enhancement of the role of women, emphasis on the rights of the child, efforts to stem the spread of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, steps to promote good governance, measures to advance civil society, and programmes to combat corruption. The Working Group termed the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) as “a practical example, which could be explored for the promotion of a rights-based approach to development.”

There was also a report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the right to development (E/CN.4/2002/27), which not only reviewed activities of her Office relating to implementation of the right

but also evaluated implementation of resolutions of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights with regard to the right to development. Besides, the report also analyzed coordination among relevant entities of the United Nations system in the implementation of relevant resolutions of the Commission on Human Rights.

There was yet another report of the Independent Expert on the right to development (E/CN.4/2002/WG.18/2). Introducing his report the Independent Expert, Arjun Sengupta urged the Commission to consider his proposal to establish “development compacts”, an idea that he said was worth testing as a means of ensuring that the right to development became a vital and effective framework for human development. The report considered, among other things, the concept and content of the right to development as the right to a process, the role of NGOs in promoting the right to development, the obligations of States and human rights and development cooperation. The report stressed that the right to development as the right to a process of development was not just an umbrella right or the sum of a set of rights. It was the right to a process that expanded the capabilities or freedom of individuals to improve their well-being and to realize what they valued. The report continued that implementing the right to development would require both national and international actions, although the primary responsibility for implementing the right to development belongs to States.

During discussions on this agenda item the Commission on Human Rights heard a several developing countries urging increase in financial aid from rich nations, establishment of a more equitable international trade regime, waiving of external debt, steps to reduce growing disparities in wealth and income, and measures to protect vulnerable countries from sudden shifts in international financial flows and unexpected economic downturns. They also said that economic globalization was so far an unequal process and had to be adjusted or managed so that less fortunate countries were not left out or marginalized. There were appeals from national delegations for increases in official development assistance (ODA), greater relief of

foreign-debt burdens, and effective steps to ensure that the global trade and financial systems took the needs and fragilities of developing countries into account.

Citing World Bank figures Cuba said that of the world's 6 billion inhabitants, some 2.8 billion lived on less than \$ 2 per day, and 1.2 billion on less than \$ 1 per day, while by contrast, the average income of the 20 richest countries on the planet was 37 times higher than that of the 20 poorest nations. A representative of Bangladesh, speaking on behalf of the Group of Least-Developed Countries (LDCs), said that the market share of LDCs in global trade had decreased from 2 per cent at the end of the 1960 to 0.8 per cent at the end of the 1970s to only about 0.4 per cent in 2000. He said that the world was proceeding at a much faster rate than LDCs could cope with, and if this drift towards marginalization was not reversed, much talk about human rights would be meaningless. A representative of Ethiopia said that democracy, good governance, and the full enjoyment of human rights were prerequisites for development progress, and that while extensive international help was needed, developing countries also had to accept that their destinies primarily were and always would be in their own hands.

While calling for an increase in development assistance Sha Zukang, the representative of China, said that development assistance had been arriving with more and more conditions attached, which was not conducive to enhancing the right to development. Realization of the right required joint efforts by the international community and States. The international community, for its part, needed to safeguard the right of developing countries to participate equally in the making of international rules, and it should change the current irrational international economic, trading and financial order, or at least refrain from setting up new obstacles to development for developing countries. The developed countries should help with debt relief, capacity building, and realization of sustainable development in poorer nations. He said that each country had the right to choose its own path of development and to set its own priorities in the light of its prevailing conditions.

Sharat Sabharwal, the representative of India said that the rights came with obligations and duties, and the realization of the right to development could be ensured only if the existence of corresponding obligations was acknowledged both at the national and international levels. Democracy and transparent, accountable and participatory governance alone could ensure that the actions of States in this area were in the best interests of citizens. Prescriptive norms imposed from outside were counter-productive and contrary to the sovereign equality of States. However, he pointed out that equally important for realization of the right to development were equitable economic relations, a conducive economic environment and cooperation at the international level. "The developing countries remained starved of the resources required for realization of the right to development," he added. "The world today was a global village where national boundaries no longer guaranteed that a country would be invulnerable to external economic influences."

Odile Sorgho-Moulinier of the United Nations Development Programme said that UNDP's action and its strategy was based on the right to development being an inalienable right. He said that the UNDP had been working actively to increase its cooperation for the implementation of human rights and sustainable development. It also intended to establish a closer relationship with monitoring bodies and would be preparing an annual report on its activities within human rights and sustainable development. In 1998 UNDP had committed itself to integrate human rights in its work since human rights played an integral part in sustainable development, and it continued to work towards the full respect for all human rights.

Alfredo Sfeir-Younis of the World Bank said that major progress was made in the last session of the Working Group on the right to development. The Bank was fully aware of the relationship between economic development and the materialization of the right to development. No matter what situation was described - of a poor or a rich country - proper macroeconomic management was essential. But, he continued, it should be a form of management that should have a

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human face. That was why one fully agreed with the Commission's emphasis on eliminating absolute poverty, as those living under such conditions saw most of their human rights violated.

The Commission on Human Rights also heard representatives of the NGOs which decried the globalization process and stressed the need to implement the right to development as an inalienable human right for all peoples. Several speakers underlined that trans-national corporations had overtaken national identities, crushing people along the way and even in some cases, this happened with the complicity of Governments. Issues concerning foreign debt and structural adjustment policies were also raised, especially in relation to how they affected the right to development. Countries were urged to donate 0.7 per cent of their GNPs as official development assistance. The speakers also underlined that chronic regional tensions affected development in all countries and that the rights of vulnerable groups, like indigenous peoples and women, needed to be respected.

Conchita Poncini of the *International Federation of University Women*, speaking on behalf of 14 non-governmental organizations, said that gender equality was a core development goal in its own right rather than a desirable by-product of it. Gender discrimination was the source of endemic poverty and low economic growth, not a cause for women's vulnerability because they were unequal in political, economic, social and cultural status. Education from a life cycle perspective was indeed the key entry point to development and the eradication of poverty. Women had a legitimate role not only to participate in social aspects to where they were often relegated but to macro economic decision making because all women were working every day of their lives. Macroeconomic policies that had been viewed until recently by policy makers as gender neutral, were in fact gender blind. Other constraints to women's right to development were lack of entitlement and access to productive resources.

Jairo Sanchez of the *American Association of Jurists* said that the right to development had disappeared from the planet with the

neo-liberal capitalist globalization. Summing up the situation he said that 20 per cent of the richest in the world owned 86 per cent of the world's GDP, whereas 20 per cent of the poorest owned one per cent. The income of the 200 richest people in the world doubled between 1994 and 1996. The assets of the three richest people in the world exceeded the combined production of the 48 poorest countries. There was nothing that ran more contrary to the right to development and human rights than the activities of trans-national companies.

Ruby Maloni of the *World Federation of Trade Unions* said that a rights-sensitive definition of poverty was "sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights." The need of the day was a set of guiding principles as a means of encouraging human rights responses to poverty. She stressed upon the urgent need of a new text that would build on existing human rights and standards in a manner that explicitly addressed the phenomenon of poverty, and in particular extreme poverty.

Laura Buchmann of the *International Institute for Peace* said that in countries where the basic freedoms of individuals were curtailed either by the action of the State or non-state actors, the process of development was dangerously shackled. The Constitution of Pakistan did not allow any person from the minority community to become President of the country. This practice ensured that a large segment of the population could not achieve their optimum potential. The laws of Pakistan also treated women as less equal than men. Highlighting that Pakistan was partly responsible for the situation in Afghanistan, he said that the Taliban came from the *madrassas* of Pakistan as Pakistan's political and societal structures had created an environment that bred the Taliban and provided the cadres for many groups affiliated to Al Qaeda. "The policies of Pakistan could in no way be conducive to the implementation of the right to development," he added.

Ali Sharma of the *Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization* said that the mere accumulation of material wealth could not be called

progress if it was not matched by human development. Human development could only take place when a cooperative effort by a democratic global community was undertaken to share equitably the planet's resources. There was an excessive emphasis on the profit motive and market forces were often quoted as a pretext for palming off old technologies and irrelevant products. This was going on as many children in the developing world did not even have access to drinkable water. Yet, in the name of free trade, factories producing luxury cars and costly aerated drinks, chocolates and, yes, even potato chips were coming to poor countries in the name of development.

Mumtaz Khan of the *European Union of Public Relations* said that the concept of the right to development was incomplete and inconclusive in the absence of fundamental rights. The denial of fundamental rights endangered the very entity of the individual. However, the benefits of globalization had not and could not be reaped by the vulnerable groups whose very basic rights had not been recognized. He also expressed concern over Pakistan's systematic and sustained propaganda about the Indian part of Kashmir, which, he said, had been designed to deflect attention of the international community.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The Commission on Human Rights considered the report of Jean Ziegler, the Special Rapporteur on the right to food (E/CN.4/2002/58), which noted that every year 36 million people die directly or indirectly from hunger or nutritional deficiencies. The report contended that international aid projects should respect key principles of neutrality, impartiality and the pursuit of strictly humanitarian objectives; that the new round of World Trade Organization negotiations should make it imperative that human rights are brought into the debate on trade; that States should establish and implement national legislation on the right to food and recognize the justiciability of the right; and that there is "schizophrenia" within the United Nations system in that its social justice and human rights agencies recognize the right to food but the Bretton Wood Institutions, along with the United States and the World

Trade Organization, oppose in practice the right to food.

There was also a report by Fatma Zohra Ouhachi-Vesely, the Special Rapporteur on the adverse effects of the illicit movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes on the enjoyment of human rights (E/CN.4/2002/61). The report concluded that international conventions sometimes contain lacunae, which prevent effective action to combat clandestine transfers, and to prosecute and punish traffickers and corrupt dealers. Some international instruments are not ratified by a large number of States and are not always effectively implemented.

There was another report of Katarina Tomasevski, the Special Rapporteur on the right to education (E/CN.4/2002/60), which contended that reaffirmation of the right to education is necessary to counter continuously decreasing aid flows and the risk that progressive liberalization of trade in education will undermine progress. The report explained that the Special Rapporteur focused on creating rights-based indicators on the subject of education and developed analytical guideposts for monitoring the extent to which the right to education is realized, besides focussing on the effects of economic exclusion, especially during a time of worldwide recession, on realization of the right to education.

Yet another report (E/CN.4/2002/59) of Miloon Kothari, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, comprised several sections: from the recognition to the operationalisation of housing rights; and setting the research agenda - priority issues in the realization of housing rights and actions to promote the progressive realization of housing rights. The report recommended that the Commission may wish to encourage the Special Rapporteur to continue to draw attention to issues relevant to housing rights at the special session of the General Assembly on children and at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and to request the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights and other concerned bodies to facilitate his participation in these conferences.

During the debate on this agenda item, the Commission on Human Rights heard a series of statements from Government delegations, specialized agencies and NGOs. Several speakers stated that the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights had been hampered by the inequalities existing between poor and rich countries, and that their absence had also affected the enjoyment of other human rights. The situation of extreme poverty, lack of access to education and health were among the factors, which had seriously curtailed the economic, social and cultural rights of millions of people around the world. Inequalities within and between countries were condemned and there were calls for international efforts to bridge such gaps as national efforts alone could not succeed. Some delegates also said that globalization and structural adjustment policies stopped developing countries from achieving their development goals. The link between poverty and social unrest was also underlined.

Sharat Sabharwal, the representative of India said that grinding poverty as well as marginalization of individuals and societies continued unchecked. It was only in recent years that economic, social and cultural rights had begun receiving attention. The Indian Constitution was deeply influenced by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in giving recognition to this set of rights. India believed that fulfillment of the right to education was key to the enjoyment of many other human rights. "A Constitutional amendment bill to make the right to education one of the fundamental rights for children of the age group 6 to 14 had been introduced in Parliament and had already been passed by the lower house," he said. "An education-for-all campaign was being undertaken by the Government to achieve the long-cherished goal of universal elementary education." He stressed that robust national action for the realization of economic, social and cultural rights should be matched by equally vigorous international cooperation to make available the requisite resources to developing countries and to create a conducive international economic environment for the realization of these rights.

Nick Dreger of the World Health Organization said that poverty, hunger, and disease were more rampant than ever. The gap between

rich and poor had grown both within and between countries. Any attempt to stimulate development and promote human security must be about investing in human beings - about investing in health - about promoting and protecting the right to health. Poverty was both a cause and a consequence of ill health.

Selman Erguden of the United Nations Human Settlements Programmes (HABITAT) said the Declaration on Cities and other Human Settlements in the new Millennium adopted by the General Assembly in June 2001 reaffirmed the fact that half of the world's population was living in urban locations. It also reaffirmed that more than half of the population in cities of the developing countries lived in informal settlements, in poverty without security of tenure and in conditions that could be described as life and health threatening. A rights based approach, involvement of civil society and national human rights institutions, networking, focus on women's rights and on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, and progressiveness were the principles of the implementation strategy of UN-HABITAT. She invited Governments to offer political and financial support for the implementation of the United Nations Housing Rights Programme and to the activities of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing.

Lee Swepston of the International Labour Office (ILO) said that as one of its commitments in the area of migrant workers, the ILO had created a Forced Labour Action Programme, which was intended to fill gaps in technical assistance and technical cooperation on that subject. He commended the Independent Expert on the question of the draft protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights for having highlighted the importance of building on the ILO's experience when designing an individual complaints procedure under the treaty. He stressed upon ILO's interest in the subject of globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights.

Shambhu Ram Simkhada of Nepal said that extreme poverty, conflict and violence stood out as two of the worst manifestations undermining the sanctity and dignity of large sections of the human

family. In the twentieth century, untold numbers of people had perished in wars and persecution and many lived in destitution, disease, ignorance and injustice. Resurgence of racial prejudice, religious fundamentalism, digital divide and inequality of wealth and opportunities were creating greater disparities and despair.

Christopher Lamb of the *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies* said that vulnerable people were those at risk from situations that threatened their survival or their capacity to live with a minimum of socio-economic security and human dignity. Disasters were not just events, which caused tragedy but their impact was often one of the consequences of uneven development. Many of the people who now sought to move from their homelands to other countries did so because of their inability to access basic economic, social or cultural rights. Any attempt to address the phenomenon of population movement must include an analysis of the availability of basic economic, social and cultural rights.

Marta Santos Pais of UNICEF said that one of the major obstacles to achieving the right to quality education for all children was gender discrimination. In cases of discrimination against children on grounds other than gender — for example, poverty, ethnicity, work, rural-urban residence or disability — the female child was often placed at a double disadvantage. Since gender cut across and frequently compounded other forms of inequity, girls' education provided an ideal entry point for a broad strategy to eliminate discrimination and to reach the full potential of girls.

It was during the debate on this agenda item that Prof. K. Warikoo, the Secretary General of the **Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation** drew attention of the Commission to the violation of economic, social and cultural rights in parts of South and Central Asia, particularly Afghanistan and Jammu and Kashmir. Taking the case of Afghanistan, he said that there was a total collapse of all the social and economic structures under the Taliban regime, which turned Afghanistan into a breeding ground for training terrorists, fundamentalists, drug

production and arms trafficking. “Agriculture, industry, trade, handicrafts, monetary system, education, health care, all have been in shambles,” he said. “The fundamental and basic human rights of the Afghan people were seriously threatened by forcefully imposing severe restrictions on their day to day life.” He stressed that the destruction of the age-old Bamiyan Buddha statues was yet another evidence of the Taliban savagery against world heritage. “With the Taliban vanquished now, time has come for the international community to restore the indigenous historico-cultural heritage of Afghanistan, so that the Afghans get back the cultural basis of their identity and self-understanding, besides reconstructing their collapsed social and economic infrastructure,” he emphasized. Drawing attention of the Commission to the devastating consequences of terrorism and religious extremism in Jammu and Kashmir, he said that the Islamist terrorists define their campaigns in terms of religion and opposition to the indigenous composite cultural ethos. “Hatred and intolerance against other cultures and faiths is taught in religious seminaries called *madrassas*,” he said. “During the past 12 years, 1300 government buildings, 800 educational institutions, 11 hospitals, 348 bridges, 2000 shops and more than 32,000 private houses have been destroyed by the terrorists with the clear objective of decimating the socio-economic infrastructure in the State that was built so assiduously over the past fifty years.” He said that the tourism sector, which contributed substantially to the economy of the Jammu and Kashmir State, was destroyed by terrorist violence including abductions and killing of foreign tourists. Such violence has also caused a blow to the prospects of reviving the cultural tourism in the valley. “Unless terrorism is curbed, sustainable economic and social development can not be achieved,” he added.

Mohammad Arif Aajakia of the *World Federation of Democratic Youth* said that numerous human rights mechanisms had documented serious violations of economic, social and cultural rights in the province of Sindh in Pakistan. The findings of the Special Rapporteur had unfortunately not brought any relief to the ethnic nationalities in the

province so far. The Punjabi establishment, dominating the civil society of Pakistan, had systematically usurped these nationalities of all their rights. The Sindh province contributed over seventy per cent of the total revenue generated by Pakistan to the national exchequer. Still, he continued, there were attempts to change the demography of Sindh through the Punjabi establishment allotting the land of Sindh province to the Punjabi army officers. "Never had a Mohajir, Sindhi or a Baloch been allotted an inch of land in Punjab," he said. He demanded the abrogation of the in-force 1973 Constitution of Pakistan and called for the enactment of a new Constitution that reflected the true spirit of the 1940 Pakistan resolution.

Mohammad Ahsan of *Interfaith International* said that the economic, social and cultural rights of the people of Sindh province in Pakistan continued to be grossly violated by the ruling ethnic majority of Punjabis in Pakistan. Sindh province depended on its agrarian economy but reduction in the quantity of water from the river Sindh to the farmers of the province had seriously threatened their means of subsistence. The water of Sindh was being given to Punjab at the expense of Sindh. The oligarchy of Punjab province also perpetrated discrimination in the field of employment. He called upon the Commission to ask Islamabad Government to take steps to replace the current Pakistani Constitution with one that reflected the spirit of the Pakistan Resolution of 1940. "That alone could do justice to ethnic and religious minorities in Pakistan," he added.

Civil and Political Rights

Numerous issues discussed under this agenda item included the questions of torture and detention; disappearances and summary executions; freedom of expression; independence of judiciary and administration of justice; religious intolerance; states of emergency; and conscientious objections to military service.

While introducing her report, Gabriela Rodriguez Pizarro, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants (E/CN.4/2002/94) said that she had highlighted two important international developments

with regard to the protection of the human rights of migrants: the World Conference against Racism and the deposition of the nineteenth ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. Similarly, there was a report of Francis Deng, the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons (E/CN.4/2002/95). In his statement, Mr. Deng said that the role of his mandate had crystallized into that of advocacy, raising the level of awareness about the displacement crisis worldwide, and acting as a catalyst for international response. He also referred to his latest missions to Indonesia and Sudan. In Indonesia he said that internal displacement was a new phenomenon and the Government had formulated a policy aimed at ending displacement.

There was a report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery (E/CN.4/2002/93) which reviewed the status and methods of operation of the Fund and noted that during its sixth session, the Board of Directors of the Fund recommended 18 project grants for an amount of \$ 148,700 and 13 travel grants for an amount of \$ 25,715 to allow representatives of non-governmental organizations to participate in the session of the Working Group on contemporary forms of slavery; and that the Board appealed for new contributions and estimated that it would need \$ 400,000 per year to function effectively. Besides, there was also a report of the Secretary-General on the human rights of children and juveniles in detention (E/CN.4/2002/63), which reviewed practical measures to protect and improve such rights, citing relevant activities of United Nations human rights mechanisms, work by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, activities in Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Asia, and steps taken by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF, and the Coordination Panel on Technical Advice and Assistance in Juvenile Justice.

There was another report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on human rights and forensic science (E/CN.4/2002/67), which describes progress in complying with a Commission resolution calling for updating of the Office's list of forensic and related

experts, for the carrying out of training of such experts in relation to victims of human rights violations, and for updating of a manual for investigation of extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions. Yet another report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the incompatibility between democracy and racism (E/CN.4/2002/69 and Add.1), explored the relationship between democracy and racism, broadly identified current trends in racism and related intolerance which threatened democracy, and considered actions that could counter the negative impacts of racism on democracy.

There was a report of the Working Group on a draft optional protocol to the Convention against Torture (E/CN.4/2002/78) on the group's tenth session, held from 14 to 25 January, and including the text of a proposal by the Chairperson for a "two-pillar" system on which the mechanics of prevention of torture would be based, the principles that would guide the functioning of national mechanisms, and the establishment of a subcommittee of the Committee against Torture that would provide assistance to such national mechanisms and carry out visits to places of detention. Another report of the Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances (E/CN.4/2002/79) summarized the group's activities during 2001 and listed information on disappearances in 75 countries and territories.

The Commission's attention was also drawn towards the reports presented by Experts on extrajudicial executions, torture, the independence of judges and lawyers, arbitrary detention and freedom of religion. Asma Jahangir, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, in a brief statement said among other things that she was worried about extrajudicial executions of children and feared that the right to life of children appeared not to be a matter of sincere concern to many Governments, as there was a huge gap between rhetoric and action. Her report (E/CN.4/2002/74) recommended that the international community, in the event of lack of action by national justice systems, must persecute persons responsible for acts of genocide; that all cases of death in custody should be thoroughly investigated by a body independent of the police or prison

authorities; that Governments have a duty to investigate death threats or attempts against the lives of inhabitants; that Governmental will and commitment to the rule of law was necessary to end impunity, which often was entrenched; and that so-called “honour killings” will end when Governments show the political will to try and punish those who commit them.

The report of Param Cumaraswamy, the Special Rapporteur on independence of the judiciary, administration of justice, and impunity (E/CN.4/2002/72), noted among other things that he was concerned about repeated efforts by some Governments to interfere in judicial matters, including to the extent of removing judges; and that the security situation of judges, lawyers, and prosecutors in some countries had become dangerous — that he had learned during the last reporting period of the killings of five judges, five prosecutors and one lawyer.

There was a report of Sir Nigel Rodley, the outgoing Special Rapporteur on torture (E/CN.4/2001/76), which recommended that countries not party to the Convention against Torture should sign and ratify the Convention; that countries should sign and ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court with a view to bringing to justice perpetrators of torture in the context of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes; that the highest authorities of countries condemn torture in all its forms and that those responsible for law enforcement activities make public the fact that those in charge of places of detention will be held personally responsible for abuses; that interrogation take place only at official centres and that secret places of detention be abolished by law.

A representative of the Secretariat read a brief statement on behalf of Abid Hussain, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. The Special Rapporteur’s report was contained in documents E/CN.4/2002/75 and Add.1. The written statement remarked among other things that while violations of the rights to freedom of speech and assembly occurred more frequently in situations of armed conflict and civil unrest, they also

occurred repeatedly in emerging democracies and in countries with long-established democratic institutions. In most cases, national security and the argument of “necessity” were invoked by authorities to justify infringements of these rights. The statement noted that yearning for order was legitimate, but it had to be remembered that when the demand for order overrode considerations of human rights, States were likely to become mechanisms of terror.

A statement was read out on behalf of Ivan Tosevski, member of the Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances, which said that since its establishment in 1980, the Working Group had transmitted 49,780 cases of alleged disappearances to 76 Governments. Out of these, however, only 7,921 cases had been clarified. On the other hand, Mr. Tosevski reported, it was a positive development that over the past couple of years there had been a continuing decline in the number of disappearances.

During debate on civil and political rights, the Commission heard statements from national delegations on issues ranging from the importance of the independence of the judiciary and reparations for victims of torture or forced disappearances, to the need to ensure freedom of opinion and religion. Several speakers referred to the 11 September attacks on the United States and stressed the importance of fighting terrorism. Some pointed out the importance of upholding basic human rights and fundamental freedoms during this fight. Several NGOs highlighted situations where the freedom of expression and religious belief were repressed by Governments.

Catherine Turner of *Amnesty International* said that the present session of the Commission presented an exceptional opportunity for preventing torture worldwide. The proposal put forward by the Working Group on the Draft Protocol to the Convention against Torture would establish a dual national and international system of visits to places where people were deprived of their liberty, with the purpose of making recommendations to prevent torture and ill-treatment. She said that enforced involuntary disappearances were one of the most

appalling forms of multiple human rights violations which continued to cause anguish to the victims and their relatives. She urged the Commission to adopt a strong resolution calling for a worldwide moratorium on executions.

Vo Van of the *International Federation of Human Rights* said that establishment of the International Criminal Court had ushered in a new era but the road towards universal justice was still long and much remained to be done. There were of course implementation issues to be dealt with as well as other challenges. However, the independence and the universality of the International Criminal Court must be the key focus. Stressing that the challenges ahead would be multifaceted and difficult, he said that if the Court's universality and efficiency were supported by real political will to combat impunity, the International Criminal Court had an important role to play.

Mohammad Anwar of the *World Federation of Democratic Youth* said that in Sindh and Balochistan provinces of Pakistan, torture and detention, disappearances and summary executions were committed with impunity. Cases of raids, arrests and torture were widespread. The military establishment and civil bureaucracy of Punjab had made the province of Sindh a virtual colony. He highlighted that in January 1998, the Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances had stated that the majority of the 60 cases of disappearances transmitted to the Pakistani Government concerned members or sympathizers of the political party *Mohajir Quami Movement*. But the whereabouts of those missing persons were still unknown. He described a recently promulgated new ordinance under which army officers participated in court trials as being tantamount to coercing judges to pass verdicts to the liking of the ruling oligarchy of Punjab. "Already over 54 *Mohajir Quami Movement* workers had been given death sentences on false and fabricated charges," he added.

Dr. Sharad K. Soni of the **Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation** said that the international community had witnessed the 11 September terrorist attacks in New York with great horror and anguish.

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It was well established by now that those attacks were carried out and sponsored by religious fundamentalists. He said that mayhem had its roots in distortion of a peace loving religion, and the distortions had essentially their basis in religious intolerance. In spite of the laudable efforts of the United Nations in general and the Commission in particular, and since the 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion or Belief was adopted, the menace of intolerance was still posing a grave threat to the human rights of freedom of religion and faith. He stressed that the right to freedom of religion and faith was an essential human right.

Firdaus Syed of the *European Union of Public Relations* said that freedom of expression was recognized as one of the pillars of democracy. If political dissent did not find expression, the community was bound to remain ignorant about the aspects that were expected to lead it to material and spiritual development. While militancy in some parts of the globe was out to destabilize duly elected governments, it also used the method of gagging the voice of the print and electronic media under duress. At the root of religious violence lay hatred and some political motives. Politicizing religion had become the instrument of realizing some temporary political objectives. Communal hatred was cancerous and destroyed the very roots of peaceful coexistence among the communities.

S.K Laroiya of the *International Institute for Peace* said that gruesome violence born of religious intolerance and the consequent denial of fundamental rights continued to blight the world as if one was still in the dark ages. "No society could achieve its destiny if elements within it were denied the possibility of shaping their lives according to their beliefs," he stressed. "One did not have to be agnostic to ensure tolerance for different faiths and that the route to achievement of any objective lay in education and the fashioning of an environment that would teach the young the value of life and the oneness of humanity."

Integration of the Human rights of Women and the Gender Perspective

Under this agenda item the Commission had before it several documents including a report of the Secretary-General on traffic in women and girls (E/CN.4/2002/80) which noted in its conclusions that there were many positive developments in the fight against trafficking, but that the human rights implications of trafficking and related phenomena were not always fully appreciated; that trafficking was too often considered from a criminal point of view and not from a human rights perspective.

There was also a report of the Secretary-General on integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system (E/CN.4/2002/81). The report concluded among other things that there was a need for all Governments to ratify without reservations the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols. It was important to take action to change existing or introduce new legislation to ensure protection of women's human rights and to acknowledge the principle of gender equality; that the obligations of States to prevent and redress violations of women's rights needed to be further clarified; and that many of the recommendations issued in 1995 on integrating a gender perspective into human rights activities and programmes remained relevant.

There was another report of Radhika Coomaraswamy, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women (E/CN.4/2002/83) which focused on cultural practices in the family that were violent towards women. The report noted among other things that such practices existed throughout the world; that cultural relativism was often used as an excuse to permit such practices; that all cultures had certain practices that denied women their rights and dignity, that States bear the responsibility for ending such practices; and that States should not invoke custom, tradition or religious considerations to avoid their obligation to eradicate violence against women and the girl child in the family.

When the Commission began discussions on this agenda item a series of national delegations described Governmental efforts to enhance women rights and to reduce discrimination in legislation and society. Issues ranging from national efforts, initiatives and legislation, gender-based violence, the proliferation of trafficking in women and children, domestic violence, harmful traditional or customary practices, forced marriages, discrimination and the importance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and legally binding instruments to protect women's human rights were discussed with regards to women's human rights and the integration of the gender perspective. Several speakers said that despite the progress in the legal field, there were still many women and girls who did not enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with men and boys.

Ana Angarita of the United Nations Population Fund said that poverty and economic insecurity, the loss of traditional roles and the absence of new ones, made accepting women's equality very difficult for many men. But men were increasingly recognizing that they would gain strength to the extent that they gave up power over women. Gender partnership was part of the fight against poverty, and the two efforts must go hand in hand.

Alfredo Sfeir-Younis of the World Bank said that addressing gender equality and human rights must be mandatory and not voluntary in order to enhance human security, peace and social stability. Changes in social structures without due consideration of a feminine identity in the process of human transformation and self-realization was tantamount to causing more social conflict and instability. With regard to children and the youth, one must create the space for them to be the architects of their own future.

Yoshie Noguchi of the International Labour Office said that the principle of non-discrimination and equal remuneration for men and women were at the core of a rights-based approach for promoting decent work for all and were contained in the ILO Conventions on

equal remuneration and non-discrimination. In addition to non-discrimination and equal remuneration, women and girls were often deprived of rights due to socialization, social norms and traditional values, poverty and the need for family survival.

Nafshia Mboi of the World Health Organization said that discrimination on the basis of sex and gender violated the fundamental human rights principles. Discrimination manifested itself in neglect, which in turn resulted in poor health. It even manifested itself in violence. Violence against women, a major public health problem and a serious human rights issue, constituted one of the gravest manifestations of inequality between men and women.

Alessandra Roversi of the *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies* said that vulnerability and its impact on individuals could be very different for men and women, and any emergency response, long-term humanitarian assistance or development programme would normally have a markedly different result for men and women. Field experience showed that through planned and gender-sensitive capacity-building, one could achieve better responses to disasters. Achieving gender equality through capacity building was a long-term process, and there was still a long way to go to achieving full recognition of the contribution that gender equality brought.

Sharad K. Soni of the **Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation** said that there was no let up in the violence against women, particularly gender specific violence such as rape, sexual abuse, beatings, torture and killings. It was a relief that in Afghanistan after years of conflict and suffering, fresh hope had come to Afghan women and girls. He expressed satisfaction that Afghan girls had now started going to schools and that female teachers were back in classes. While highlighting another case of Jammu and Kashmir where violence against women had been systematic and persistent during the past twelve years, he said that terrorists and Islamist extremists had resorted to rape, abduction, forced marriage, and physical violence, including killings, as a means to demoralize and subjugate the society into

submission. He stressed that there was urgent need to take stringent punitive action at national levels against such terrorist groups and religious extremists. "It is high time that the States and international community muster sufficient political will and assert pressure on such armed bands and terrorist groups, and impose sanctions on those states that support or harbour such terrorist groups, to prevent any further violation of violence against women," he added.

Reena Marwah of the *International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies* said that violence against women, because they were women, represented serious violations of their human rights. The prevalence of such gender-based violence was impossible to estimate, but it was a universal problem that represented a serious impediment to development all over the world. Research indicated that the abusers and survivors of gender-based violence came from all classes, nationalities and economic states. Examples of gender-based violence were domestic violence, genital mutilation, trafficking in women and rape in time of peace and as a weapon of war. While entire communities suffered the consequences of armed conflict and terrorism, women and girls were particularly vulnerable and worst affected.

S.K Laroiya of the *International Institute for Peace* said that the ideology that allowed the oppression of women often flew from religious tenets that denied women's equality. A prime example was the existence of the Hudood Ordinances in Pakistan that decreed that a woman was less than equal before the law. Such discriminatory State-enacted provisions provided men in certain societies with the sanction to indulge in barbaric practices like honour killings. In Pakistan, media reports indicated that over 1,000 women were murdered in 2001. Societal and state structures, rather than mitigating the effects of negative cultural practices, often accentuated them, resulting in violence against women being accepted as a norm rather than being treated as a condemnable outrage. Codes governing dress, practices like female circumcision, sanctioning of domestic violence, and the excessive emphasis on female virginity were all male fashioned instruments to keep women in their place.

Conchita Poncini of the *International Federation of University Women* said that a gender perspective was needed to recognize the intersection of gender with other forms of discrimination in all policies and programmes of action against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Addressing inter-sectionality meant an integrated approach that focused on forms of multiple discrimination intersecting with gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, migrant status, socio-economic or other status such as the right of women to be married or to be single which was tied with culture. Certain forms of racial discrimination were directed at women specifically because of their gender, such as “stoning” and sexual violence against women members of particular racial or ethnic groups in detention or during armed conflict.

Rights of the Child

Under this agenda item, the Commission heard two key reports including the one by Olara Otunnu, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the impact of armed conflict on children (E/CN.4/2002/85). The report noted, among other things, that instruments for protection of such children had been strengthened by the coming into force of the relevant Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child; that nonetheless the plight of children in situations of armed conflict will remain grave unless all parties to conflicts adhere to international standards for protecting children; that the Special Representative is working on methods for monitoring and reporting on the situation in such children; that impunity must be addressed; that a research network and coordinated secretariat have been established on the rights of children in armed conflicts.

Another report by Juan Miguel Petit, the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (E/CN.4/2002/88) outlined Special Rapporteur’s anticipated working methods, including the use of urgent appeals and letters of allegation transmitted to Governments, and methods of investigation of individual complaints of the sale of children and of the involvement of children in prostitution.

Sharad K. Soni

The report provided brief commentary on two issues- the entry into force of the relevant Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the link between HIV/AIDS and children caught up in prostitution.

During discussions several speakers welcomed the entry into force of the two Optional Protocols of the Convention to the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. They stressed the need for the implementation of the two Optional Protocols at the national, regional and international levels. Speakers also reiterated that children must be protected from social or economic exploitation. Children must not be employed in or required to perform work that was likely to be hazardous or to interfere with their education or to be harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. It was also stressed that the international community needed to act collectively to stop the proliferation of trafficking of children.

Lesley Miller of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said that despite significant progress made since the World Summit for Children in 1990, children throughout the world still faced poverty, lack of access to health services and denial of their right to quality education. An increasing number of children were suffering as a result of HIV/AIDS, exploitation, abuse and armed conflict. The protection of the most vulnerable children was, of course, one of UNICEF's priorities. For that reason, UNICEF welcomed the decision of the General Assembly to ask the Secretary-General to initiate an in-depth study on the protection of children from violence. UNICEF was fully prepared to support the development of such a study, joining hands with other partners, including the UN family and NGOs, and to share its own experience in addressing the appalling phenomenon of violence against children.

Elena Gezelius of the *International Save the Children Alliance* expressed his concerned over the continued legal and social acceptance

of serious violations of human rights, namely the corporal punishment of children. Hitting children was a dangerous practice, which could cause physical and psychological injury and even death. It inhibited or prevented positive child development and positive forms of discipline. Yet corporal punishment in the home was still a legal and common practice in most States. Many States had already banished corporal punishment from their schools and other institutions, with positive results, and 11 countries had prohibited all corporal punishment, including in the family.

Qudsia Zuhra of the *International Human Rights Law Group* said that during 23 years of war and armed conflict, the people of Afghanistan had faced unprecedented hardships. Millions had lost family members and property and thousands of children had been recruited as soldiers. On behalf of women and girls in Afghanistan, she thanked the international community for its continuous support for human rights in Afghanistan and thanked the Commission for integrating women's rights into its resolutions on Afghanistan. She urged the Commission to continue providing assistance for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Today women made up more than 60 per cent of the population, and there must be at least 50 per cent of seats allocated for women in the Grand Assembly, *Loya Jirga* that would take place in June to formulate the new political shape of Afghanistan. There were millions of women and girls like her in Afghanistan who had become physically disabled during the brutal war. A clear national policy was needed to protect the rights of people with disabilities to ensure that they would have full access to education, employment and recreational programs to reach their full potential as human beings.

John Taylor of the *International Association for Religious Freedom* said that the Convention on the Rights of the Child affirmed that a child's education should seek to prepare the child to assume his or her responsibilities in life in a spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance and friendship among all peoples and ethnic, national and religious groups. In other terms, the Convention, like other international instruments, underlined the necessity of educating new generations in

respect for the other, for the one who was different. Children should be educated to accept pluralism, to accept those who belonged to different races, nationalities and religions. The terrible events of 11 September, and other events too, highlighted the fact that there were extremist movements which opposed pluralism, movements which made improper use of religion to sow intolerance and hatred even to the point of rejecting or exterminating the other.

Shaukat Ali Kashmiri of the *European Union of Public Relations* said that the Government of Pakistan has not demonstrated any genuine commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights. Although children's rights were theoretically protected by numerous laws that incorporated elements of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in practice, the Government had singularly failed to enforce those laws. In Pakistan, there were no federal laws on compulsory education, and neither the federal nor provincial governments provided sufficient resources or universal education. He highlighted that not more than 27.5 per cent of school age children attended school in the country. More than 10,000 schools had been closed down in recent years across the country due to lack of teachers. Describing child labour as common practice in Pakistan he said that there were as many as 20 million child labourers there. "Children were kidnapped to be used as forced labour," he added.

The Commission on Human Rights concluded its six-week long session on 26 April 2002, after having debates on a wide range of human rights issues and deciding to appoint a new Special Rapporteur on the right to health and to establish two new Working Groups related to the outcome of the World Conference against Racism held in September 2001 in Durban, South Africa. Problems posed by racism figured prominently in the Commission's deliberations. The Commission decided to establish a voluntary fund to provide, among other things, additional resources for the effective implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. It requested the High Commissioner for Human Rights to submit an analytical report at its next session on the extent of implementation of the Programme of

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Action of the Third Decade to Combat Racism. A number of resolutions were also adopted at this session of the Commission. In his concluding remarks Krzysztof Jakubowski, Chairman of the Commission said that although there seemed to be widespread agreement on the standards of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the principal international human rights conventions, nuances in the debate on human rights started to appear when the Commission came to issues such as the meaning of democracy, the impact of underdevelopment on prospects for human rights, and how international human rights norms related to cultures and traditions.

**NETWORK OF NGOS FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT
RESOLUTION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
WOMEN STUDIES**

Seminar Report

Kiran Sood

A two-day National Seminar on *Network of NGOs for Peace and Conflict Resolution with Special Reference to Women Studies* was organized by the M.K.P. (PG) College, Dehradun, Uttaranchal on 11-12 March 2006 at the College premises, with the support of the University Grants Commission, New Delhi.

The seminar sought to have a dialogue with government representatives/ NGOs/ civil society organizations for seeking effective solutions towards conflict resolution and for building peace. Development and empowerment of women through social, cultural and economic measures was highlighted as a major requirement towards creating conflict resolution measures and attaining sustainable development. The aim was to generate awareness and to sensitize society and government towards their responsibilities and duties for protecting human rights of women and ensuring their gainful employment and integration with the society so that goals of peace-building and conflict resolution are achieved.

The two-day National Seminar was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Uttaranchal, N.D. Tiwari on 11 March 2006. Other speakers in the inaugural session included Rajesh Walia, Vice-Chairman, Advisory Board for Disability, Vivek Khanduri, Dr. (Ms.) Sudha Pande, Senior Member, State Public Service Commission, Mrs. Sushila Dhobwal, former Vice-Chancellor, H.N.B. Garwal University, Rakesh Oberoi, Chairman, Managing Committee, M.K.P. (PG) College, N.S. Bhatnagar, Secretary, Managing Committee, M.K.P. (PG) College,

Mrs. Shanta Tankha, Principal, M.K.P. (PG) College. The key resource persons and participants for the seminar were Dr. R.S. Tolia, Chairman, RTI, Uttaranchal, Professor K. Warikoo, Dr. Bupinder Zutshi and Dr. Mondira Dutta from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, Dr. Swadesh Bansal and Mrs. Rakesh Dhawan from All India Women's Conference, Mrs. Ramachandran, Chairperson, *Sanjeevani* (NGO), Rajan from *Policy Alternatives* (NGO), Ms. Geeta Goirala, *Mahila Samakhya* (NGO), Pankaj Shah from *LEADS* (NGO), Ms. Janvi of *Disha*, Ms. Chaya Kunwar of *HARC* (NGO), Mrs. T. Singh, Chairperson, *UWA* (NGO), Dr. (Ms.) Geetanjali (writer), Dr. Sudesh Chandra, historian (both from Delhi), Dr. Badoli, Member, Film Censor Board, Principal, DWD, faculty members and students of M.K.P. (PG) College.

The inaugural session was chaired by Mrs. Sushila Dhobwal, the first Principal of M.K.P. (PG) College and former Vice Chancellor of H.N.B. Garhwal University. While welcoming the Chief Guest, N.D. Tiwari, Dr. Kiran Sood, Seminar Coordinator drew attention to the serene atmosphere of Uttaranchal comparing it to Geneva of Switzerland. She described Uttaranchal as the "Abode of Gods" highlighting its glorious traditional culture and historical past. She stated that Uttaranchal is not only *Devbhumi* but this region must also be known as *Vir Bhumi*, which has sacrificed several sons of the soil as soldiers for the defence of the country. Women of this region are known for their courage to endure the loss of their near and dear ones with dignity. She exhorted that women have been the victims of violence for centuries and now time has come that they should be actors in TRACK-II diplomacy. Our aim should be to train women of India as peace negotiators, mediators and conciliators. She expressed the desire to build strong infrastructure in Uttaranchal for inviting and facilitating people of India for initiating round table meetings of stakeholders to resolve conflict and for peace negotiations. She mentioned the need for peace and conflict resolution through strong network of all stakeholders including the government, academics, civil society organizations and NGOs.

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Dr. Kiran Sood emphasised the need of building strong network of NGOs to root out small conflicts in the initial stages which would go a long way for building long lasting peace. She stated that educational institutions can no longer remain isolated and they have a duty to reach out to society and create strong awareness for protecting their human rights and ensuring equity in development programmes. Social and economic development is essential for ensuring success in the conflict resolution process.

Dr. Sudha Pande, Senior Member, Uttaranchal State Public Service Commission, in her keynote address emphasised the need to modify the present system and establish links between educational institutions and society.

Rajesh Walia, Vice Chairman, Advisory Board for Disability, Uttaranchal Government, highlighted the progress attained by the state under the guidance and leadership of N.D. Tiwari during the last 4 years. He stressed the need for establishing computer center in the Women's College which was established way back in 1902 and the institution was elevated as Degree College in 1958.

Rakesh Oberoi, President, M.K.P. (PG) College Management Committee, while outlining the history and contribution of the College, wanted modern technological centres to be set up in the College for girls and women of Uttaranchal.

In his inaugural address, the Chief Minister of Uttaranchal, **N. D. Tiwari** gave several examples of hot spots in history, especially the example of the suffering of human kind through World Wars. He stated that all religions of the world have professed peace. He stated that empowerment of women through usage of knowledge based modern ICT technology is essential for achieving social, economic and overall development. He encouraged the students to benefit from the opportunities opened by the ICT and internet for exchanging knowledge and creating value addition. The Chief Minister announced a Grant-in-aid of one crore rupees for the establishment of Centre for Women and Development in the College and for promoting research on gender and development.

The College Principal **Mrs. Shanta Tankha**, in her vote of thanks, expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister for delivering the Inaugural Address and also for spending considerable time at the College with the Seminar participants, faculty and students.

First Technical Session devoted to the theme **Women and Conflict Resolution** was Chaired by **Dr. R.S. Tolia**, Chairman, RTI, Uttaranchal State and former Chief Secretary of Uttaranchal State. Dr. Mondira Dutta, Prof. K. Warikoo and Dr. Bupinder Zutshi from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi were the main speakers at this session.

Dr. Mondira Dutta, in her paper entitled *Gender, Peace and Conflict Resolution* drew attention to the United Nations resolution of 1992, urging member states to seek effective participation of women in peace negotiations. She emphasised that the peace talks need to incorporate not only those who bear arms but also those who face the brunt of it.

Prof. K. Warikoo, Director, Central Asian Studies Programme, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, in his paper on *Peace and Conflict Resolution Processes in Central Asia* emphasised the need for creating conducive conditions to solve conflicts in the initial stages through common action programmes and dialogue. He detailed the terrorist activities and violence in Central Asia especially in the Andijan region of Uzbekistan. He also showed a film on *Violence and Terror in Andijan*, which recorded several testimonies of the victims of violence. The film created an intense urge among the participants for an action programme and capacity building measures to achieve peace and conflict resolution.

Dr. Bupinder Zutshi of the Centre for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University presented his paper entitled *Strong Networking of NGOs for Peace and Conflict Resolution*. He highlighted the significance of TRACK-II diplomacy in supplementing and complimenting TRACK-I diplomacy. He stressed the role of NGOs in resolving conflicts and the opportunities provided by the ICT

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in creating networking, communication and awareness.

Ms. Renu Rathore a representative from the Corporate World, presented her paper *Spirituality for Peace Building*. She believed that India has a potential of being in the forefront for peace and conflict resolution in the 21st century, through its spirituality and long history of socio-cultural heritage of peace loving initiations.

Dr. R.S. Tolia, Chairman of the session in his concluding remarks stressed the need for analysing and studying the causes and consequences of the conflicts. He narrated his experience of being an actor himself in the process of TRACK-II diplomacy. He mentioned the positive and negative role of media in creating and resolving conflicts and urged the media, academic, NGOs and other stakeholders to address the issue jointly through peace negotiations.

Second Session, which focussed on knowledge based links for sharing ideas and successful stories, was chaired by Mrs. Ramachandran, Chairperson, *Sanjeevani* (NGO). Mrs. Rakesh Dhawan, National Treasurer, All India Women's Conference was the Chief Guest. Several NGO representatives and faculty of the College who shared their thoughts and experiences included:

- Mr. Rajan of *Policy Alternative*;
- Ms. Chayya Kunwar of *HARC*;
- Dr. Swadesh Bansal of *Sangini* – Sunderland, United Kingdom;
- Ms. T Singh, Chairperson, University Women's Association;
- Dr. Rekha Khare, Head, Chemistry Department, M.K.P. PG College;
- Ms. Gita Gairola (*Mahila Samakhya*);
- Dr. Archana Shukla, Head, History Department, M.K.P. PG College;
- Dr. Geetaljali Shri (writer);
- Dr. Richa Kamboj, Lecturer, Department of Drawing & Painting, M.K.P. PG College;

- Dr. Sudhir Chandra, (Historian);
- Dr. Vidya Singh, Department of Hindi, M.K.P. PG College;
- Dr. Chhavi Kumar, Lecturer, Department of Economics, M.K.P. PG College;
- Ms. Janvi of *Disha*,
- Dr. Alka Mohan, Lecturer, Department of Hindi, M.K.P. PG College; and
- Dr. Durganand Balodi, Member, Film Censor Board, New Delhi.

Mr. Rajan from *Policy Alternatives* brought out the importance of programmes for poverty alleviation, education and health. He stated that such programmes would ultimately lead to development thus ushering in a sustainable peace process. **Ms. Chayya Kunwar** shared her experience as being part of peace building process at the global level. **Dr. Swadesh Bansal**, was nostalgic in getting back to her roots. She stated the kind of work they do through her organization *Sangini* at Sunderland, United Kingdom.

Various speakers highlighted the multi-disciplinary approach to address issues of peace and conflict resolution. The main emphasis was on poverty alleviation programmes and achieving sustainable development.



*Shri N.D. Tiwari, Chief Minister of Uttarakhand,
delivering his Inaugural Address*



Dr. Kiran Sood, Seminar Coordinator making her welcome speech



*Seated from right Dr. R.S. Tolia, Dr. Sudha Pandey,
Prof. K. Warikoo, Dr. Bupinder Zutshi and Dr. Mondira Dutta*



Delegates at the Seminar

BOOK REVIEW

SOUTH-CENTRAL ASIA: EMERGING ISSUES

Kuldip Singh (*ed.*)

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 2005, pp.395, Rs. 350/-

The 1990s were marked by the emergence of five independent Central Asian Republics (CARs) immediately after the break up of Soviet Union. This event created a peculiar geopolitical and geo-strategic situation and brought about new challenges and opportunities both for the region itself and the adjacent regions including South Asia. Strengthening of transnational relationship between the CARs and the South Asian region particularly the Indian subcontinent is the main focus of this edited book. It highlights the social, political, strategic and economic significance of Central Asia that shapes India's foreign policy towards CARs in the post- Cold War era.

In his introduction, Kuldip Singh, the editor of the book says Soviet disintegration was a "huge loss" for India, which required India to reorient and restructure its policy towards Russia and other CIS countries. Despite India's "declared policy objectives" towards its "extended and strategic neighbourhood", the author argues, that the progress made to achieve economic, strategic and political goals in Central Asia was inadequate. Realizing the potential of close and meaningful political and economic ties between the two regions, the author wants India to have "an active foreign policy." He believes that factors like "political developments in Pakistan and Afghanistan are bound to have direct bearing on the politics of Central Asia and consequently on the policy formulation in India." The author has contributed another article with regard to the nature of US led War on Terror in Afghanistan and Iraq. The US policies aimed at "installing puppet regimes in pursuit of its imperialist designs", which he warns, "if pursued in Central Asia, might destabilize the nascent polities of the region." He, however, underlines the fact that "Central Asian region would continue to engage the minds of US policy makers."

As many as five articles of this book are devoted to different aspects and dimensions of India-Central Asia relations. The first one

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by Bhupinder Brar finds fault with the “conventional way” of analyzing India’s foreign policy that India has a consistent and well conceived foreign policy and there is complete consensus in the country over this. He points out that “India’s foreign policy has undergone a fundamental shift, both internally and externally, abandoning the policy of non-alignment and opting for tactical alliances dominated by business considerations.” He suggests that instead of analyzing that how India looks at Central Asia, “one should focus on how different kinds of Indians look at Central Asia region and reveal themselves.”

P. S. Sahai gives an insider view of India’s diplomatic ties with the CARs and examines how “central” is Central Asia to India. Terming the establishment of “meaningful and multifaceted relationship” with the CARs since 1991 as a multi-pronged exercise, he discusses that it has brought both challenges and opportunities. The primary focus has been on developing meaningful links through “frequent exchange of high profile official visits, technical cooperation, cultural exchange programme and establishment of institutional level linkages.” He also sees the improvement in relationship at the strategic, political and defence, economic and traditional cultural levels. Since the present efforts are not enough, the author believes that there should be “greater understanding of India’s connectivity with the CARs” and the government should adopt a “pro-active approach.”

Talking about “India’s foreign policy shift from China and Pakistan to Central Asia”, Meena Singh Roy argues that India’s policy towards Central Asia was “directionless” in the initial years, but is “more coherent” and “focused” now. The author covers almost all aspects of India-Central Asia relations. While analysing the present cooperation between the two sides, she argues that inspite of a great deal of political and diplomatic endeavours, the economic relations remain at low ebb. Considering their “shared concerns” and “common problems” in the context of economic and trade opportunities, she says, India and CARs should move together in partnership. To build strong and meaningful relations with CARs, she makes a number of suggestions saying that there is “immense scope for India’s involvement in the democratization

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process and civil society and media there.” Hailing Indian government’s recent initiatives, she concludes, “India looks at the CARs as long-term partners in the growth of economically stable and politically peaceful Asia.”

In his article on the geopolitics of Central Asia, Sanjay Bhardwaj argues that “India has to make its space for promoting its economic interests and ensuring energy security” by establishing meaningful cooperation with the CARs. He analyses how the geo-economic importance of the rich natural resources in the region has increased the importance of CARs. He suggests that India should adopt a “robust and endeavouring foreign policy” for ensuring regular flow of energy sources at sustainable prices.

While stressing that Central Asia occupies “a special place in India’s foreign policy priorities”, Baljit Singh makes an assessment of India’s policy towards Central Asia in the post-Cold War era. The author opines that due to lack of effective and vibrant diplomacy “India’s policy initially could not go beyond diplomatic mould and was passive in nature”. The author, however, argues that India is arriving at political and diplomatic, defence, military as well as economic cooperation with the CARs. Making an overview of India’s policy, he terms it as a “long journey from indifference to activism.” The present geo-political, geo-strategic and geo-economic milieu in CARs makes it necessary for India to adopt “a pro-active policy.”

Central Asia and the Caspian region is a zone of interest for various countries as it is a promising oil and gas region with resources exceeding those of the North Sea. P.L. Dash in his scholarly article analyses that this region has become a focal point of economic activities. This has attracted a number of Western MNCs to find out feasible transportation routes to avail these resources. The author talks about possible transportation routes, structure and directions of these routes. Besides, the author talks about the importance of North-South Corridor proposed by India, Iran and Russia. He also says that the most pragmatic route options of the future would be to link Russian arteries of pipelines with those existing in Iran and Turkey. The author

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apprehends that the growing American presence in South Asia and Middle East region would provide “a strange political configuration of controlling the existing and emerging pipelines.”

Gulshan Sachdeva’s article attempts to understand the present-day economic scenario in Central Asia and South Asia. He starts from the economic transformation in Central Asia with special focus on macro economic developments and includes external economic relations along with several regional and international economic cooperation mechanisms. Through a number of tables, he has tried to explain the trade directions of the individual CARs. Pointing out the potential areas of economic cooperation between CARs and South Asia, the author feels that “the liberalization process in South Asia and the role of a number of regional groupings like SAARC, could be an eye opener for the CARs.”

The security scenario in Central Asia, which has been jeopardized by internal and external factors, has been the talk of the academic world in the recent years. Out of the two articles devoted to this aspect, one by Nirmala Joshi focuses mainly on Central Asia’s primary concern for both “conventional” and “non-traditional” security. The non-traditional problems like religious extremism, its causes and consequences and conventional problems like growing competition among several external powers to have control over this rich region have posed an intractable challenge to Central Asian security. The author, however, feels “these challenges are manageable and have not assumed dangerous proportions.” Though religious extremism is gaining foothold in the region especially in the Fergana Valley, the author is optimistic that “this could be warded off if adequate measures are taken.”

The other article in this regard is by K. S. Sidhu who analyses the sources of insecurity in the region. To him, some factors of insecurity in the region are inherent in the “geo-political and socio-cultural milieu of the area” and others are due to “changing environment within and outside the region.” The author has also shown concern about religious resurgence and the security situation in Afghanistan. He deplores that

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none of the CARs has been able to develop “a system of governance and status of security” which has further exposed the region to many other serious problems. Amidst growing pressures from US, Russia, China and the Islamic world, the author suggests, all the Central Asian Republics have to work out “a viable strategy to maintain a balance between the external and internal interests.”

Clifton Marques tries to draw out the “‘actors’ and ‘factors’ that determine Central Asian affairs - politically, economically and militarily.” “Economy, transport/communication and oil” are the “factors” that determine the role played by the “actors”- Russia, US, China, Japan, Turkey, Iran, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan. The interaction of these factors, opines the author, is deciding “the strategic face of the foreign policy of the CARs and drawing out the security cordon around them.”

Amrisha Dhaka’s article tries to evaluate the “geopolitical framework” or “geopolitical matrix” in Central Asia. He talks about the role, interest, influence and significance of potential powers and regional powers, operating within or in the vicinity of the region, in determining the “course of action” of the CARs or the “Central Asian dynamics.” The author talks about the security set up in Central Asia and limitations of the CARs in this regard before focusing his study on India, Pakistan and Central Asia. Talking about the importance of the “three sets of composite relationship between India and Central Asia; Pakistan and Central Asia; and India and Pakistan”, the author sums up that this either “can improve or offset any one of the former two.”

Keeping in view India’s growing influence in the Central Asian region, Surendra Chopra sees Pakistan as making serious attempt to get closer to the CARs. He describes how after Soviet disintegration, problems like “ethnicity, religion and nationalism have become central issues in international affairs.” He tries to find out the historical roots of Islam in the region, its role and influence in past and present. Bringing the CARs in the category of “Third World countries”, he describes the “great geo-strategic significance” of the region and the “uniqueness” of these countries because of “hunger, Islamic fundamentalism and nuclear weapons.”

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The article by Harmeet Singh is based on the hypothesis that “Pakistan’s nuclear programme has dangerous portends connected with irresponsible proliferation.” The author categorises his paper in the following heads - “Pakistan’s nuclear threat perceptions due to India’s nuclear programme”, “Pakistan’s nuclear difficulties and its non-proliferation overtures”, “Pakistan’s nuclear doctrine vis-à-vis India”, “Pakistan’s nuclear bungle”, “Indian and American response to this bungle.” He derides Pakistan’s nuclear proliferation bungle and advocates resolute response from the international community.

Munir Alam’s paper seeks to examine the evolution of new defence and security cooperation between Russia and Tajikistan to thwart the challenges posed by Taliban. It also highlights Tajikistan’s response in the US war on terrorism. In addition, Tajikistan was involved in various bilateral and multilateral security agreements. Though “US military presence in the Central Asian region has added a new dimension to the geo-strategic environment”, the author aptly says that “without Russian help, the survival of Tajikistan as a nation would have become difficult.” The author concludes that “unified international action against the Taliban and formation of interim Afghan government under Hamid Karzai had a positive effect on Tajikistan.”

After the end of Cold War, multi-ethnic states like Uzbekistan experienced problems of ethnicity, ethnic conflict and nation building. The author thinks Uzbekistan which has the “potential to dominate the regional affairs in the region”, witnessed an “extreme and diverse ethnic atmosphere”, after its creation. His study highlights the policies and programmes of the “authoritarian regime” in Uzbekistan besides making a brief discussion of the “perception and response of the minorities towards such policies and programmes and their linkages with nation-state project of Uzbekistan.” To be a leader in the region, the author suggests, Uzbekistan has to avoid ethnic conflicts and for this it should devise “ethnically neutral” and minority-centric policies. For the growth and development of the state, “minorities should have a respectable position in the national life” and they should be given “representations in national institutions.”

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Downfall of the Taliban and creation of an interim government in Afghanistan are two remarkable events in the beginning years of the new millennium. As democracy was on its way to usher in this war ravaged country with preparations for the country's first democratic elections in October 2004, the article by Vishal Chandra tries to examine and analyse the challenges before the interim Afghan government and the international community. Amidst apprehension of re-emergence of Taliban, the author questions the viability and feasibility of holding democratic elections.

The article by Rajlaxmi Dash makes a survey of literature on Central Asia and indicates the valued sources of literature for researchers working on this area. She gives a detailed list of books and monographs for thematic research, institutional publications, important journals, internet materials, i.e., websites and enlists method of author and subject search. Since research is a thorough process of investigation, the author concludes, "a collective approach to collecting and locating, and collating information helps overcome many problems."

To sum up, this book covers important aspects of India-Central Asia relations and provides thought provoking ideas over the strengthening of relations with the CARs. The book, however, suffers from certain limitations. While some of the chapters complement each other and thus produce a rich account of the dynamics of relationship between South Asia and Central Asia, the analysis is in places repetitive. Nevertheless, the book is a valuable source of data and presents an analysis of the situation in Central Asia. This book will prove useful to those interested in studies related to India-Central Asia relations.

Mahesh Ranjan Debata

HIMALAYAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES is a quarterly Journal published by the Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation, which is a non-governmental, non-profit research, cultural and development facilitative organisation. The Journal is devoted to the study of various issues pertaining to the Himalayan and trans-Himalayan region in South and Central Asia or parts thereof, connected with its environment, resources, history, art and culture, language and literature, demography, social structures, communication, tourism, regional development, governance, human rights, geopolitics etc.

While the principal concern of the Journal will be on its focal area, i.e., from Afghanistan to Myanmar including the Central Asian states of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, China, Mongolia, Nepal, Bhutan and the Indian Himalayan States of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttaranchal and North East states; papers with a broad sweep addressing environmental, social, cultural, economic, geopolitical and human rights issues are also welcomed.

The objective is to make a scientific appraisal of the issues confronting the Himalayan and adjoining region in South and Central Asia or parts thereof, and to make specific policy oriented studies and need based recommendations as the means to promote the human, educational and economic advancement of the peoples of the region besides preserving and enriching their ethno-cultural, literary and historical heritage. Promotion of human rights, social justice, peace, harmony and national integration are the other key areas in which the Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation has been active.

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