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The General in his Labyrinth

Tariq Ali

If there is a single consistent theme in Pervez Musharraf's memoir, it is the familiar military dogma that Pakistan has fared better under its

generals than under its politicians. The first batch of generals were the offspring of the departing colonial power. They had been taught to obey orders, respect the command structure of the army whatever the cost and uphold the traditions of the British Indian Army. The bureaucrats who ran Pakistan in its early days were the product of imperial selection procedures designed to turn out incorruptible civil servants wearing a mask of objectivity. The military chain of command is still respected, but the civil service now consists largely of ruthlessly corrupt time-servers. Once its members were loyal to the imperial state: today they cater to the needs of the army.

Pakistan's first uniformed ruler, General Ayub Khan, a Sandhurst-trained colonial officer, seized power in October 1958 with strong encouragement from both Washington and London. They were fearful that the projected first general election might produce a coalition that would take Pakistan out of security pacts like Seato and towards a non-aligned foreign policy. Ayub banned all political parties, took over opposition newspapers and told the first meeting of his cabinet: 'As far as you are concerned there is only one embassy that matters in this country: the American Embassy.' In a radio broadcast to the nation he informed his bewildered 'fellow countrymen' that 'we must understand that democracy cannot work in a hot climate. To have democracy we must have a cold climate like Britain.'

Perhaps remarks of this sort account for Ayub's popularity in the West. He became a great favourite of the press in Britain and the US. His bluff exterior certainly charmed Christine Keeler (they splashed together in the pool at Cliveden during a Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference) and the saintly Kingsley Martin of the *New Statesman* published a grovelling interview. Meanwhile opposition voices were silenced and political prisoners tortured; Hasan Nasir, a Communist, died as a result. In 1962 - by now he had promoted himself to field-marshal - Ayub decided that the time had come to widen his appeal. He took off his uniform, put on native gear and addressed a public meeting (a forced gathering of peasants assembled by their landlords) at which he announced that there would soon be presidential elections and he hoped people would support him. The bureaucracy organised a political party - the Convention Muslim League - and careerists flocked to join it. The election took place in 1965 and the polls had to be rigged to ensure the field-marshal's victory. His opponent, Fatima Jinnah (the sister of the country's founder), fought a spirited campaign but to no avail. The handful of bureaucrats who had refused to help fix the election were offered early retirement.

Now that he had been formally elected, it was thought that Ayub would be further legitimised by the publication of his memoirs. *Friends Not Masters: A Political Autobiography* appeared from Oxford in 1967 to great acclaim in the Western press and was greeted with sycophantic hysteria in the government-controlled media at home. But Ayub's information secretary, Altaf Gauhar, a crafty, cynical courtier, had ghosted a truly awful book: stodgy, crude, verbose and full of half-truths. It backfired badly in Pakistan and was soon being viciously satirised in clandestine pamphlets on university campuses. Ayub had suggested that Pakistanis 'should study this book, understand and act upon it . . . it contains material which is for the good of the people.' More than 70 per cent of the population was illiterate and of the rest only a tiny elite could read English. In October 1968, during lavish celebrations to commemorate the ten years of dictatorship as a 'decade of development', students in Rawalpindi demanded the restoration of democracy; soon Student Action Committees had spread across the country. The state responded with its usual brutality. There were mass arrests and orders to 'kill rioters'. Several students died during the first few weeks. In the two months that followed workers, lawyers, small shopkeepers, prostitutes and government clerks joined the protests. Stray dogs with 'Ayub' painted on their backs became a special target for armed cops. In March 1969 Ayub passed control of the country to the whisky-soaked General Yahya Khan.

Yahya promised a free election within a year and kept his word. The 1970 general election (the first in Pakistan's history) resulted in a sensational victory for the Awami League, Bengali nationalists from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The Bengalis were disgruntled, and for good reason: East Pakistan, where a majority of the population lived, was treated as a colony and the Bengalis wanted a federal government. The military-political-economic elite came from West Pakistan, however, and all it could see in the Awami League's victory was a threat to its privileges.

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the leader of the Pakistan People's Party, which had triumphed in the western portion of the country, should have negotiated a settlement with the victors. Instead he sulked, told his party to boycott a meeting of the new assembly that had been called in Dhaka, the capital of East Pakistan, and thus provided the army with breathing space to prepare a military assault. Yahya prevented the leader of the Awami League, Mujibur Rahman, from forming a government and, in March 1971, sent in troops to occupy East Pakistan. 'Thank God, Pakistan has been saved,' Bhutto declared, aligning himself with what followed. Rahman was arrested and several hundred nationalist and left-wing intellectuals, activists and students were killed in a carefully organised massacre. The lists of victims had been prepared with the help of local

Islamist vigilantes, whose party, the Jamaat-e-Islami, had lost badly in the elections. The killings were followed by a campaign of mass rape. Soldiers were told that Bengalis were relatively recent converts to Islam and hence not 'proper Muslims' – their genes needed improving.

The atrocities provoked an armed resistance and there were appeals for military aid from New Delhi, where the Awami League had established a government-in-exile. The Indians, fearful that Bengali refugees might destabilise the Indian province of West Bengal and no doubt sensing an opportunity, sent in their army, which was welcomed as a liberating force. Within a fortnight, the Pakistan troops were surrounded. Their commander, General 'Tiger' Niazi, chose surrender rather than martyrdom, for which his colleagues, a thousand miles from the battlefield, were never to forgive him. In December 1971, East Pakistan became Bangladesh and 90,000 West Pakistani soldiers ended up in Indian prisoner of war camps. Nixon, Kissinger and Mao had all 'tilted towards Pakistan' but to little effect. It was a total disaster for the Pakistan army: the first phase of military rule had led to the division of the country and the loss of a majority of its population.

Bhutto was left with a defeated army and a truncated state. He had been elected on a social-democratic programme that pledged food, clothing, education and shelter for all, major land reform and nationalisation. He was the only political leader Pakistan has ever produced who had the power, buttressed by mass support, to change the country and its institutions, including the army, for ever. But he failed on every front. The nationalisations merely replaced profit-hungry businessmen with corrupt cronies and tame bureaucrats. As landlords flocked to join his party, the radical reforms he had promised in the countryside were shelved. The poor felt instinctively that Bhutto was on their side (the elite never forgave him) but few measures were enacted to justify their confidence. His style of government was authoritarian; his personal vindictiveness was corrosive.

Bhutto attempted to fight the religious opposition by stealing their clothes: he banned the sale of alcohol, made Friday a public holiday and declared the Ahmediyya sect to be non-Muslims (a long-standing demand of the Jamaat-e-Islami that had, till then, been treated with contempt). These measures did not help him, but damaged the country by legitimising confessional politics. Despite his worries about the Islamist opposition, Bhutto would probably have won the 1977 elections without state interference, though with a reduced majority. But the manipulation was so blatant that the opposition came out on the streets and neither his sarcasm nor his wit was any help in the crisis.

Always a bad judge of character, he had made a junior general and small-minded zealot, Zia-ul-Haq, army chief of staff. As head of the Pakistani training mission to Jordan, Brigadier Zia had led the Black September assault on the Palestinians in 1970. In July 1977, to pre-empt an agreement between Bhutto and the opposition parties that would have entailed new elections, Zia struck. Bhutto was arrested, and held for a few weeks, and Zia promised that new elections would be held within six months, after which the military would return to barracks. A year later Bhutto, still popular and greeted by large crowds wherever he went, was again arrested, and this time charged with murder, tried and hanged in April 1979.

Over the next ten years the political culture of Pakistan was brutalised. As public floggings (of dissident journalists among others) and hangings became the norm, Zia himself was turned into a Cold War hero – thanks largely to events in Afghanistan. Religious affinity did nothing to mitigate the hostility of Afghan leaders to their neighbour. The main reason was the Durand Line, which was imposed on the Afghans in 1893 to mark the frontier between British India and Afghanistan and which divided the Pashtun population of the region. After a hundred years (the Hong Kong model) all of what became the North-Western Frontier Province of British India was supposed to revert to Afghanistan but no government in Kabul ever accepted the Durand Line any more than they accepted British, or, later, Pakistani control, over the territory.

In 1977, when Zia came to power, 90 per cent of men and 98 per cent of women in Afghanistan were illiterate; 5 per cent of landowners held 45 per cent of the cultivable land and the country had the lowest per capita income of any in Asia. The same year, the Parcham Communists, who had backed the 1973 military coup by Prince Daud after which a republic was proclaimed, withdrew their support from Daud, were reunited with other Communist groups to form the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), and began to agitate for a new government. The regimes in neighbouring countries became involved. The shah of Iran, acting as a conduit for Washington, recommended firm action – large-scale arrests, executions, torture – and put units from his torture agency at Daud's disposal. The shah also told Daud that if he recognised the Durand Line as a permanent frontier the shah would give Afghanistan \$3 billion and Pakistan would cease hostile actions. Meanwhile, Pakistani intelligence agencies were arming Afghan exiles while encouraging old-style tribal uprisings aimed at restoring the monarchy. Daud was inclined to accept the shah's offer, but the Communists organised a pre-emptive coup and took power in April 1978. There was panic in Washington, which increased tenfold as it became clear that the shah too was about to be deposed. General Zia's dictatorship thus became the lynchpin of US

strategy in the region, which is why Washington green-lighted Bhutto's execution and turned a blind eye to the country's nuclear programme. The US wanted a stable Pakistan whatever the cost.

As we now know, plans (a 'bear-trap', in the words of the US national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski) were laid to destabilise the PDPA, in the hope that its Soviet protectors would be drawn in. Plans of this sort often go awry, but they succeeded in Afghanistan, primarily because of the weaknesses of the Afghan Communists themselves: they had come to power through a military coup which hadn't involved any mobilisation outside Kabul, yet they pretended this was a national revolution; their Stalinist political formation made them allergic to any form of accountability and ideas such as drafting a charter of democratic rights or holding free elections to a constituent assembly never entered their heads. Ferocious factional struggles led, in September 1979, to a Mafia-style shoot-out at the Presidential Palace in Kabul, during which the prime minister, Hafizullah Amin, shot President Taraki dead. Amin, a nutty Stalinist, claimed that 98 per cent of the population supported his reforms but the 2 per cent who opposed them had to be liquidated. There were mutinies in the army and risings in a number of towns as a result, and this time they had nothing to do with the Americans or General Zia.

Finally, after two unanimous Politburo decisions against intervention, the Soviet Union changed its mind, saying that it had 'new documentation'. This is still classified, but it would not surprise me in the least if the evidence consisted of forgeries suggesting that Amin was a CIA agent. Whatever it was, the Politburo, with Yuri Andropov voting against, now decided to send troops into Afghanistan. Its aim was to get rid of a discredited regime and replace it with a marginally less repulsive one. Sound familiar?

From 1979 until 1988, Afghanistan was the focal point of the Cold War. Millions of refugees crossed the Durand Line and settled in camps and cities in the NWFP. Weapons and money, as well as jihadis from Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Egypt, flooded into Pakistan. All the main Western intelligence agencies (including the Israelis') had offices in Peshawar, near the frontier. The black-market and market rates for the dollar were exactly the same. Weapons, including Stinger missiles, were sold to the mujahedin by Pakistani officers who wanted to get rich quickly. The heroin trade flourished and the number of registered addicts in Pakistan grew from a few hundred in 1977 to a few million in 1987. (One of the banks through which the heroin mafia laundered money was the BCCI – whose main PR abroad was a retired civil servant called Altaf Gauhar.)

As for Pakistan and its people, they languished. During Zia's period in power, the Jamaat-e-Islami, which had never won more than 5 per cent of the vote anywhere in the country, was patronised by the government; its cadres were sent to fight in Afghanistan, its armed student wing was encouraged to terrorise campuses in the name of Islam, its ideologues were ever present on TV. The Inter-Services Intelligence also encouraged the formation of other, more extreme jihadi groups, which carried out acts of terror at home and abroad and set up madrassahs all over the frontier provinces. Soon Zia, too, needed his own political party and the bureaucracy set one up: the Pakistan Muslim League.

With the elevation of Mikhail Gorbachev in March 1985 it became obvious that the Soviet Union would accept defeat in Afghanistan and withdraw its troops. It wanted some guarantees for the Afghans it was leaving behind and the United States – its mission successful – was prepared to play ball. General Zia, however, was not. The Afghan war had gone to his head (as it did to that of Osama bin Laden and his colleagues) and he wanted his own people in power there. As the Soviet withdrawal got closer, Zia and the ISI made plans for the postwar settlement.

And then Zia disappeared. On 17 August 1988, he took five generals to the trial of a new US Abrams M-1/A-1 tank at a military test range near Bahawalpur. Also present were a US general and the US ambassador, Arnold Raphael. The demonstration did not go well and everybody was grumpy. Zia offered the Americans a lift in his specially built C-130 aircraft, which had a sealed cabin to protect him from assassins. A few minutes after the plane took off, the pilots lost control and it crashed into the desert. All the passengers were killed. All that was left of Zia was his jawbone, which was duly buried in Islamabad (the chowk – roundabout – nearby became known to cabbies as 'Jawbone Chowk'). The cause of the crash remains a mystery. The US National Archives contain 250 pages of documents, but they are still classified. Pakistani intelligence experts have told me informally that it was the Russians taking their revenge. Most Pakistanis blamed the CIA, as they always do. Zia's son and widow whispered that it was 'our own people' in the army.

With Zia's assassination, the second period of military rule in Pakistan came to an end. What followed was a longish civilian prologue to Musharraf's reign. For ten years members of two political dynasties – the Bhutto and Sharif families – ran the country in turn. It was Benazir Bhutto's minister of the interior, General Naseerullah Babar, who, with the ISI, devised the plan to set up the Taliban as a politico-military force that could penetrate Afghanistan, a move half-heartedly approved by the US Embassy. Washington had lost interest in Afghanistan and Pakistan once the Soviet Union had withdrawn its troops. The Taliban ('students') were

children of Afghan refugees and poor Pathan families 'educated' in the madrassahs in the 1980s: they provided the shock troops, but were led by a handful of experienced mujahedin including Mullah Omar. Without Pakistan's support they could never have taken Kabul, although Mullah Omar preferred to forget this. Omar's faction was dominant, but the ISI never completely lost control of the organisation. Islamabad kept its cool even when Omar's zealots asserted their independence by attacking the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul and his religious police interrupted a football match between the two countries because the Pakistan players sported long hair and shorts, caned the players before the stunned crowd and sent them back home.

After Benazir's fall, the Sharif brothers returned to power. And once again, Shahbaz, the younger but shrewder sibling, accepted family discipline and Nawaz became the prime minister. In 1998 Sharif decided to make Pervez Musharraf army chief of staff in preference to the more senior General Ali Kuli Khan (who was at college with me in Lahore). Sharif's reasoning may have been that Musharraf, from a middle-class, refugee background like himself, would be easier to manipulate than Ali Kuli, who came from a landed Pathan family in the NWFP. Whatever the reasoning, it turned out to be a mistake.

On Bill Clinton's urging, Sharif pushed for a rapprochement with India. Travel and trade agreements were negotiated, land borders were opened, flights resumed, but before the next stage could be reached, the Pakistan army began to assemble in the Himalayan foothills. The ISI claimed that the Siachen glacier in Kashmir had been illegally occupied by the Indians and the Indians claimed the opposite. Neither side could claim victory after the fighting that followed, but casualties were high, particularly on the Indian side (Musharraf exaggerates Pakistan's 'triumph'). A ceasefire was agreed and each army returned to its side of the Line of Control.

Why did the war take place at all? In private the Sharif brothers told associates that the army was opposed to their policy of friendship with India and was determined to sabotage the process: the army had acted without receiving clearance from the government. In his memoir, Musharraf insists that the army had kept the prime minister informed in briefings in January and February 1999. Whatever the truth, Sharif told Washington that he had been bounced into a war he didn't want, and not long after the war, the Sharif family decided to get rid of Musharraf. Constitutionally, the prime minister had the power to dismiss the chief of staff and appoint a new one, as Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had done in the 1970s, when he appointed Zia. But the army then was weak, divided and defeated; this was certainly not the case in 1999.

Sharif's candidate to succeed Musharraf was General Ziauddin Butt, head of the ISI, who was widely seen as corrupt and incompetent. He was bundled off to Washington for vetting and while there is said to have pledged bin Laden's head on a platter. If Sharif had just dismissed Musharraf he might have had a better chance of success but what he lacked in good sense his brother tried to make up for in guile. Were the Sharif brothers really so foolish as believe that the army was unaware of their intrigues or were they misled by their belief in US omnipotence? Clinton duly warned the army that Washington would not tolerate a military coup in Pakistan and I remember chuckling at the time that this was a first in US-Pakistan relations. Sharif relied too heavily on Clinton's warning.

What followed was a tragi-comic episode that is well described in Musharraf's book. He and his wife were flying back from Sri Lanka on a normal passenger flight when the pilot received instructions not to land. While the plane was still circling over Karachi, Nawaz Sharif summoned General Butt and in front of a TV crew swore him in as the new chief of staff. Meanwhile there was panic on Musharraf's plane, by now low on fuel. He managed to establish contact with the commander of the Karachi garrison, the army took control of the airport and the plane landed safely. Simultaneously, military units surrounded the prime minister's house in Islamabad and arrested Nawaz Sharif. General Zia had been assassinated on a military flight; Musharraf took power on board a passenger plane.

So began the third extended period of military rule in Pakistan, initially welcomed by all Nawaz Sharif's political opponents and many of his colleagues. In the Line of Fire gives the official version of what has been happening in Pakistan over the last six years and is intended largely for Western eyes. Where Altaf Gauhar injected nonsense of every sort into Ayub's memoirs, his son Humayun Gauhar, who edited this book, has avoided the more obvious pitfalls. The general's raffish lifestyle is underplayed but there is enough in the book to suggest that he is not too easily swayed by religious or social obligations.

The score-settling with enemies at home is crude and for that reason the book has caused a commotion in Pakistan. A spirited controversy has erupted in the media, something that could never have happened during previous periods of military rule. Scathing criticism has come from ex-generals (Ali Kuli Khan's rejoinder was published in most newspapers), opposition politicians and pundits of every sort. In fact, there was more state interference in the media during Nawaz Sharif's tenure than there is under Musharraf and the level of debate is much higher than in India, where the middle-class obsession with shopping and celebrity has led to a trivialisation of TV and most of the print media.

When Musharraf seized power in 1999, he refused to move house, preferring his more homely, colonial bungalow in Rawalpindi to the kitsch comfort of the President's House in Islamabad, with its gilt furniture and tasteless decor that owes more to Gulf State opulence than local tradition. The cities are close to each other, but far from identical. Islamabad, laid out in a grid pattern and overlooked by the Himalayan foothills, was built in the 1960s by General Ayub. He wanted a new capital remote from threatening crowds, but close to GHQ in Rawalpindi, which had been constructed by the British as a garrison town. After Partition, it became the obvious place to situate the military headquarters of the new Pakistan.

One of the 19th-century British colonial expeditions to conquer Afghanistan (they all ended in disaster) was planned in Rawalpindi. And it was also from there, a century and a half later, that the Washington-blessed jihad was launched against the hopeless Afghan Communists. And it was there too that the US demand to use Pakistan as a base for its operations in Afghanistan was discussed and agreed in September 2001. This was a crucial decision for the army chiefs because it meant the dismantling of their only foreign triumph: the placing of the Taliban in Kabul.

Heavy traffic often makes the ten-mile journey from Islamabad to Rawalpindi tortuous, unless you're the president and the highway has been cleared by a security detail. Even then, as this book reveals in some detail, assassination attempts can play havoc with the schedule. The first happened on 14 December 2003. Moments after the general's motorcade passed over a bridge, a powerful bomb exploded and badly damaged the bridge, although no one was hurt. The armoured limo, fitted with radar and an anti-bomb device, courtesy of the Pentagon, saved Musharraf's life. His demeanour at the time surprised observers. He was said to have been calm and cheerful, making jocular allusions to living in perilous times. Unsurprisingly, security had been high – decoys, last-minute route changes etc – but this didn't prevent another attempt a week later, on Christmas Day. This time two men driving cars loaded with explosives came close to success. The president's car was damaged, guards in cars escorting him were killed, but Musharraf was unhurt. Since his exact route and the time of his departure from Islamabad were heavily guarded secrets the terrorists must have had inside information. If your security staff includes angry Islamists who see you as a traitor and want to blow you up, then, as the general states in his memoir, Allah alone can protect you. He has certainly been kind to Musharraf.

The culprits were discovered, and tortured till they revealed details of the plot. Some junior military officers were also implicated. The key plotters were tried in secret and hanged. The supposed mastermind, a jihadi extremist called Amjad Farooqi, was shot by security forces.

Two questions haunt both Washington and Musharraf's colleagues: how many of those involved remain undetected and would the command structure of the army survive if a terrorist succeeded next time around? Musharraf doesn't seem worried and adopts a jaunty, even boastful tone. Before 9/11 he was treated like a pariah abroad and beset by problems at home. How to fortify the will of a high command weakened by piety and corruption? How to deal with the corruption and embezzlement that had been a dominant feature of both the Sharif and Bhutto governments? Benazir Bhutto was already in self-exile in Dubai; the Sharif brothers had been arrested. Before they could be charged, however, Washington organised an offer of asylum from Saudi Arabia, a state whose ruling family has institutionalised the theft of public funds.

Musharraf's unstinting support for the US after 9/11 prompted local wags to dub him 'Busharraf', and was the motive behind the attempts on his life. (In March 2005 Condoleezza Rice described the US-Pakistan relationship since 9/11 as 'broad and deep'.) Had he not, after all, unravelled Pakistan's one military victory in order to please Washington? General Mahmood Ahmed, who headed the ISI, was in Washington as a guest of the Pentagon, trying to convince the Defense Intelligence Agency that Mullah Omar was a good bloke and could be persuaded to disgorge Osama, when the attacks of 11 September took place. That his listeners were freaked out by this is hardly surprising. Musharraf tells us he agreed to become Washington's surrogate because the State Department honcho, Richard Armitage, threatened to bomb Pakistan back to the Stone Age if he didn't. What really worried Islamabad, however, was a threat Musharraf doesn't mention: if Pakistan refused, the US would have used Indian bases.

Musharraf was initially popular in Pakistan and if he had pushed through reforms aimed at providing an education (with English as a compulsory second language) for all children, instituted land reforms which would have ended the stranglehold of the gentry on large swathes of the countryside, tackled corruption in the armed forces and everywhere else, and ended the jihadi escapades in Kashmir and Pakistan as a prelude to a long-term deal with India, then he might have left a mark on the country. Instead, he has mimicked his military predecessors. Like them, he took off his uniform, went to a landlord-organised gathering in Sind and entered politics. His party? The evergreen, ever available Muslim League. His supporters? Chips off the same old corrupt block that he had

denounced so vigorously and whose leaders he was prosecuting. His prime minister? Shaukat 'Shortcut' Aziz, formerly a senior executive of Citibank with close ties to the eighth richest man in the world, the Saudi prince Al-Walid bin Talal. As it became clear that nothing much was going to change a wave of cynicism engulfed the country.

Musharraf is better than Zia and Ayub in many ways, but human rights groups have noticed a sharp rise in the number of political activists who are being 'disappeared': four hundred this year alone, including Sindhi nationalists and a total of 1200 in the province of Baluchistan, where the army has become trigger-happy once again. The war on terror has provided many leaders with the chance to sort out their opponents, but that doesn't make it any better.

In his book he expresses his detestation of religious extremists and his regrets over the murder of Daniel Pearl. He suggests that one of those responsible, the former LSE student Omar Saeed Sheikh, was an MI6 recruit who was sent to fight the Serbs in Bosnia. Al-Qaida fighters had also been sent there (with US approval) and Sheikh established contact with them and became a double agent. Now Sheikh sits in a death-cell in a Pakistani prison, chatting amiably to his guards and emailing newspaper editors in Pakistan to tell them that if he is executed papers he has left behind will be published exposing the complicity of others. Perhaps this is bluff, or perhaps he was a triple agent and was working for the ISI as well.

Next year there will be an election and rumours abound that Musharraf is offering Benazir Bhutto's People's Party a deal, but one that excludes her. A few years ago she could be spotted in Foggy Bottom, waiting forlornly to plead for US support from a State Department junior on the South Asia desk. All she wanted then was a cabinet position under Musharraf, so that she could remain a presence on the political scene. Musharraf is much weaker now and she may decide not to play ball with him, but to hang on for something better.

And then there is Afghanistan. Despite the fake optimism of Blair and his Nato colleagues everyone is aware that it is a total mess. A revived Taliban is winning popularity by resisting the occupation. Nato helicopters and soldiers are killing hundreds of civilians and describing them as 'Taliban fighters'. Hamid Karzai, the man with the nice shawls, is seen as a hopeless puppet, totally dependent on Nato troops. He has antagonised both the Pashtuns, who are turning to the Taliban once again in large numbers, and the warlords of the Northern Alliance, who openly denounce him and suggest it's time he was sent back to the States. In western Afghanistan, it is only the Iranian influence that has

preserved a degree of stability. If Ahmedinejad was provoked into withdrawing his support, Karzai would not last more than a week. Islamabad waits and watches. Military strategists are convinced that the US has lost interest and Nato will soon leave. If that happens Pakistan is unlikely to permit the Northern Alliance to take Kabul. Its army will move in again. A Pakistan veteran of the Afghan wars joked with me: 'Last time we sent in the beards, but times have changed. This time, inshallah, we'll dress them all in Armani suits so it looks good on US television.' The region remains fog-bound. Pakistan's first military leader was seen off by a popular insurrection. The second was assassinated. What will happen to Musharraf?

Tariq Ali's *Pirates of the Caribbean: Axis of Hope*, about Latin America, is out from Verso.

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Illustration by Nino Jose Heredia/Gulf News

Military rule stifles democracy

by Husain Haqqani, Special to Gulf News

President General Pervez Musharraf does not seem to see a contradiction between his decision to retain his military uniform and his claims of transforming Pakistan into a democracy.

He recently told a public gathering in Dera Esmail Khan that his uniform has nothing to do with democracy.

"For the first time, the assemblies are completing their tenure. The year 2007 is the election year and people should elect progressive and moderate people," he was quoted by the media as saying.

Musharraf asserted naively, "The uniform has nothing to do with democracy. It must not be confused and the vested interest is out to mislead the nation."

In reality, Musharraf's uniform has everything to do with Pakistan not being on the road to democracy. Recently former prime minister Benazir Bhutto was reported to be prepared to accept Musharraf as president in uniform in return for a free, fair and inclusive parliamentary election.

Bhutto has denied a deal between her Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Musharraf. But her hope, shared by many Pakistanis, is that a transitional arrangement could somehow emerge that would allow Musharraf to wield power for a while longer and then allow him to fade away.

Supporters of this transitional mechanism cite the examples of Chile and South Korea, where power sharing arrangements between democratic politicians and coup making generals paved the way for constitutional, democratic government over a period of time.

In Pakistan's case, however, phased transitions from military to civil rule have faltered in the past. For a power-sharing arrangement to be meaningful it is important that it should be more than an arrangement between individuals and parties but rather a social contract between Pakistan's all powerful military and the country's political parties.

Those who cite the models of Chile and South Korea for Pakistan should not forget that the military's political intervention in those countries did not come to a complete end until Generals Pinochet and Chun Dohwan were detained or tried, thereby establishing civilian accountability over coup making security services.

The problem with having a uniformed president is two-fold. First, it represents politicisation of an institution the army that should be above politics.

A professional military's main task is to defend the country against external aggression. Soldiers are trained to locate and liquidate enemies.

When a serving general runs the country in addition to commanding the army, his political and soldierly interests collide.

As has happened many times in Pakistani history, military decisions are made with politics on the mind and political decisions end up being soldier-like, aimed at eliminating "enemies" rather than accommodating opponents.

The second problem with a uniformed president is that it leads to the degradation of national institutions as supposedly neutral state institutions, such as the army, the civil service, the judiciary and the intelligence agencies, end up taking the side of the uniformed incumbent.

Pakistan has become a highly militarised state under its four military rulers, who have collectively ruled the country for 31 of its 59 years in existence.

The military is an important institution in the life of any country but it should not dominate aspects of life for which soldiers have no training or aptitude. Allowing a serving general to be head of state, in violation of the country's constitution, encourages militarisation and undermines civil society.

There is a tendency among experts to divide the blame equally among Pakistan's generals, civilian politicians, religious leaders and feudal elites for Pakistan's democratic failure.

Undoubtedly, Pakistan's politics are complex. Mistakes by several institutions and individuals have preceded the breakdown of each of Pakistan's experiments with democracy.

But if there is a common thread running through Pakistan's checkered history, it is the army's perception of itself as the country's only viable institution and its deep-rooted suspicion of civilian political processes. The generals have refused to let politics take its course.

Although generals have ruled Pakistan for over half of the state's existence, Pakistanis have still clearly considered democracy to be the only legitimate system of governance for the country.

Acknowledging this reality, each of Pakistan's four military rulers generals Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan, Zia-ul Haq, and Pervez Musharraf has tried to redefine democracy and claim that he and the army were building democracy instead of bypassing it.

The result is a carefully crafted system of political manipulation, which empowers covert agencies and individuals working at their behest instead of allowing people's representatives to conduct open and accountable politics.

If Musharraf remains in uniform, it is this system that would be perpetuated instead of a genuine democracy, which allows genuine debate and real alternation of power among contending parties.

So far, Musharraf and the military have strayed little from the script of Pakistan's earlier generals. Not until the army's institutional thinking changes or its hold becomes weaker can Pakistan be expected to make a transition to democratic rule.

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Newsline – December 2006

Cover Story

Soldiers of Fortune

by Dr. Ayesha Siddiqi

The Pakistan military is among several other armed forces in the world engaged in commercial ventures. Today, its financial empire has an

approximate financial size of 200 billion rupees with military-controlled welfare foundations operating in areas ranging from banking, insurance, leasing and real estate to private security, education, airlines, cargo services, knitwear, and major agri-based industries.

These businesses denote an additional cost for the government because of the use of state assets. A number of the commercial operations of the four welfare foundations, the Fauji Foundation, Army Welfare Trust (AWT), Bahria Foundation and Shaheen Foundation, as pointed out by several reports of the auditor-general of Pakistan, use state resources without reimbursing the government. However, the military's top management continues to claim that these are purely private sector ventures that do not fall under the scope of government accountability procedures and, hence, have continued to grow as part of the military's hidden economy.

The military's economy comprises three interdependent but distinct levels. The welfare foundations represent the most visible segment. These four foundations are subsidiaries of the military, and the link is very clear. In general terms, all foundations use the logos of their parent services, and the overall management is provided by the respective service headquarters. The Fauji Foundation, on the other hand, is a tri-service organisation managed by the ministry of defence and has a system of plowing resources back into the welfare budget of the three services. These financial stakes account for about six to seven per cent of private sector assets.

According to the former governor, State Bank of Pakistan, Ishrat Hussain, the military's stakes in the private sector are about 3.6 per cent. However, the former governor's estimates do not take into account the military business complex's real estate investments. Moreover, his estimates are based on the data collected from the Karachi Stock Exchange, which does not include a number of the military's business ventures. The military's corporate empire comprises 100 projects controlled directly or indirectly by the four welfare foundations, most of which are not even listed with the stock exchange. Although these commercial ventures have ostensibly been established for the welfare of the entire armed forces, the fact is that the officer corps, especially the top echelons, are the key beneficiaries of the military's economy. The cushy jobs given to senior commanders in these foundations or other military-controlled business ventures soon after retirement generate an interest at the senior level of the military's management to maintain a foothold in power politics. It is this aspect which is most troublesome for a polity that is trying to get back on its feet. A political army's interests in remaining well-entrenched in politics become significant when it has equally significant financial stakes in staying on top of things.

The armed forces' direct or indirect involvement in the economy and its parallel control of power politics allows it access to privileged information

which, in Pakistan's case, has allowed two welfare groups, the AWT and the Fauji Foundation, to become two of the largest business conglomerates in the country. Besides access to strategic economic information, these business groups have been given tax breaks as well. For instance, the Fauji Foundation was exempt from taxes during the 1960s, and the AWT did not pay any taxes until 1993, when tax was levied on it during the first regime of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Even then, the trust paid fewer taxes than the Shaheen and Bahria Foundations. So much for the political influence of the army.

The military as a serious economic actor, which competes with other domestic economic players, is a phenomenon prevalent primarily in the developing world, especially in countries ridden with the problem of political underdevelopment. The armed forces of the developed world, such as in the US, France, Britain and others, also have a significant economic role, but these militaries normally piggyback on the civilian players to exploit resources in other countries rather than competing within. So, the Chinese PLA, the Thai, Pakistani and Burmese armed forces, or even the Iranian Hezbollah militia, directly depend on their political significance to exploit resources at home. In weak polities in particular, militaries are tempted to engage in economic ventures for a number of reasons, ranging from the welfare of their own personnel to filling the financial gap in order to meet their operational and personnel needs – especially when the governments cannot do so due to a resource crunch, or because the state has a poor tax base that does not allow it to generate resources – or merely to fulfill certain other objectives of the state.

Historically speaking, militaries have been engaged in commercial ventures for a host of reasons. The German military, for instance, was deeply entrenched in commercial ventures until it was defeated during the Second World War. However, a direct involvement in commercial ventures in the post-Cold War era is a phenomenon that one sees prevalent in developing countries mainly. It is also a feature in countries where the militaries were directly involved in nation-building or were people's armies, such as those in China, Indonesia, or a number of Latin and South American countries. The military in business is not a popular model in operational/professional militaries. Of course, there are exceptions such as Pakistan and Turkey.

Once one begins to look into this issue, there are clearly three models that are visible. The first model relates to cases like in China, Indonesia and many Latin American states where the military, including serving personnel, are directly involved in commercial ventures. Here, the militaries became engaged in commercial ventures as part of the politico-economic tradition whereby the armed forces were encouraged to get involved in business activities to raise their own resources or to meet

budgetary gaps. In Indonesia's case, for instance, the military was consciously involved in commercial activities to meet the resource gap, even for buying military hardware. In China, this was also done to meet the shortfall in the defence budget. However, in Pakistan's case, the defence budget is completely funded by the government, which also bears the burden of over 30 billion rupees in military pensions. It is important to note that even in such cases like China and Indonesia, it was eventually realised that the military's direct involvement in commercialism was inimical to the professionalism of the institution. Hence, the Chinese armed forces were legally banned in 1998 from indulging in commercial ventures, especially in the service industry.

The second model relates to countries like Pakistan and Turkey where militaries are not engaged directly, but by proxy. This is done by running commercial activities through retired military personnel and using funds accumulated for welfare. This is a method that has been used in both Turkey and Pakistan. In Pakistan's case, the pension or the welfare fund is used to run three foundations: the Army Welfare Trust, Bahria Foundation and the Shaheen Foundation. Given the huge resources available to the armed forces as part of the post-retirement fund, the money is invested in business ventures to earn returns for those investing in the welfare scheme. This methodology also gives credence to those who argue that these ventures have no link with the military. In fact, in the view of most military personnel, the fact that these foundations and some of the businesses are run by retired military personnel does not signify that they are the corporate interests of the armed forces. Of course, what is always forgotten is that it is the political clout of the military – and the fact that it is directly involved in governance – that has a major role to play in giving these commercial ventures a big boost. Given the peculiar nature of the civil-military relations imbalance in Pakistan, there are times when contracts are granted on a preferential basis to military organisations. The entire construction workload given to the FWO and the NLC in Lahore by Shahbaz Sharif bears witness to the fact. Skeptics would argue that the contracts are obtained through competitive bidding. However, given the nature of transparency of the government, this argument is highly questionable.

The last model that was referred to earlier pertains to activities conducted in the developed world where retired military personnel set up security firms or organisations directly linked with the 'management of conflict.' These companies, like the MPRI in the US or Executive Outcomes in the UK or Sandline International of South Africa, are used indirectly by the military or the governments to pursue their security objectives in other countries or regions. A number of these companies were used in the African continent to support regimes or to bring down governments. This involvement is strictly military and is run in the fashion of the East

India Company where private companies are used to protect commercial interests, such as natural resources, diamond mines, etc. However, the implications of this approach are for the polity and economy of other states rather than the country where such private organisations are registered.

Although all of these aforementioned cases are problematic, it is the military's direct and indirect involvement that is of major concern, especially for economies trying to survive. This is because in this situation money could be created or there could be an injudicious use of resources even in the corporate sector.

In many ways, Pakistan military's commercial activities represent a crossbreed between the first and the second models described. The military, in fact, seems to have adopted a two-pronged approach. First, turn public sector ventures into private ventures, hence using state capital. This pertains to operations like the National Logistic Cell and the Frontier Works Organisation, or even the military farms. These activities use state capital, but are later turned into private ventures. The second approach involves running commercial ventures through the use of welfare funds. It is through a combination of both that the military has arrived at the point where its businesses today control about 23 percent of the assets of the corporate sector, with two foundations – the Fauji Foundation and the Army Welfare Trust – representing two of the largest conglomerates in the country. This quantification does not, however, include the extent of the military's intricate network that forms its economic/commercial empire.

To even have an idea of how deep the network is, one needs to look at three distinct levels: (a) small and medium enterprises run independently by units and divisions. These businesses range from bakeries to more intensive ventures; (b) public sector large enterprises – this refers to organisations like the NLC and FWO that are run under a formal public sector set-up; and (c) large-scale private sector ventures where some or all of the capital has been drawn from the public sector. The control, definitely, is in the hands of the armed forces. For instance, the management of the foundations is connected with the service headquarters. To get an idea of the size of the private ventures, the Fauji Foundation has 21 projects, the AWT 41, Bahria Foundation 23 and the Shaheen Foundation has 11. These range from bakeries, petrol pumps and international airlines to real estate, financial services and banks.

Referring to the military's small and medium enterprises, one would like to cite the example of one recent venture started by the corps command/cantonment board Bahawalpur. In this case, the cantonment board erected a toll plaza on the main GT road and started to collect money, an action that is in contravention of the cantonment board/local bodies law. As per the rules, none of these organisations can impose a

tax on a highway. Of course, the High Court rejected the plea against the decision, and one does not have to wonder why. Such ventures are carried out to make money that is then put in the regimental fund in the name of welfare, but with no accountability. There is absolutely no method to quantify the extent of such activities and the money generated through it. Unfortunately, the lack of transparency breeds corruption.

Then there are the two approaches used by the armed forces for what they term as their private sector ventures. The first relates to organisations like the Fauji Foundation that were raised by some funds from the government or those inherited from the British in 1947 as part of the welfare fund and invested in establishing commercial ventures. In this approach, the profit is used for the direct investment in welfare of retired personnel through opening schools, hospitals, training centres, etc. Since such operations are fairly independent, there is not a constant source of input from the public.

The businesses run by Fauji generate sufficient profit for the ventures to expand. However, efficient operations are not a common feature through the spectrum of the Fauji Foundation business. There are areas where the Foundation has, in the past, sought government intervention and financial help to remain afloat. The one example relates to Fauji-Jordan Cement. The operation had to be salvaged through help from Islamabad. In fact, a glance at the financial statements shows that the amount of the interest payable is so high that such establishments could be conveniently liquidated.

The other approach relates to the other three foundations where welfare money is used to establish businesses that, in turn, are used to generate profit to be paid back to the investors. These investors are the retired personnel who have invested the money in welfare schemes.

What is interesting about most of the business and industrial ventures is that the operations are in areas with high government protection or relate to high consumption items. For instance, the military's major industrial ventures are confined to sugar, fertiliser, cereal, and cement production. The idea is to restrict operations to areas that are financially less risky and bring higher dividends. This is a pattern that one finds in other areas of operations as well. Major concentration in the trade and service industry is in areas where the foundations could either benefit from business provided by the parent services or where there is a greater surety of returns. The two examples in this regard are the knitwear project of the AW and the real estate businesses of AWT, Bahria and Shaheen. The additional benefit is that land is often acquired on concessional rates due to the military's image and then sold at higher market prices. The profits are definitely visible even in cases where a service has not invested a major share of resources in a project.

The one example relates to Bahria Foundation's housing and construction project. The construction of the Bahria town in Rawalpindi and other cities is replete with stories of kickbacks to individuals. In any case, this project involves the linkage between one Mr. Riaz and the navy with the former responsible for major financial investment in the housing projects in return for using Bahria's name. The relationship was finally terminated in 2000 when Bahria Foundation transferred all shares in Bahria Town Scheme to Malik Riaz. The foundation also challenged Riaz in court for continuing to use the name Bahria. However, the court decided in the businessman's favour whose contention was that the name Bahria had become synonymous with his large housing projects, and that his business would be affected if he did not use the name and the logo. Interestingly, the court did not seem to pay attention to the laws which prohibited the use of an official logo by private companies.

It must also be mentioned here that the real estate development projects run by the three foundations are separate from the housing schemes run by the respective service headquarters. Contrary to the practice followed by foundations that procure land against a certain price, service headquarters do not pay any price for the land acquired to establish welfare housing schemes. It is only the construction price for the house or flat that is borne by the officer who has been given the property. Hence, it is not surprising to see state land previously dedicated for military purposes being consumed by such housing schemes. In Lahore cantonment alone, about 600 acres of land allocated for army exercises and other uses was arbitrarily taken and converted into housing schemes or given to officials for the paltry sum of 17 million rupees. Intriguingly, no one seems to have questioned the decision.

Today, military's economic activities can be observed in all three key segments of the economy: agriculture, manufacturing and service industries. The general principle that seems to have been followed is to expand in areas where the foundations were more assured of profits. However, having this rule does not necessarily mean that the foundations are efficient as well. Some of the military's concerns have huge operating/management costs. As for the AWT, it had to ask the government for a 5.4 billion rupee bailout in 2002. According to sources, the Nawaz Sharif government bailed out the trust through helping it with one of its foreign loans. This is highly scandalous, and certainly as scandalous as the Sharifs getting unfair concessions for the Ittefaq group. Although intriguing and understandable at the same time, the political leadership continued to support the expansion of this economic empire, treating contracts and businesses as favours that might protect a particular regime from the army's wrath. While it was not possible to achieve the perceived objective, the financial empire started to bloat as well.

Nawaz Sharif is not the only one who supported the military's business. A number of projects by the welfare foundations were sanctioned under Benazir Bhutto's government as well, with rumors of close linkages between Asif Zardari's close friends and Shaheen Foundation's management regarding the setting up of the Shaheen pay-TV and radio projects. None of the political governments raised any major objection to the military business complex during the 1990s. Moreover, there are many in the corporate sector who do not object to the military in business or even become its partners. This complacency or tacit cooperation can be explained as a by-product of the military's economic role – it tends to create clientalism. In Pakistan's elitist-authoritarian political system, which is backed by a top-down authoritarian economic model of progress and development, the political class and other key sectors seek the military's partnership for their personal gains. Since the military is a permanent actor in politics, which also keeps returning to power, other players seek to build a partnership with the GHQ or not disturb its interests to seek economic gains. Unfortunately, this perpetuates an elite model of exploitation of national resources.

The negative impacts are multi-dimensional and it is not just on the economy, but also on the profession of the military as well. It is true that one does not have a large number of serving people involved in private businesses. The bulk of uniformed people are actually in the National Logistic Cell and the Frontier Works Organisation, two organisations that have turned commercial. Both organisations were initially established to handle special projects or national emergencies, but then encouraged to do their own revenue generation. The limited number, hence, one could argue, does not put Pakistan military's ventures on par with that of China or Indonesia's. Also, one could argue that the Pakistani model is different because it does not use serving officers. However, there are two critical issues that must be understood.

First, commercial ventures, even if they do not use serving officers, do, unarguably, have an impact on the professional mindset. Senior officers, who are quite aware of the rewards that await them after retirement in terms of extension of perks and privileges as a result of jobs in these companies, tend to compromise on the quality of their work during service. It is important to note that there is no streamlined system for selecting people for appointment in these organisations.

According to a senior retired army officer, Zia used these foundations to reward people he liked, or punish those he didn't by kicking them out of the mainstream GHQ positions into the foundations. But for the majority, it is a perk that requires major compromises during their military career, especially at the top. Second, there is an element of symbolism involved here. What this means is that with the number of soldiers involved in such ventures at the unit/division/corps level, and even looking at the

post-retirement benefits, a lot would view these as an extension of their power and influence. It also inculcates an attitude of grabbing financial opportunities that tends to ruin the organisational ethos. Hence, there are problems even with this, otherwise, benign model.

Finally, these are not the kind of activities that a professional/operational military ought to be getting involved in. After all, it was the sensitivity towards increasing or safeguarding the military's professionalism that lead the Chinese to force the armed forces to withdraw from it. There were other curbs that were imposed as well.

Ayesha Siddiqi is the author of the upcoming book, *Military Inc, Inside Pakistan's Military Economy* (to be released in April 2007)

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Newsline – December 2006

Cover Story

Business in Jackboots

More than just a well-oiled war machine, the Pakistan army is a flourishing business corporation.

By Gulmina Bilal

The role of the army in Pakistani politics has received much attention. However, the army has over the years also acquired other vast and varied economic interests. While reports of the extensive land-holdings of the army have featured in the press (including this magazine), the army is also into other businesses – from leasing and dairy farms, to breakfast cereals. While virtually an entire generation of middle-class Pakistanis have grown up having Fauji Cornflakes for breakfast, few perhaps have focused on its parent company, the Fauji Foundation, a quintessential army concern. Another umbrella army organisation is the Army Welfare Trust (AWT). The mission statement of AWT declares: “It is a major obligation of the army to look after the welfare and rehabilitation of retired members, who have devoted the best part of their lives to the motherland.” The website of the AWT (www.awt.com.pk) further declares that looking after retired army personnel is “regarded by the army as sacrosanct and a bounded duty.”

It is interesting how the army has evolved for itself a comprehensive system to look after its own, which is sadly missing in the civilian sector. However, is this system run by public or private companies? If they are private companies, then public money and other resources cannot be used for their operations. If they are public corporations, their chief

executives are accountable to public representatives and the public at large.

The parliamentarians themselves contend they are not clear whether the Fauji Foundation and the Army Welfare Trust are public or private concerns. In the Senate, Senator Farhatullah Babar questioned the workings of the Fauji Foundation. The Federal Education Minister, Lt. General ® Javed Ashraf Qazi, responded to his query by stating the official position: Fauji Foundation is a private entity. Earlier, in 2005, when a parliamentary committee had summoned the Managing Director (MD) of the Fauji Foundation, he refused to appear before them saying he was not accountable to the committee as Fauji Foundation was a private company. The government took the same stance. On November 22, 2005, the federal education minister declared on the floor of the house that Fauji Foundation was not given any public money. The minister stated: "It (Fauji Foundation) has been given no money. This [perception] is not correct. If at all, only a guarantee [was] given to the Army Welfare Trust, not to Fauji Foundation."

However, on December 28, 2005, while giving a written reply to a question of compensation, Minister of State for Finance, Omar Ayub Khan declared, "The government of Pakistan agreed to compensation for the losses incurred by the Fauji Jordan Fertiliser Company, renamed Fauji Fertiliser Bin Qasim Ltd. in the wake of non-implementation of the provisions of the Fertiliser Policy, 1989. The total amount of five billion rupees was agreed to be disbursed to the company over a period of seven years, starting from the year 2002." The payment of this compensation made Fauji Fertiliser the only fertiliser company in the country to be compensated.

Given this backdrop, the education minister was asked why he had declared that Fauji Foundation had not benefited from any public funds. He replied that there was no contradiction between what he had stated in the Senate and what the finance minister had said in reply to a question about the compensation paid to the Fauji Jordan Fertiliser Company. General Qazi also said that the Fauji Jordan Fertiliser Company was an independent entity and the Fauji Foundation was only a partner in it.

The homepage of the foundation's website (www.fauji.org.pk) describes the foundation as a "self-supporting entity in the private sector." It further declares, "The Fauji Foundation has been generating financial resources to meet its welfare obligations through its own industrial and commercial projects.

Today, it covers nine million beneficiaries spending over Rs 16 billion (on welfare) since its inception." The website further goes on to describe the foundation as "being the largest welfare and industrial group in the country." The natural conclusion based on this assertion would be that

the Fauji Foundation is a private concern, and certainly one of the “largest industrial group(s) in the country,” considering its purported spending of 16 billion rupees on welfare causes.

However, on the same page the foundation also asserts: “The Fauji Foundation is a charitable trust for the welfare of ex-servicemen and their families. Its corporate operation began in 1954 when the Post War Services Reconstruction Fund was reactivated under the control of the Pakistan army.” The foundation is run by the administration committee and the board of directors. The chairman of the central board of directors is the secretary, ministry of defence of the government of Pakistan. The administration committee’s chairman is also the defence ministry secretary, and its members are chief of the general staff, Pakistan army, adjutant general, Pakistan army, quartermaster general, Pakistan army, chief of logistics staff, Pakistan army, deputy chief of the naval staff, Pakistan navy and the deputy chief of air staff, Pakistan air force. In other words, there are several public servants, including generals, serving on the administrative committee of this “self-supporting entity in the private sector.” The question is: are public servants allowed to be members of the administrative committees of private corporations?

The Fauji Foundation also declared that it “disburses annual grants to service headquarters for the welfare of destitute and disabled ex-servicemen.” Figures for 2005 were not available, but in 2004, according to the foundation’s own website, 21.39 million rupees each were given to the general headquarters of the Pakistan army, the naval headquarters and the air headquarters. This generous grant raises certain questions, such as: (a) If the Fauji Foundation is a private corporation, then why is a private corporation giving 64.17 million rupees to the three services of Pakistan, and (b) If the foundation is in a position to contribute this amount, then why did it need bailing out – i.e. the compensation it received for its fertiliser company – from public money?

The Fauji Foundation has seven affiliates, namely, Marri Gas Company Limited, Fauji Cement Company Limited, Fauji Fertiliser Company Limited, Fauji Fertiliser Bin Qasim Limited, Foundation Securities, Fauji Kabirwala Power Company Limited and Fauji Oil Terminal & Distribution Company Limited. The minister of state for finance, Omar Ayub Khan declared that Fauji Fertiliser Bin Qasim Limited, formerly known as Fauji Jordan Fertiliser Company Limited, was given the compensation from a public company. However, the federal education minister maintains that this is not correct and “only a guarantee was given to the Army Welfare Trust.” It is not clear why the education minister deems it within his obligations to dispute a statement of the finance ministry given that this is surely a matter for this ministry’s purview, not the education ministry’s.

Let us examine the education minister’s statement that merely a “guarantee” was given to the Army Welfare Trust, but no money was given

to Fauji Foundation. The Army Welfare Trust was founded in 1971 and according to its website (www.awt.com.pk), "AWT's mandate is restricted only to the generation of funds for welfare and rehabilitation without undertaking welfare activities itself." The homepage further goes on to assert, "The Army Welfare Trust essentially operates as a business house." Thus, if one was to paraphrase what the education minister actually said, while it is true that no public money was given to Fauji Foundation, a guarantee of five billion rupees of public money was given to an entity, which "essentially operates as a business house." Is this legal? It is important to mention that no other business house was given any guarantee or compensation out of public money for the losses it suffered for the non-implementation of the provisions of the Fertiliser Policy 1989.

The composition and status of the Army Welfare Trust (AWT) also raise certain questions.

The adjutant general (AG) branch of the army, based at the general headquarters, oversees the welfare of retired and serving personnel. The Welfare and Rehabilitation Directorate (W&R) at the AG branch is directly involved in that welfare, and the AWT comes under the W&R Directorate. It is here that the story becomes interesting, as the AWT is actually the corporate and money-generating wing of the army.

The website of the AWT (www.awt.com.pk) itself declares that the AWT, established in October 1971 under the Societies Registration Act, "essentially operates as a business house." In other words, the AWT through its various divisions generates profit and then makes it available to the W&R Directorate for welfare activities. The website clearly declares: "AWT's mandate is restricted only to the generation of funds for welfare and rehabilitation without undertaking welfare activities itself." It is interesting that an organisation registered under the Societies Registration Act is operating as a profit-making business house. The figures certainly indicate its profit-making abilities. The AWT was started with a modest capital of 700,000 rupees in 1971, but now, according to the website, its assets are in excess of 50 billion rupees. Citizens might be interested in knowing that the initial seed money of 700,000 rupees was public money.

The AWT has seven divisions, namely 'army projects,' 'corporate development,' 'farms,' 'finance,' 'industries,' 'real estate' and 'technical.' The army projects division consists of four projects, i.e. shoes, woollen mills, Al-Ghazi Travels and Services Travels. The last two are travel agencies which, according to the website, provide services to civilians and foreigners.

The army shoes project, with an industrial estate at Kot Lakhpat, supplies shoes to the army and foreign markets. The corporate development

division in turn consists of seven profit-generating business houses, namely Askari Commercial Bank Limited, Askari Leasing, Askari Insurance, Askari Guard, Askari Associates, Askari Aviation and Askari Mobil. All these seven business houses generate good profit, while the Askari Commercial Bank has been declared the best commercial bank for 1994 and 1996.

The farms division consists of the sugar mills at Badin and the five agricultural farms of AWT at Multan, Okara, Pakpattan and Badin. The finance division looks after the financial matters of AWT as a whole. The industries division consists of Askari Cement Factory, Wah, Askari Cement Nizampur and Askari Pharma at Lahore. The real estate division consists of AWT-owned commercial plazas, housing projects, lands and even restaurants. The technical division consists of Askari Information Systems, the computer section and, most interestingly, the Askari Commercial Enterprises that is mandated to “help retired army personnel and selected civilians to minimise infrastructural investment by prospective entrepreneurs.” The Askari Commercial Enterprises provide “furnished office accommodation, free guidance, loan and leasing facilities through AWT financial institutions, and many other facilities to get the prospective entrepreneurs off the ground.” Thus, in a nutshell, from shoes to wedding halls, insurance, leasing, lands to furnished offices, all are provided by the AWT, which by its own admission operates “as a business house.”

This business house, which is registered under the Societies Registration Act meant for non-profit organisations, has a board of directors and an administration committee. Interestingly, the administration committee consists of the adjutant general Pakistan army, the chief of general staff, Pakistan army, the quarter master general, Pakistan army, master general ordinance and the managing director of AWT. Except for the latter, all the other members of the administration committee are serving generals. The board of directors consists of the directors of the seven divisions, the managing director of AWT and, of course, the adjutant general.

So, is the Army Welfare Trust (AWT) public or private? It can be termed public as it falls under the AG Branch of the Pakistan army and was set up initially with public money. However, the Army Welfare Trust itself declares that it operates as a whole, as well as through its seven divisions, as a profitable business house designed to generate funds. If it operates as a business house, then can serving army personnel be on the boards of business houses or connected in any way with a profit-generating body? Why did the government, as admitted by the federal education minister, give a “guarantee of five billion rupees to AWT” from the public kitty to a business house? More interestingly, how is it that a business house is registered under the Societies Registration Act that is

for non-profit organisations? These are one set of public interest questions.

Another question one may ask is, what about the civilian sector of the population? In spite of their confusing public-private status, etc., the Fauji Foundation and the AWT ensure that an individual even remotely associated with the army has a comfortable living. The defence budget and the corporate interests of the army ensure that it has enough resources at its disposal to address the needs of its personnel. However, public servants not associated with the army do not enjoy such advantages. One fails to understand why this discrimination exists between uniformed and un-uniformed public servants? If the welfare of army personnel is a "sacrosanct duty," then what about the needs of the public servant who has served all of his life in the railways, gas, education or health departments? While desisting from advocating a welfare state, one cannot help but demand, at the very least, that all public servants be respected and treated equally, and furthermore, that all the "business" concerns of the forces be made public.

2. DEEP MUTUAL DISTRUST WITHIN THE FOREIGN POLICY OFFICIALDOM

The Telegraph – January 06, 2007

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1070106/asp/nation/story_7227553.asp

Diplomats miss golf as India, Pakistan bicker Bharat Bhushan

[Photo] Aziz Ahmed Khan with wife Aisha

New Delhi, Jan. 5: Is India really ready to trust Pakistan with a joint mechanism on Kashmir when it does not even trust the presence of its diplomats in Noida and Gurgaon?

The trust deficit between the two countries is so huge that they regularly tail each other's diplomats, restrict their movements, harass their family members and always seem to be looking for opportunities to show who can be more cussed towards the other.

Three months ago, India had indicated to the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi that its diplomats could not go to the adjoining towns of Gurgaon and Noida. Informally, they were allowed to go there till Diwali

last year. Soon thereafter, they were told to take permission each time they needed to go there.

Pakistani diplomats are members of golf clubs in both Noida and Gurgaon. They claim that their families also like to visit the malls and the cinemas there. So Pakistan High Commission apparently asked the Indian foreign ministry to reconsider its decision or else it would also have to take similar action.

When Delhi did not reconsider its decision for nearly three months, Pakistan responded by a tit-for-tat measure. It restricted Indian diplomats to Islamabad — asking them to henceforth seek permission if they wanted to visit the twin city of Rawalpindi or the nearby hill station of Murree, where India owns a guesthouse used by its diplomatic staff in Islamabad.

The latest round of spy vs spy began in August last year with Pakistan declaring Indian visa counsellor Deepak Kaul persona non-grata for “indulging in practices incompatible to his status” as a diplomat. Kaul was allegedly caught by Pakistan while receiving some documents from a Pakistani source in the mid-point restaurant on the Islamabad-Lahore Highway.

India responded within hours and expelled the political counsellor in the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi, Syed Muhammad Rafique Ahmed, also for “activities incompatible with his diplomatic status”.

Both India and Pakistan regularly post intelligence personnel in their respective missions under the garb of diplomats. However, both sides usually know the identities of such spooks.

After Kaul’s expulsion, India also imposed a new requirement on Pakistani diplomats posted in Delhi — it mandated that each time they travelled by road to Pakistan they would have to seek prior permission. Earlier, the requirement was only to “inform” the foreign ministry. Pakistan did the same.

Then followed the Gurgaon and Noida restrictions. India apparently said it was willing to allow access to Gurgaon but only if Pakistanis allowed Indian diplomats to also travel to Taxila and Hasan Abdal (where Gurdwara Panja Sahib is situated) in addition to Rawalpindi and Murree.

Islamabad rejected the demand — Taxila is next to Wah Cantonment, where its ordnance factories are situated.

India apparently suggested that it might even restrict the Pakistani diplomats to the precincts of New Delhi. The Pakistanis pointed out that Islamabad also had two parts — Urban Islamabad and Rural Islamabad — and that they would retaliate by restricting Indian diplomats to urban Islamabad.

Ultimately, the movement of Indian diplomats has been restricted to Islamabad (both urban and rural) and that of Pakistani diplomats to Delhi (including old Delhi).

All this has happened while intensive back-channel diplomacy was going on between the two countries for reaching some sort of working formula to resolve the Kashmir imbroglio.

One of the measures being proposed is a joint consultative mechanism or even joint management for the two Kashmirs — on the Indian side and on the Pakistani side.

The question that is being asked in this context now is: What do such proposals mean when we don't trust our diplomats to travel even 40 km outside their respective diplomatic missions?

3 Killing Fields of India and Pakistan: Land Mines at work

Kashmir Times – 24 December 2006

Mine-blown lives

By Fatima Chowdhury

Ghunnar looks a typical Rajasthan village with its agricultural fields and modest houses. The only difference is it happens to be on the India-Pakistan border. Though not as tense as the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir, the border in Rajasthan is a mined area.

An unsuspecting Savitri Devi, 31, walked onto one such mine on January 5, 2004. There was an instant explosion, and she lost her left foot. She was taken to the district hospital at Sriganganagar, 18 miles away, for treatment. Savitri Devi could count herself fortunate that she survived. But her quiet, normal life was shattered for ever. Says a family member: "We've become victims without any fault of ours."

And that is the universal story of a majority of mine victims. They happen to be civilians. And it is women and children who are more vulnerable in mine explosions. In August 2002, it was 12-year-old Kiran Deep of Karanpur village on the Indo-Pak border who stepped on a mine, and lost her right foot. Three months later, it was 10-year-old Hetram, from the same village, walked on mine when he took his goats across a field. He lost his right leg.

It is not just the hapless villagers who are at a loss to deal with the exigencies of mine explosions. Even the panchayats – the elected village

councils – do not know how to deal with the situation except to rush the victims to the nearest government hospital for treatment. But the distances from the far-flung villages on the border in the desert region of Rajasthan are daunting. Immediate medical attention is of vital importance in the case of mine victims, and precious time is lost due to inadequate road and transport links.

In several cases, blood loss is a major concern and there is an extensive need for blood transfusion, which is often not readily available. It is often the case that victims die even before they can be taken to a distant hospital. And as for trauma counselling, there is none available.

A major problem with regard to mines in India is the high illiteracy rates in rural India, which make it difficult for people even to recognise the warning boards that are set up in some of the mined areas. The women and children, and even the men, cannot read the signboards asking them to keep off the area.

Figures are not easy to come by. The Landmine Monitor Report 2006 for India states: “There were at least 306 casualties from mines and improvised explosive devices in 2005, and 271 from January to May, 2006.”

In India, it is not the civilians alone who fall prey to mine explosions. Security forces personnel suffer as much. According to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines–India (ICBL–India) report (2004), government forces suffered as many as 1,776 casualties due to mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). Thousands of families were displaced and areas turned into waiting death traps. The operation was considered one of the last major uses of antipersonnel mines.

India is certainly not an explosive minefield country like war-torn Angola and Cambodia, but the figures are quite high in absolute terms. The 2004 Landmine Monitor Report pointed out that extensive laying of mines was undertaken during Operation Parakram undertaken by the Indian Army along its 2,880–km northern and western border with Pakistan between December 2001 and July 2002.

According to Dr. Balakrishna Kurvey, coordinator of ICBL–India: “There are a million mines planted, of which five per cent to 10 per cent are untraceable.”

There is a further complication. He says that while mined areas are demarcated by fencing, there is a shift and drift due to changing climatic conditions. Rains, melting snow, shifting sands and even rodents, displace landmines. As a result they are moved to other areas. The danger zone shifts, and it makes the situation so much more difficult.

The most essential part that needs to be addressed on the issue of landmines is the plight of the victims. As amputees, they are seen as a

burden to their families and often abandoned to lead a life of begging and poverty. In children, the psychological scars run deeper.

And women who are mine victims face problems that arise from gender disadvantages. Adopt-A Minefield, a UN-supported American organisation devoted to combating the menace of landmines, emphasises broadly that while both men and women are victims of landmines, studies show that women suffer more due to inadequate medical attention and access to facilities resulting in a higher fatality rate of 43 per cent than males at 29 per cent.

As victims, married women are often divorced by their husbands while the marriage prospects of single women are gloomy. On the other hand, disabled men can depend on their wives for support.

The lack of funds in India also mean women are less likely to get adequate medical attention, access to prostheses and a better guidance to rehabilitation. Where men are victims, women's lives are also affected as caretakers. It not only takes an emotional toll on their well-being but in many cases they end up becoming the sole earning member to support the family.

Landmines is a burning issue because simple lives are blighted for ever with each explosion. The Savitri Devis in Rajasthan and elsewhere on the India-Pakistan border will continue to pay with their lives unless it is brought into the public domain as a matter of serious concern.

-(Courtesy: Women's Feature Service)

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Human Right Commission of Pakistan
Press Release

Stop mining the border

Lahore, 10 January 2007 :

LAHORE: The report that, after an outcry both within and outside the country, the Pakistan government has stated the plan to lay landmines along the border with Afghanistan could be reviewed is a welcome sign of a possible return to sanity.

HRCP is appalled that the draconian plan, which violates humanitarian standards and international agreements was proposed at a high level. This is especially true since the authorities are fully aware that divided tribes and even families based on the Pak-Afghan border regularly move across it for gatherings or tribal events, and require no visa to do so.

It is also shocking that the authors of the plan forgot that children play regularly in areas along the border, which is not demarcated in many

places. Apparently the terrible danger posed to these children by death and fearful injury, including loss of limb, that landmines are known to cause was not enough to persuade the authorities to avoid placing deadly weapons across wide stretches of Pakistan's territory. As in many other matters, it took pressure from the outside world to induce them to think.

It is also obvious that the issue of cross-border militancy and accusations in this regard made by Afghanistan, which Islamabad has said it hopes to tackle through the border fencing and mining plan, cannot be dealt with through such crude methods obviously thought up by a military mind. Militancy needs to be tackled through holistic policies which address the socio-economic issues and the notions of injustice that are spurring it on. Allegations being made from Kabul and the increasingly tense relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan can only be resolved through a continuous process of dialogue and discussion, not by slamming shut doors and adding to the increasing friction between the two neighbours.

HRCP demands that Pakistan sign the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, already ratified by 151 nations. It must also bring to an end its ignominious status as one of the few countries still manufactures landmines by ending this process and destroying its large existing stockpiles, so that no further victims can be claimed by these terrible weapons which have inflicted immense suffering on so many people in the region and elsewhere in the world.

Kamran Arif

Vice-chairperson, NWFP

4 DISAPPEARED IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN:

Women's eNews – January 14, 2007

Kashmir's Half-Widows Struggle for Fuller Life

by Haroon Mirani

WeNews correspondent

The wives of men who have disappeared in India's Kashmir conflict gather each week holding photos of their husbands in a protest. The "half-widows" are unable to collect pensions or remarry without official word that their husbands are dead.

Half-widows of Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India (WOMENSENEWS)--Nearly 17 years ago, Tahira Begum fought with her parents to marry her sweetheart, Tariq Ahmad Rather. The two families were not on good terms at the time, but in the end the marriage went through.

Today she's fighting a very different battle: for help confirming that her husband, who disappeared while traveling on business to New Delhi in 2002, has been killed in the ongoing war in Kashmir, the disputed border region between India and Pakistan.

Now 35, Begum became one of the thousands of Kashmir's "half-widows," wives whose husbands are lost in the limbo between missing and confirmed death.

"From that time I have been visiting every police station and every army camp in the state for the hope of finding any clue," Begum says tearfully of her efforts to find her husband, a civil contractor with a federal hydroelectric company. She says some people said they saw her husband in army custody, but she has no proof of anything.

Indian-administered Kashmir has been a flashpoint between India and Pakistan since the end of British colonial rule in 1947. During the current insurgency, which started in 1989, many people have vanished, presumed killed or imprisoned without trial or record. The death toll in the current conflict amounts to somewhere between 40,000 and 90,000, depending on the source.

During the last 15 years the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons, an organization of the relatives of the disappeared in Kashmir, claims that about 10,000 people have been subjected to enforced disappearances by state agencies, mostly taken by armed personnel. Of the disappeared, they say between 2,000 and 2,500 people were married, and almost all were males.

"There are organizations fighting for land, water, rights, money, freedom, et cetera," says Parveena Ahanger, chair of the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons, based in the Kashmiri summer capital of Srinagar. "We are fighting to obtain just a piece of information about the whereabouts of our disappeared relatives."

Ahanger's son Javid Ahmad Ahanger was picked up by security forces on Aug. 18, 1990, when he was 16; since then she has not heard from him.

India denies any connection to the abductions and says fewer than 1,000 people have disappeared. It says most of the missing have gone to the Pakistan-administered side of Kashmir for training in guerrilla warfare. The Indian administration has confirmed 135 such missing persons as dead.

Seven-Year Limbo

The wives of the missing often can't remarry. Not only do they lack proof of being widowed, their observance of Islam often means they must wait at least seven years before taking another husband.

The Indian government's policy is to deny the half-widows any relief before the expiration of seven years. At that point they can receive the standard relief offered to widows who have lost husbands to the insurgency; either a one-time grant of between \$1,000 and \$2,000 or a monthly pension of about \$10.

To date the government has provided relief to 400 half-widows. Activists estimate there are between 2,000 and 2,500 such women.

Nearly all the half-widows are from lower-income families and were entirely dependent on their husbands, activists say.

During the seven-year waiting period, the women's rights to their husbands' property are often threatened, says Pervez Imroz, a human-rights lawyer who spearheads the Human Rights group Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Societies, based in Srinagar.

Property Rights Denied

Women grieve after deaths of villagers in Kashmir conflict.

Imroz says the half-widows are often denied any share of their husbands' property by their in-laws. Some in-laws may recognize their property rights, but still restrict or infringe upon them in various ways.

"With their husbands gone missing they have been left in the open sky," Imroz says. "The government is making just the tall claims and the situation is almost as similar as it was some years ago."

Imroz's group has started a couple of training centers for half-widows and other women hurt by the region's militancy. The group is also documenting the history of Kashmir after the insurgency period and plans to provide a detailed account of the number killed and injured, the amount of damaged property and other measures of the human toll.

The coalition has withstood at least two direct armed attacks on their activists in the past five years, during which two of their female workers were killed.

Imroz was shot in the back during a 1995 attack and survived an assassination attempt in April 2005. His attackers are not identified but activists say it is dangerous to raise charges and questions of human rights violations such as those suffered by the half-widows. Many nongovernmental organizations avoid discussing the half-widows for fear of official reprisal.

Park Demonstrations

In a public plea for help in attaining information about the missing men, the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons organizes a group of about two or three dozen half-widows—including Begum—to assemble at a central public park in Srinagar on the 25th of each month for a sit-in protest.

Those who turn up have been missing their husbands for as long as 17 years. Many cry openly. As they hold photographs of their husbands in their hands and the names printed on their white headgears, the women have become an embarrassment for the authorities, who often break up the demonstrations.

The women put a foundation stone in a graveyard as a group memorial in April 2005, but within hours the police destroyed it.

“It is a hard situation for them,” says Peerzada Arshad, a local journalist, who has covered the plight of the half-widows extensively for national newspapers. “The wives of missing husbands known as half-widows can’t re-marry as the death of their husbands has not been confirmed, the children can’t differentiate themselves between the two categories of orphans and non-orphans, and the grandparents long for a resolution, for one moment of a complete family.”

Fahmeeda Bano, 37, lives in a remote village of Kupwara south of Kashmir and has visited almost all the police stations and army camps in Kashmir. Still, sorrow haunts her. Her husband was picked up by the Indian army 14 years ago.

“If my husband is alive I want to see him,” she begs. “I want the authorities to tell me where he is. If he has been killed let them hand over his body to me.”

Haroon Mirani is a Kashmir-based freelance journalist who has covered the region for the past five years.

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New York Times

January 14, 2007

Kin and Rights Groups Search for Pakistan’s Missing Faisal Mahmood/Reuters

Amina Masood Janjua, with two of her children, protested in Rawalpindi last month over the disappearance of her husband, Masood Ahmed Janjua. Rights groups say intelligence agencies have detained hundreds.

By Salman Masood

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan, Jan. 9 — Amina Masood Janjua has been fighting for some word on the fate of her husband since he vanished from a bus station here in July 2005. In recent months, she and her two teenage sons and 11-year-old daughter have begun a campaign of court petitions, protests and press releases.

Mrs. Janjua's son Muhammad, 17, was beaten as police officers broke up the march. They lowered his trousers as a means of humiliating him.

More than 30 families of other missing men have joined her, all seeking to locate what they and human rights groups say are hundreds of people who have disappeared into the hands of the country's feared intelligence agencies in the last few years.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, an independent group, estimates that 400 citizens have been abducted and detained across the country since 2001. Amnesty International says many have been swept up in a campaign against people suspected of being extremists and terrorists. But some here also charge that the government is using the pretext of the war on terror to crack down on opponents.

In addition to some with ties to extremist groups, those missing include critics of the government, nationalists, journalists, scientists, researchers and social and political workers, the groups say. Mrs. Janjua says she has compiled a list of 115 missing persons, and says the list could grow as more families gain the courage to come out in the open.

Pakistani officials deny any involvement in extrajudicial detentions or any knowledge of the men's whereabouts.

This week a Supreme Court judge nonetheless ordered the government to speed up the process of finding 41 men listed as missing by Mrs. Janjua and her supporters after the court took up their cases in an unprecedented decision in October.

At the court hearing on Monday, the government acknowledged that it had located 25 of the 41 men listed by Mrs. Janjua, "who are now free," according to Nasir Saeed Sheikh, the deputy attorney general, though it refused to say from where they had been released.

Mrs. Janjua and others said the men were held in detention centers and safe houses of military intelligence, though most of those freed were

reluctant to talk about their experiences. Mrs. Janjua maintained that only 18 persons had actually been freed.

Her husband, Masood Ahmed Janjua, 45, an educator and businessman, was not among them. Mr. Sheikh told the court that, according to a report by the Interior Ministry, all intelligence agencies had denied detaining Mr. Janjua.

Mr. Janjua left his home around 9:30 a.m. on July 30, 2005. He was heading to Peshawar in the northwest to attend a religious gathering with a friend, Faisal Fraz, 26, a mechanical engineer from the eastern city of Lahore.

Both had reservations on a 10 o'clock bus bound for Peshawar, but never made it to their destination, according to the families. "Before even reaching the bus stop, somewhere on the way, they were picked up," Mrs. Janjua says.

Relatives of missing persons and rights advocates here say Mr. Janjua and the others are among the many "forced disappearances" or "illegal detentions" that were rare before 2001. In many cases, family members have received no news of the presumed detainees for months and even years.

"Hundreds of people suspected of links to Al Qaeda or the Taliban have been arbitrarily arrested and detained," a report by Amnesty International issued in September said. "Scores have become victims of enforced disappearances; some of these have been unlawfully transferred (sometimes in return for money) to the custody of other countries, notably the U.S.A.," the report said.

"The clandestine nature of the arrest and detention of terror suspects make it impossible to ascertain exactly how many people have been subjected to arbitrary detention or enforced disappearance," it added.

I. A. Rahman, director of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, said the government was using the cover of a war on terrorism to flout the law. "Unstable states like Pakistan are taking full advantage of 'war on terror,'" Mr. Rahman said. He said the government was using the antiterror campaign to crack down on its opponents and critics, especially in Baluchistan, where government forces are fighting a nationalist insurrection.

"It is correct that many of those arrested or detained were connected with Al Qaeda or extremist organizations," he said. "But a number of people

have been taken into custody whose only crime seems to be that they are nationalists in Baluchistan or Sindh. In Baluchistan, there is no Al Qaeda activity,” he said.

In cases that are brought before a court, he noted, a government denial of detention basically closes the case on a habeas corpus petition. “It was only in the end of 2006 that the Supreme Court said the government must find out where are these people,” he said.

While many of those missing persons were suspected of having links to extremist or terrorist activities or have been involved in them, many among them were innocent, the relatives maintained.

Majid Khan, 26, a computer engineer, disappeared from Karachi, a southern port city, four years ago and is now in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, said his wife, Rabiya Majid. “We don’t why he was arrested,” she said.

Mrs. Janjua, too, says she has no clue as to why her husband disappeared. The Janjua family lives in Rawalpindi, in the neighborhood of Westridge, a relatively well-off enclave inhabited mostly by active and retired military officers.

Before his disappearance, Mr. Janjua, who holds a bachelor’s degree in marine engineering, was working as managing director of a private institute here, the College of Information and Technology. He was also running a travel agency and involved in charity work, his wife said.

“He had no links with any extremist organization,” Mrs. Janjua said, though she acknowledged that he worked “off and on” with Tablighi Jamaat. The group characterizes itself as a nonpolitical, nonviolent movement that seeks to spread Orthodox Islam by proselytizing, but it has also come under suspicion by authorities as a potential recruiting ground for extremists.

Since her husband’s disappearance, Mrs. Janjua has taken over his business and his work at the college in addition to leading the drive, with the other families, to find the missing. Together they have formed a group called Defense of Human Rights.

In the last week of December, wives, daughters and sisters of dozens of missing men, led by Mrs. Janjua, gathered in Rawalpindi, holding up posters and portraits of the missing men and shouting, “Give our loved ones back.”

But their protest was quickly thwarted by the police. The photographs of the missing men were snatched. The posters were confiscated.

Mrs. Janjua's eldest son, Muhammad, 17, was beaten by the police, who removed his pants to humiliate him before they whisked him away in a police van. He was freed that evening but the next morning the image of Muhammad with his baggy trousers pulled down by the police appeared in newspapers across the country. Op-ed columnists and editorials expressed outrage at police "brutality" and sympathy for the missing people's families surged.

Some of those released, like Muhammad Tariq, 35, have returned home. He is one of the few willing to talk. Mr. Tariq acknowledges that he formerly belonged to Jaish-e-Muhammad, a banned extremist group, but says he just gave the group money and was not an active member.

Mr. Tariq, a business owner from Gujranwala in the east who sells iron pipe, was "picked up in broad daylight on June 14, 2004, by around a dozen plainclothesmen and elite police commandos," his father, Nizamud Din, said in an interview.

Mr. Din said he had been unsuccessful in locating his son through the courts, police officials and even the Senate's Standing Committee on Human Rights. "He was portrayed as a big catch — a big terrorist," Mr. Din said.

President Pervez Musharraf even alluded to the case, without mentioning Mr. Tariq by name, in his book "In the Line of Fire" in connection with a failed assassination attempt in December 2003, Mr. Din said.

General Musharraf wrote in his memoirs that a person from Gujranwala gave refuge to Abu Faraj al-Libbi, the No. 3 Qaeda leader. He was arrested in Pakistan in May 2005 and accused of organizing the failed assassination.

"It is all nonsense," Mr. Tariq said. "I have no link. I don't even know Libbi."

Mr. Tariq says he was singled out because in 2003 he briefly put up a family, introduced to him through a friend, of an Arab man who had been arrested in Quetta.

Mr. Tariq, a father of five, stammers while recounting his time in detention.

“For two years, I did not see the sky, the sun or the moon,” he said. He said he was kept in a 4 foot by 7 foot cell in this city, was interrogated by Pakistani military officers, mostly about Mr. Libbi, and endured “all kinds of imaginable torture.”

He was released Nov. 27 and pushed from a vehicle at night at an intersection near Islamabad. He said he had never been brought before a court. Mr. Din and Mr. Tariq said they believed the release was a result of the pressure from Mrs. Janjua’s group and the Supreme Court case.

Mrs. Janjua hopes her husband will return the same way, some day soon. “At every doorbell,” she said, “I think he is back.”

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Pakistan: Growing anger at continuing enforced disappearances

Despite growing anger in Pakistan at the practice of enforced disappearances, the government has still not acknowledged its responsibility for hundreds of people arbitrarily detained in secret locations—and reports of enforced disappearance continue to emerge.

In a week of demonstrations organised by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) against enforced disappearances, Amnesty International is releasing an update to its September report that reveals new cases and describes how families searching for their relatives have begun to organise themselves into protest groups.

“The Pakistani government needs to treat this issue with the gravity and urgency it deserves—we are talking not only about the fate of hundreds of people but also the devastating effect on their families. The situation involves serious breaches of international law,” said Angelika Pathak, South Asia researcher at Amnesty International.

President Pervez Musharraf dismissed the September report out of hand, refusing to reply when questioned on it by a BBC journalist. Other government officials were similarly offhand. Foreign Secretary Riaz Mohammed Khan told Amnesty International delegates that legal procedures were too longwinded to be followed in Pakistan in a political context in which results were needed quickly.

“Politics, economics, security—all have variously been given as excuses as to why the government needs to break international law. But there is never an excuse for violating human rights. Human rights are the bedrock—the starting point for approaching politics and security,” said Angelika Pathak.

The day Amnesty International released its report -- 29 September—magazine editor Abdur Rahim Muslim Dost was arrested as he left a mosque in Peshawar. His fate and whereabouts are still unknown. He had just published a book describing how he was arrested by Pakistani military in 2001, transferred into US custody and detained in Guantánamo Bay. The book recounted his torture in Pakistani and US custody.

Family members continued to face harassment even as parliamentarians, lawyers and NGOs gathered for a workshop organised by the HRCP and Amnesty International in Islamabad in early October. At least one relative was stopped by intelligence agents on the morning of the workshop and questioned as to why he was attending it.

Abid Raza Zaidi, a researcher at Karachi University, was detained by Military Intelligence agents after giving a speech at the workshop. He said he was taken to the Red Fort in Lahore and threatened with dire consequences if he spoke publicly about his experiences again. In his speech he had described being detained for over three months without charge and being beaten to make him confess to taking part in a suicide bomb attack at Nishtar Park in April 2006. Abid Raza Zaidi was not charged and was released after 24 hours at the intervention of the HRCP.

Several people subjected to enforced disappearances have reappeared in recent weeks after being arbitrarily detained in secret locations for over two years on average. Each was warned not to speak publicly about their experiences and detention.

“Of course the Pakistani government has a duty to protect people from security threats. At the same time it must follow national and international law in doing so—anyone suspected of terrorism should be charged, given access to a lawyer and their family, and given a fair trial,” said Angelika Pathak.

“To prevent anyone else being subjected to enforced disappearance, the government must set up a central register of detainees and publish regular lists of all recognised places of detention.”

To see the report update, Pakistan: Working to stop human rights violations in the ‘war on terror’, please go to:

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa330512006>.

To see the September report, Pakistan: Human Rights Ignored in the ‘war on terror’, please go to:

<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGASA330362006>

For more information on enforced disappearances in Pakistan, please go to: <http://web.amnesty.org/pages/stoptorture-061208-features-eng>.

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Pakistan protester Where are they?

Pakistanis seek family members ‘abducted’ by security services

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6177057.stm

Spotlight on Pakistan’s “disappeared”

By Nirupama Subramanian (The Hindu – December 5, 2006)

<http://www.hindu.com/2006/12/05/stories/2006120504350900.htm>

RIGHTS–PAKISTAN:

‘War on Terror’ an Excuse for Disappearances

Zofeen Ebrahim (Inter Press Service – December 6, 2006)

<http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=35737>

HRCPT slates torturing of Pindi protesters

http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=37316

5 NUCLEAR MATTERS:

Himal South Asian– January 2007

Commentary / REGION

LIVING WITH THE BOMB

[Illustration by beena sarwar/ kunda dixit]

With George W Bush all set to sign the Indo-US nuclear deal after its recent ratification by the US Congress, it is time for the Southasian peace lobby to engage in some deep introspection. The doomsday scenario projected by the anti-nuclear discourse has not come to pass, and in hindsight the strategy experts in favour of the Indian tests seem to have played their cards well. While morality and the threat of mass destruction remain more powerful than any other argument against nuclearisation, it is crucial that the peace constituency is candid about its failures and comes up with a more effective case against the bomb.

Let's look at arguments made by both sides in India, in the run-up to and the aftermath of the tests. The peaceniks said that nuclearisation would wreak complete devastation and would ruin relations between New Delhi and Islamabad. Those in favour of the tests responded with the theory of deterrence, and claimed that rational actors would not use the bomb. Instead, they argued that overt announcement of nuclear programmes would compel all actors in the region to build a semblance of cordial ties. The jury is still out on this particular point. Southasia came close to a nuclear holocaust, during both the Kargil war and 'Operation Parakram' after the attack on the Indian Parliament. The threat of destruction looms large, and all it will take is a single spark or streak of irrationality to set events off in a chain of madness.

But the fact remains that a full-fledged conflict has not taken place between India and Pakistan since the tests; at present, bilateral relations, despite obstacles, are more intimate than ever in the last few decades. This can be attributed to a range of factors, from the change in the geo-political environment to the nature of the current leadership in both countries – a liberal economist in New Delhi and a PR-friendly autocrat in Islamabad. Irrespective of the causes, however, what is true is that relations between India and Pakistan, contrary to what was predicted, have not hit rock bottom due to the nuclear tests.

Leaders of the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace also said that it did not make economic sense for India to test the bomb, and that Delhi would not be able to withstand the sanctions that would come its way after the tests. Irrespective of whether we agree with the growth-based model India is currently pursuing, it is clear that the sanctions had little impact on the economy. The economic problems that remain, including the lack of equitable distribution of resources and the persistence of poverty, must be attributed mainly to neo-liberal strategies adopted by the state.

The most potent argument unleashed by the peace lobby was that going for the bomb would lead to a slump in relations with China and international ostracisation. On both counts, the lobby has been proven wrong. After a brief period of tension – when India pointed to the Chinese threat as justification for the tests, and Beijing insisted on a UN

resolution asking New Delhi to cap, roll back and eliminate the nuclear programme – relations between the two sides have reached a level of normalcy. Bilateral trade is booming, and both sides are trying hard to ensure that their simultaneous rise in the international order does not lead to conflict. The nuclear deal with the US and the apparent willingness of almost all members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, including China, to treat India as an exception have all but cleared the way for India's comfortable accommodation in the nuclear club.

Of course, there is no direct and immediate cause-and-effect relationship between the nuclear tests and developments that have subsequently taken place in these diverse spheres. But the point is that, morality aside, the strategic arguments deployed by the anti-nuclear lobby have all but collapsed over the past eight years. This may have happened because of the lack of a coherent argument, the absence of party political support, or the sheer power of a militarist ideology. But let us be honest enough to recognise that battling the hawks on their own turf has not been an astute move if the aim is to stop the spread of nuclear weapons in the Subcontinent.

This magazine has consistently and vociferously spoken out against the Pokhran and Chagai explosions. Indeed, in a special issue we carried articles from various perspectives in an attempt to build a powerful discourse for a nuclear-free Southasia. And it remains that it would take only one irrational hand on the trigger during a run of spiralling tension to bring devastation to Southasia. Given that we live in a region in which time from take-off to strike is under ten minutes, the two main protagonists moving to nuclear-tip their missiles would do well to pull back and jettison their acquired warheads.

The fact that the nuclear Armageddon has not hit Southasia may be making the pro-bomb argument seem retrospectively coherent. But the threat posed by these weapons remains. Nuclear weapons need to be opposed for the simple fact that they are dangerous weapons, unethical in both intent and in action, that take lives of huge numbers of innocents – and pose the threat of taking infinitely more. It is important not to get caught up in the debate of whether they serve the interests of a national-security state, for that is a distraction from the moral and humanist high ground that peace activists do and must occupy. As soon as we cede ground to the 'strategists', who have the support of the powerful political and military set-up, by accepting their posing of the nuclear question in terms of inter-state conflict, war, power and deterrence, we will lose the argument. Exactly like the well-intentioned peace lobby in India did. Instead of a techno-activist campaign, what is needed is a political campaign rejecting nuclearisation on moral grounds from the grassroots.

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Nuclear disarmament gets critical

by Praful Bidwai

NEW DELHI – If prospects for nuclear weapons reduction took a turn for the worse in 2006, the New Year holds out little hope for containing proliferation.

In October 2006, eight years after India and Pakistan crossed the nuclear threshold, the world witnessed yet another breakout, when North Korea exploded an atomic bomb and demanded that it be recognized as a nuclear weapons–state. Talks aimed at persuading Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons, in return for security guarantees and economic assistance, collapsed last week.

In 2006, the ongoing confrontation between the Western powers and the Islamic Republic of Iran over its nuclear program got dangerously aggravated. The United Nations Security Council imposed harsh sanctions on Iran – but these may prove counterproductive.

Tehran dismissed the sanctions as illegal and vowed to step up its "peaceful" uranium enrichment program. It added one more cascade of 164 uranium enrichment centrifuges during the year and is preparing to install as many as 3,000 of these machines within the next four months. (Several thousand centrifuges are needed to build a small nuclear arsenal.)

Developments in South Asia added to this negative momentum as India and the United States took further steps in negotiating and legislating the controversial nuclear cooperation deal that they inked one-and-a-half years ago. The deal will bring India into the ambit of normal civilian nuclear commerce although it is a nuclear weapons–state and has not signed the Non–Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Meanwhile, India and Pakistan continued to test nuclear–capable missiles and sustained their long–standing mutual rivalry despite their continuing peace dialogue.

Looming large over these developments in different parts of Asia are the Great Powers, led by the US, whose geopolitical role as well as refusal to undertake disarmament has contributed to enhancing the global nuclear danger in 2006.

According to a just–released preliminary count by the Federation of American Scientists, eight countries launched more than 26 ballistic

missiles of 23 types in 24 different events in 2006. They include the US, Russia, France and China, besides India, Pakistan, North Korea and Iran.

"One can list other negative contributing factors too," says Sukla Sen, a Mumbai-based activist of the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace, an umbrella of more than 250 Indian organizations. "These include US plans to find new uses for nuclear armaments and develop ballistic missile defense ("Star Wars") weapons, Britain's announcement that it will modernize its "Trident" nuclear force, Japan's moves towards militarization, and a revival of interest in nuclear technology in many countries."

"Clearly," adds Sen, "61 years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the world has learned little and achieved even less so far as abolishing the nuclear scourge goes. The nuclear sword still hangs over the globe. 2006 has made the world an even more dangerous place. The time has come to advance the hands of the Doomsday Clock."

The Doomsday Clock, created by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, published from Chicago in the US, currently stands at seven minutes to midnight, the Final Hour. Since 1947, its minute hand has been repeatedly moved "forward and back to reflect the global level of nuclear danger and the state of international security."

The Clock was last reset in 2002, after the US announced it would reject several arms control agreements, and withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which prohibits the development of "Star Wars"-style weapons.

Before that, the Doomsday Clock was advanced in 1998, from 14 minutes to midnight, to just nine minutes before the hour. This was primarily in response to the nuclear tests by India and Pakistan in May that year.

The closest the Clock moved to midnight was in 1953, when the US and the USSR both tested thermonuclear weapons. The Clock's minute hand was set just two minutes short of 12.

The lowest level of danger it ever showed was in 1991, following the end of the Cold War and the signature of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the US and the Soviet Union. The Clock then stood at 17 minutes to midnight.

"The strongest reason to move the minute hand forward today is the inflamed situation in the Middle East," argues M.V. Ramana, an

independent nuclear affairs analyst currently with the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Environment and Development, Bangalore.

"Iran isn't the real or sole cause of worry. It's probably still some years away from enriching enough uranium to make a nuclear bomb. But there is this grave crisis in Iraq, which has spun out of Washington's control. And then there is Israel, which is a de facto nuclear weapons-state and is seen as a belligerent power by its neighbors in the light of the grim crisis in Palestine. All the crises in the Middle East feed into one another and aggravate matters," adds Ramana.

At the other extreme of Asia, new security equations are emerging, partly driven by the North Korean nuclear program.

"Today, this is a key factor not only in shaping relations between the two Koreas, but the more complex and important relationship between North Korea, China, Japan and the US," holds Alka Acharya, of the Center of East Asian Studies at the Jawaharlal Nehru University here.

Adds Acharya: "The US has failed to resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis diplomatically. North Korea's nuclear weapons program will spur Japan and South Korea to add to their military capacities. There is a strong lobby in Japan which wants to rewrite the country's constitution and even develop a nuclear weapons capability. Recently, Japan commissioned a study to determine how long it would take to develop a nuclear deterrent."

Japan has stockpiled hundreds of tons of plutonium, ostensibly for use in fast-breeder reactors. But with the fast reactor program faltering, the possibility of diversion of the plutonium to military uses cannot be ruled out. Similarly, South Korea is likely to come under pressure to develop its own deterrent capability.

"Driving these pursuits are not just nuclear calculations, but also geopolitical factors," says Prof. Achin Vanaik who teaches international relations and global politics at Delhi University. "The US plays a critical role here because of its aggressive stance and its double standards. It cannot convincingly demand that other states practice nuclear abstinence or restraint while it will keep its own nuclear weapons for 'security'. Eventually, Washington's nuclear double standards will encourage other countries to pursue nuclear weapons capabilities too."

In particular, the joint planned development of ballistic missile defense weapons by the US and Japan is likely to be seen by China as a threat to its security and impel Beijing to add to its nuclear arsenal.

Adds Vanaik: "The real danger is not confined to East Asia or West Asia alone. The overall worldwide impact of the double standards practiced by the nuclear weapons-states, and especially offensive moves like the Proliferation Security Initiative proposed by the US to intercept 'suspect' nuclear shipments on the high seas, will be to weaken the existing global nuclear order and encourage proliferation. The US -India nuclear deal sets a horribly negative example of legitimizing proliferation."

"A time could soon come when a weak state or non-state actor might consider attacking the US mainland with mass-destruction weapons. The kind of hatreds that the US is sowing in volatile parts of the world, including the Middle East, could well result in such a catastrophe," Vanaik said.

The year 2006 witnessed a considerable weakening of the norms of nuclear non-proliferation. Until 1974, the world had five declared nuclear weapon-states and one covert nuclear power (Israel). At the end of this year, it has nine nuclear weapons-states - nine too many.

No less significant in the long run is the growing temptation among many states to develop civilian nuclear power. Earlier this month, a number of Arab leaders met in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia and decided to start a joint nuclear energy development program.

"Although this doesn't spell an immediate crisis, nuclear power development can in the long run provide the technological infrastructure for building nuclear weapons too," says Ramana. "The way out of the present nuclear predicament does not lie in non- or counter-proliferation through ever-stricter technology controls. The only solution is nuclear disarmament. The nuclear weapons-states must lead by example, by reducing and eventually dismantling these weapons of terror."

[Source: Inter Press Service, 28 December 2006]

6. MISSILE TESTING

(i)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6164559.stm

BBC News – 9 December 2006

Pakistan tests ballistic missile

Pakistan has successfully test-fired a short-range ballistic missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead, the Pakistani military has said.

The Hatf III (Ghaznavi) is the third ballistic missile to have been test-fired by Pakistan in three weeks.

The missile has a range of 290km (181 miles).

Pakistan and rival India have been regularly testing missiles since 1998, when both countries carried out nuclear detonations in close succession.

(ii)

Agni III to be launched in 2007

BANGALORE, Dec 22 (UNI): India's indigenously developed Agni III missile will be launched in 2007, Scientific Advisor to Defence Minister M Natarajan announced today.

Speaking to newsmen here, he said the failure of the missile on July Nine last was related to materials and it had been rectified. Work was in full progress and there was no problem with regard to navigation, control and any of the mechanical aspects.

Asked about the exact date for the launch, he said he did not want to set an exact date. The missile was designed to cover a range of 3500 kilometres.

7

Inequality and conflict

by Shahid Javed Burki

(Dawn – 12 December 2006)

I LEFT the readers of this column last week with the thought that it is useful for the purpose of public policymaking to segment the Pakistani population into a number of socio-economic groups, divided according to their share in national income. I said that it was useful to look at the population in terms of five broad categories: the very poor, the not so poor, the middle class, the well-to-do, and the very rich.

How many people would I put in these classes and what are the levels of their incomes? How do the people in these broad categories relate to one another and how do they view the economy's and society's change and development over the last few years? Change is always very disruptive

and there has been great deal of it in the last few years. How will it influence the country's future?

We can begin to answer these questions by disaggregating further the income distribution data to which I referred last week. For 2006, the country's population is estimated at 160 million and the size of the national income at \$136 billion. This gives income per head at \$850. In using these numbers we should understand that they are based on a new series of national income accounts that the government began to use a couple of years ago which resulted in a significant increase in both the national income and per head income estimates.

These were not real increases but increases because of the new way of accounting. Rebasings national income accounts is something that is done on a regular basis to reflect the changes in the structure of the economy. The results accounting change produce should not be confused with real increases in income.

The increase in income per head of the population has been significant since 2003 when the economy began to grow rapidly but has not been as large as sometimes claimed by the country's senior leaders. That those claims are being made can have serious political and social consequences since the perceived benefits on the part of sizable segments of the population may not be as large as those suggested by the government.

As I wrote in last week's column, it was the gap between the government's claim and the people's perception that resulted in the BJP's loss in the elections in India in 2004. There are enough problems in the tensions being created in society by the very uneven distribution of benefits from recent growth not to make the matter more complicated by making claims not founded on facts.

Using the estimates provided by the World Bank for the shares of income for each 20 per cent of the population, we can estimate the sizes of these socio-economic groups, their share in national income and their overall economic well-being.

I estimate that some 40 million people, or one-fourth of the population, are very poor with a total income of \$14 billion and income per capita of \$350. Since these people have an income per day of less than \$1, the World Bank would classify them as "absolute poor". These people earn only about 40 per cent of the national average. For my purpose, I have labelled them as the very poor. It should be interesting to note that the number of people living in absolute poverty today is more than the entire population of the country in 1947. At that time, what is Pakistan today, had a population of 32 million and the number of people who were absolute poor was estimated at about 20 million.

In other words, while the size of the population since independence has increased five-fold, the number of people living in poverty has only doubled. Viewed over the long-term, therefore, Pakistan has made considerable progress since it achieved independence almost 60 years ago.

I define the next category as the not-so-poor. This category of people numbers some 50 million with a total income of \$21 billion and income per head of \$425. Their income is 50 per cent of the national average. Their number is larger than that of the very poor but of the same size as the category that comes after them. The third group — the people I call the middle class — also number 50 million. Their total income is \$50 billion and per capita income of \$1,000, which is about 18 per cent above the national average. The average income of the middle class, therefore, is more than twice as high as that of the not-so-poor.

The upper 10 per cent of the population make up the remaining two socio-economic groups; I describe them as the well-to-do and the rich. This group of 19 million has a combined income of \$51 billion which gives it an income per head of \$2,700, or slightly more than three times the national average. But lumping the two categories — the well-to-do and the very rich — together would not serve our analytical purpose; they need to be separated with estimates made for their incomes and size.

I call the 0.13 per cent top people in the income distribution scale the very rich. They number some 200,000 people and have a combined income of slightly more than four billion dollars or \$20,000 per head which is 24 times the national average and 57 times the average income of the very poor. Simple arithmetic then puts the number of the well-to-do at 18.8 million, with a total income of \$47 billion and income per head at \$2,500. The well-to-do have per capita incomes two and half times as large as that of the middle class. Having provided some rough estimates for the number of people in the five socio-economic categories with which I have been working in this analysis, it would be useful to say a word about their principal characteristics and how they interact with one another. Most of the 40 million very poor — the bottom 25 per cent of the population — live their lives at some distance from the rich. A large proportion of them are either in the country's more backward areas (almost the entire province of Balochistan, large parts of the NWFP, northern Punjab, all of rural Sindh) or in the katchi abadis of the major cities.

The rich don't visit these areas and do not have an appreciation of the circumstances in which the absolute poor live. Some of the very well-to-do may have some contact with the absolute poor and may know their real situation through association with charitable organisations but for most there is not much knowledge about their conditions.

Not only do the very poor live in isolation; they have benefited very little from the recent burst of growth in the country. This growth, propelled by increase in demand which in turn was helped by the boom in real estate and increase in consumer finance, was not pro-poor. It is unusual for benefits not to flow to the poorer segments of the population when the rate of growth is three times the rate of increase in population.

This relationship between high rates of growth and reduction in the level of poverty has been established by the World Bank's empirical work. Nonetheless, because the sources of growth in Pakistan were not those that would provide much relief to the poor, the reduction in their number was small.

While the very poor live their lives out of sight of the very rich, that is not the case with the not-so-poor; there is much greater social and economic interaction between them and the very rich. A significant proportion of the 50 million not-so-poor live in the country's major cities and large numbers of them work in the houses of the rich or in the businesses they own and run. They — the not-so-poor — therefore see for themselves the extravagant lifestyles of the very rich and how the economic opportunities offered to them by public policy have made it possible for them to live the way they do.

Growth in the economy has a profound impact on the not-so-poor. If it is brisk it pulls them out of poverty; if it falters, they can plunge back into poverty. There is an interesting example of this from Pakistan's own history. While little serious analytical work has been done in Pakistan on the social consequences of the socialist policies followed by the administration of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. It seems that a large number of the not-so-poor fell back into poverty during this period. Since the rate of economic growth declined significantly during this time, it is ironic that what was done in the name of the poor resulted in further impoverishment for them.

The middle class is the third category in the income distribution scale with a combined income of more than two and a half times of the not-so-poor. The people in this category have benefited from growth in recent years; it is this group that has seen a significant change in their lifestyles. To take one example: they have graduated from using bicycles as the main means of transport to motorcycles. They have also seen enough increase in their disposable incomes to be able to send their children to private schools thus laying the basis for their future economic and social advance.

The well-to-do have also done well in the current economic boom. This class of nearly 19 million is behind the consumption boom that is sustaining the Pakistani economy at this time. A significant number in this income group have benefited from the structural changes that have

occurred in the economy over the last two to three decades. It is this group that has created the large affluent diasporas in North America — in Canada and the United States — and, as a consequence, is drawing benefits from the capital that is flowing back into Pakistan from those residing outside the country.

The 50,000 or so families that fit in the income category of the very rich owe their wealth and income either to land they have owned for decades, perhaps for centuries, or to the industries they established since the birth of Pakistan, or to dealings in properties that are now valued very highly at the peripheries of the major cities. In all these cases the state has either helped in protecting the source of income or assisted in creating the wealth that produces it.

Those who populate the upper echelons of the economic society of Pakistan were not always in that position. This is one of the unique features of Pakistani society; a lot of the wealth that produces these incomes is of recent origin which is not the case in most of the developing world. Even those who owe their position in this group to the ownership of land can not be said to have had it brought to them through many inter-generational transfers. Some of the agricultural wealth and incomes associated with it is of relatively recent origin; some of it is the product of the extraordinary productivity increases that resulted from the green revolutions of the late 1960s and the early 1990s. The first saw very large increases in productivity in the wheat and rice-growing areas in central Punjab in the late 1960s; the second because of the productivity increases in the cotton-growing areas of southern Punjab and Sindh.

The differences in the circumstances of these five socio-economic groups could become the source of conflict if the right set of policies is not adopted. I will take up this subject next week.

8. On Arms Sales From India and Pakistan

Sri Lanka to purchase \$100 million arms from Pakistan

<http://www.pakistanlink.com/Headlines/Jan07/02/02.htm>

Pakistan eyes arms sales to Egypt

Daily Times, Pakistan – Dec 15, 2006

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2006%5C12%5C16%5Cs_tory_16-12-2006_pg7_12

India: Military Aid to Burma Fuels Abuses

India Must Halt Arms Sales and Training to Burmese Army

The Indian government is offering a package of military assistance to the Burmese army, which is likely to use such arms and training to attack against civilians in its war against ethnic insurgents, Human Rights Watch said today.

December 7, 2006 Press Release

http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/12/07/india14778_txt.htm

9.

The Guardian – December 7, 2006

<http://politics.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,1965993,00.html>

Arms and the middlemen

It is not in Britain's national interest to maintain this corrupt liaison with Saudi Arabia

David Leigh

All the Chicken Lickens in Britain's business press have been running about for the past fortnight shouting: "The sky is falling! The sky is falling!" The cause of this hysteria, adroitly stoked up by our biggest arms firm, BAE Systems, is that the economy is allegedly in danger because the Saudi royal family may take away a warplane contract worth £10bn.

But a senior British diplomat, Stephen Day, said publicly this week what many sensible people have been thinking for some time. He told the Financial Times that Britain might be better off if it ended its corrupt liaison with Saudi Arabia. The former ambassador to Qatar said there were no political or strategic grounds for continuing with these monster arms deals: "The UK now risks fuelling the perception that the British are shoring up a corrupt regime without sound military reasons ... Britain really has to sit back and think from first principles how it can help the Middle East ... Selling arms to Saudi Arabia is not the way."

These words are heresy to the arms industry, and no doubt to the entourage of political actors on its payroll, which has included: Lord Powell, the brother of the prime minister's chief of staff; Michael Portillo, the former Tory defence secretary; and Sir Kevin Tebbit, the recently

retired permanent secretary at the MoD, now on the board of Smiths Group, a major BAE subcontractor.

The Saudis are said to be displeased with the Serious Fraud Office, which is making belated headway in a huge corruption investigation, homing in on accounts in Swiss banks. The Saudis are also put out, it is said, that Whitehall files have surfaced revealing how a former British ambassador reported that Crown Prince Sultan “has a corrupt interest in all contracts”. Other defence ministry files, later hastily retrieved from the national archives, let out the awkward information that the price of previous BAE–Saudi arms deals had been inflated by £600m, allowing room for gigantic commissions.

The prime minister is now said to be agonising about whether honesty is the best policy, or whether the country (and his MPs’ marginal seats) can withstand the alleged loss of 50,000 British jobs. All these scare stories are heavily exaggerated. The real target of the SFO investigation is not the Saudi regime, but BAE at its Farnborough headquarters. And the investigation, well-informed sources say, is not about arms deals long ago. It has unearthed what looks very like a well-organised conspiracy, run through British Virgin Islands front companies and discreet lawyers in Geneva, to channel almost £1bn in secret payments to the Middle East over the last five years.

But every time the SFO makes a breakthrough, BAE’s political machine seems to try to derail it. The trade department and the MoD previously attempted a Whitehall coup to stop the SFO serving orders on BAE that would disclose its secret middlemen. That 2005 assault on the integrity of the attorney general was renewed again last week, with the same appeal to the “national interest”.

Even more embarrassingly, US state department files show how Sir Kevin Tebbit, while still in post, was summoned to Washington to be berated by an administration official. The assistant secretary of state Anthony Wayne went on to “underscore our concern about persistent allegations that BAE pays bribes to foreign public officials ... We urge you to use your new legal measures to investigate serious allegations vigorously. The continuing absence of any investigation by the British government of allegations of BAE bribery would be difficult for us to understand.”

This is the sort of humiliating tone that might be used to an errant banana republic. It would surely be better for Britain’s international reputation if we took Stephen Day’s advice and just ditched the Saudi contract.

10 SIACHEN DISPUTE

The News International
Dec 16, 2006

Revenge of the 'Wild Roses'

By Arshad H Abbasi

The present debate is not over the war or ceasefire on the longest glacier known as 'Wild Roses' in the local language but on the concern over the melting of the Siachen Glacier, known as the world's longest glacier in the non-polar regions, its melting process has now been bracketed amongst the fastest in the world. Its retreat is evident from the snout (base of the glacier) and through the continuous thinning of ice along its entire length.

The Siachen, along with several other major tributary glaciers, reduced its volume by 35 per cent during the last twenty years, retreating at the rate of 110 meter per year. Hydrological analyses too are substantiating this glacier melt. A study on temperature trends of high altitude stations in this region shows temperature is increasing at the rate of 0.20 degrees centigrade annually. The extraordinary melting of Siachen and other major tributary glaciers is caused by human activity, and is not due to natural changes. It has not only led to formations of glacial lakes and snow hole, but is responsible for destructive snow avalanches on both side of Saltoro ridge.

The problem is being caused by the establishment of permanent cantonments on either side of the Saltoro ridge, the daily heavy air traffic to advance camps (up to Indra Col post), the cutting and melting of glacial ice through the application of chemical, daily dumping of more than a ton of chemicals, metals, organic and human waste, daily leakages from 2000 gallons of kerosene oil from 250 km plastic pipeline laid by India throughout the glacier. The unprecedented increase in the flow of the Nubra River, emerging from the Siachen Glaciers further supports the melting process. More so, as the yearly swelling of this river is now destroying carefully constructed bridges and infrastructure along its course. Would this be 'Siachen's Revenge' against the massive human intervention into its natural ecology?

Two decades of military activities, with daily jet flights carrying men and material into the world's highest military airport 'Thoise', at the foot of the Siachen, hourly helicopter flights, facilitated by "Sonam" helipad on the glacier at 21000 ft, provide service to the highest camp site at Base Indra. At this height, the fuel efficiency and load-carrying capacity of a helicopter is reduced to 30 per cent. Its proficiency in disturbing freshly

accumulate snow is undoubtedly outstanding, while simultaneously contributing to thinning the ice. Surely clear evidence of human-influenced warming the world's largest glacier, which will have serious long-term repercussion on the water resources with climatic changes at regional and global level.

Joined in this process of rapid ice melting, is the mountain-engineering feat completed in 1986, which laid an all weather road, purely as support-line to the military activities in the Siachen. With its final destination the Nubra Valley, routed from Delhi-Manali-Leh, it requires crossing the highest passes in the world, including the 5.300 meters high Tanglang La Pass.

A death sentence seems to be hanging over this region. The constant movement of heavy military vehicles, which in turn are dependent on ancillary support along its way, are further endangering the ecology of the known 6500 glaciers in this Himalayan regions, particularly Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal state and Ladakh. This is further authenticated by a strong correlation between the melting of Siachen and other Himalayan glaciers like Meola, Gangotri which are already retreating at the rate of more than 30 meters per year.

Siachen and other Himalayan glacier contributed 24 per cent to sea level rise since last 20 years, as reported by the World Glacier Monitoring Service (WGMS) in 2005. On the other hand the western glaciers of Pakistan have remained stable as studies conducted by Italians and the University of Newcastle UK in December 2005, published in the "Annals of Glaciology" duly endorsed. As these glaciers are still safe from human transgression and devilry enacted on Siachen, global warming needs to be re-assessed in this context.

In 2005, the WWF indicated and warned that the Himalayan glaciers, which regulate the water supply to the Ganges, Indus, Brahmaputra, Mekong, Thanlwin, Yangtze and the Yellow Rivers, are believed to be retreating at a rate of about 10-15m (33-49ft) each year. Policy makers and scientists of the subcontinent attributed this unprecedented proof to climatic changes or global warming. Over the past many years though, much publicity has been given and concern expressed over the high level of carbon emission in China and India. Global outcry however continuous to ignore the danger signals emitting from the melting glaciers in the Himalayas. Astonishingly, India ratified the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty in 1996, to preserve the pristine nature of this remote continent, but ignores to protect the Himalayan glaciers. An ADB study reveals that a one-meter sea level rise will displace approximately 7.1 million people in India and the economic impact of climate change on a city like Mumbai could be as high as US \$48 billion alone. It was also predicted that cyclones in the Bay of Bengal will

increase, while during the post monsoon season, fierce winds will become a regular feature.

Cropping patterns will need to be adapted and water-saving techniques and flood controls introduced, while municipal sewage systems will require redesigning. Other studies anticipate that between 2 to 16 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) of South Asian countries will be lost every year due to natural disasters.

It is universally accepted, that the Himalayan Glaciers are not only the 'source of the rivers' and 'ecological source' for China and South-Asia, but also the 'starter' and 'regulating area' for climate control of the Eastern Hemisphere. Himalayan glaciers are the headwater of rivers that feed half of humanity. Asia is significantly affected by the height and extent of the Himalayan mountains as it plays a major role in controlling the climatic system of the region.

In turn, it also affects the global climate change. The glaciers within the Himalayas act as the controlling body of the regional atmospheric circulation and splits the upper westerly winds in winter into northern and southern branches. No-doubt, the glacial changes were recorded during the past century. However in the past 40 years or so, glaciers have shrunk more than 6606 kilometres in the entire region. The greatest retreat became noticeable since the mid 1980s. This indicates that Siachen intervention is already playing havoc with the climate of the South-Asia region.

The melting of Siachen and other glaciers is now significantly contributing to the rising of the oceans. Post-Tsunami research reports concluded that one of the causes that triggered the Indonesian tsunami is the ever-rising sea level. It increases pressure on the earth's crust, causing extreme geological disturbances. Serious alarm bells are raised by American scientists, who warned that Katrina and Rita were the result of pressure on the earth's crust and thus the increase in the rising sea levels. Siachen, still a bone of contention between two countries, needs to be adopted by the world community. With the life of 400 million people living within 20 kilometres of the coastlines, the Himalayan glaciers and Siachen need to be declared as a global heritage to save them from melting.

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Defence Minister rules out withdrawal of troops from Siachen

BANGALORE, Dec 22 (UNI): Defence Minister A K Antony today ruled out withdrawal of armed troops from the Siachen border keeping in view the growing irritants in the region.

Speaking to newsmen here, after inaugurating the new campus of the Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (CAIR), he said India always wanted friendly relationship with neighbours especially the immediate ones. However, the real problem the country faced was infiltration from across the border. These infiltrators were being supported and encouraged by Pakistan which had also expressed desire to have friendly relationship with India. If Pakistan was sincere it should put stop to infiltration. He referred to Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's interest in improving relationship and said "interest is not enough, action is more important."

He said situation could improve only when Pakistan realised the ground realities. If they accepted them, then "we could have authentication and move forward in improving relationship between the two countries," he added firmly ruling out either withdrawal or reduction of troops in Siachen. In case of China too, there were some irritants and efforts were already initiated to improve relationship.

To a question related to cross border terrorism, he said the situation was being reviewed regularly and measures had been initiated to keep eternal vigil.

Answering a question related to acquisition of fighter aircraft for Indian Air Force, he said the government was committed to fulfil demands of the armed forces to meet the growing challenges. "We are ready to procure most modern equipment and aircraft at the earliest to meet such requirements," he assured.

He said the government would accept the Mandan Committee, expected to submit its report within two months, on various issues related to the human reforms in the armed forces.

11 KASHMIR:

Hindustan Times
New Delhi, January 14, 2007

'In J&K, misplaced concerns delay RTI'
Neelesh Misra

Misplaced concerns about security in Kashmir are delaying the enforcement of the Right to Information Act in the state, says the head of the watchdog agency.

The landmark act, described by many analysts as one of the most important laws enacted in India since independence, currently does not apply to J&K because of its special constitutional status. It will have to be adopted by the state assembly before citizens can begin to seek the wide-ranging information they want from the government.

A law like the RTI is crucial to Kashmir, where much is veiled in secrecy, and many actions are defended citing national security needs. Wajahat Habibullah, who has served for years in Kashmir as an administrator, said transparency would make Kashmiris feel more secure.

In an interview with the Hindustan Times, he said he had drafted a right to information law for J&K; it was introduced in the state assembly and referred to a select committee. "But they are not coming up with anything," said Habibullah. "I do not think it is just because of bureaucratic delays, it is something more. There are misplaced concerns for security."

Similar security concerns earlier prevented the use of mobile phones in Kashmir. Security agencies blocked their entry for years even as their use boomed elsewhere in India. Now, intelligence agencies use the phones to intercept militants' conversations.

Habibullah said he would personally handle appeals in cases of human-rights violations and corruption in spy agencies and those security forces mostly exempted under the law.

At least 4,000 people have been reported as missing in Kashmir during the 17-year-old insurgency, many of whom disappeared after being taken for questioning by security forces, according to estimates from government officials.

Allegations of other human-rights abuses are also frequently made by citizens and civil-rights groups in that state, the Northeast and other parts of the country where paramilitary and other forces are deployed.

But most citizens seem unaware that although the information law does not apply to J&K, applications can still be placed before representatives of central security forces and intelligence agencies.

K Srinivasan, deputy inspector-general, Border Security Force – which is deployed in the Kashmir Valley – and Prabhakar Tripathi, spokesman for the Central Reserve Police Force, which has bunkers and pickets across Srinagar, told HT that no application had been made in Kashmir under the information law. Both organisations are in the RTI exemptions list.

Habibullah said he had received no appeal related to human-rights abuses or corruption among intelligence and other exempted security agencies.

Parvez Imroz, a Kashmiri human-rights activist with the Coalition of Civil Society, said: "Unlike other states where people and civil-society groups are asserting rights, there is no faith here in institutions here – although that is also not correct."

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Kashmir Times

SOG continues to be terror for civilians

By Anuradha Bhasin Jamwal & Arun Kumar Gupta

<http://www.kasmirtimes.com/archive/0612/061211/index.htm>

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Kashmir Times – 16 December 2006

Editorial

Deprived of land

Army fails even to pay compensation

The army occupying land of three families in Uroosa village in Uri sector along the Line of Control for construction of a helipad, promising compensation, jobs and then not giving anything at the end may not be the sole case of its kind. The army spokesperson has pleaded ignorance about the matter. The allegations merit greater attention than simply that. The problem of denial of compensation for land occupied by the army or para-military forces in the border areas is much more acute. There are several cases like the Uroosa case, strategic concerns of the army necessitating the occupation of land but absolute complacency and insensitivity of some officers denying the affected civilians any kind of compensation. Already, people in Akhnoor, who were forced to go back to their homes after six years of displacement in 2005 have neither been given access to their lands nor any compensation for their lands. The people from these villages, some of which fall on the Line of Control, were displaced during the Kargil war when Akhnoor sector also became a

battle-field between the Indian and Pakistani forces. During the Kargil war in 1999 and subsequently during the Operation Parakaram that began on December 2001, vast tracts of agricultural lands were occupied by the army for mining operations. Unlike other parts of the international borders, where lands were restored two to three years later to the people after demining operations, no such operation was carried out in the Akhnoor sector.

As part of the policy both the Indian and the Pakistani armies do not demine the areas along the Line of Control. For strategic purposes, the army considers the villages along the international borders in the Akhnoor sector as vulnerable as the areas along the Line of Control and so the mines placed along this border belt are never de-activated. Even the mines planted during the 1971 war are still buried in the fields of the villagers, for which however, they were receiving compensation till 1999 when they were uprooted. While fresh agricultural fields were occupied for mining and later fencing purposes, the villagers have alleged time and again that they have not received any compensation and even the annual compensation (paid for the uncultivated fields) for the 1971 mine-fields stopped coming their way. At least till last year, all the flow of money in terms of compensation to the farmers was totally blocked. This despite the fact that the government and the army were keen that villagers go back from the camps to their villages and reports are already galore about the kind of pressure tactics used to bring back the villagers to their original homes, though some of them continue to languish in the camps still. However, most of them landed up landless and virtually jobless with little compensation being paid for their lands that were occupied. Similar is the story of the villages up north all along the Line of Control.

In fact, farther up one goes, the greater the surveillance of the army and the greater is exclusion of people. In the border villages of Poonch, people's deprivation from their lands is partial. While some of the land is often occupied by army in the name of strategic concerns, whether or not the compensation is paid or not, there is also the recent trend of cluster colonies in at least a dozen villages which have been set up towards the interiors of the Line of Control to enable army to have a better control over the areas just along the disputed line, and where lives of people are no less than a slavery of a kind since access to homes and fields has been limited to brief hours between sunrise and sunset. The question certainly is not simply of whether any compensation is being paid to the people or not but also of the choice given to the people to barter their land or homes in lieu of some other promise. The worst, of course, is when people at the helm of affairs don't live up to such promises. The Uroosa example is just one case in point.

VDCs have contributed to ethnic, communal divide in Jammu region

By Anuradha Bhasin Jamwal & Arun Kumar Gupta (Kashmir Times –13 December 2006)

JAMMU, December 12: Eleven years after they were created, the village defence committees (VDCs) have proved to be the one of the biggest contributing factors in fragmenting the society in the militancy affected areas of Jammu region. The reason is mainly the inability of the government to democratize the selection process which defeated the very purpose of their creation.

While the police officials maintain that only those people who were keen to join the village defence committees were given the membership and arms to defend themselves, the fact remains that this saffronised agenda, which interestingly started during the Congress regime in New Delhi, people were hand-picked on communal and ethnic lines for the creation of the village defence committees.

That there were no VDCs created in Kashmir region during the last one decade is itself an indication. Top brass of Jammu and Kashmir police force dismiss the allegations. Additional DGP Counter Intelligence Kuldeep Khuda avers that no VDCs were created in Kashmir because there was no threat perception to the villagers though there was threat perception to some individuals.

The VDCs, however, were found to be desirable in Jammu region following increasing number of massacres in Doda region on selective basis allegedly by militants and the first experiment began in Doda region. The policy of forming VDCs followed the policy adopted by the army and para-military forces operating in the hilly area in the early nineties of carrying out searches and crackdowns on selective basis in villages and towns with mixed population.

The well known modus operandi adopted those days was to line up people during cordon and search operations, ask them their names, send back Hindus to their homes, sometimes after using abusive language, and making the rest face the ire of a more tedious interrogation, often also torture and other kinds of harassment.

The VDCs were apparently formed to continue a trend started by the para-military forces in those days. In the first phase, on an experimental basis, 200 VDCs were initially sanctioned for and created in the summer of 1995 in Doda and Gool areas. Subsequently, several other VDCs came up in various parts of the state including Rajouri, Poonch, Udhampur and Kathua. It was after the BJP led coalition government took over reigns of power in New Delhi that the number of VDCs multiplied fast and today it crosses the 3,000 mark with half a dozen to a dozen members in each VDC. However, the number of members in VDCs are not static. Some VDCs comprise 20 persons. In Marah village in Surankote comprising about 1,000 people, 175 VCD members are operating including some

women who were armed after the controversial 2003 Operation Sarpvinaash in Hill Kaka area of Surankote, when it was first established that VDCs were not only playing a role in self-defence but were also aiding security forces in counter insurgency operations. In Doda district alone, 1200 VDCs are operating.

While in most areas, the VDCs came up almost on communal lines with a composition of mainly members of the minorities, in the hilly districts of Rajouri and Poonch, the composition of VDCs was mainly on ethnic lines, sharpening the decades old animosity between Gujjars and Paharis. The only reason that a communal division was not preferred is due to the fact that in these two districts, there are very few Hindus in the rural areas; their concentration's mostly in the towns. The majority community of the state, though a minority in Jammu region, found little space in these armed wings of the village. Kuldeep Khuda reasons that only those people were given guns who volunteered for it and claims that the police also tried to ensure that no "wrong people" were included.

Whether the VDC members are screened for their integrity or not, the fact is that apart from the creating a communal and ethnic polarization throughout the region, the VDCs have also contributed in the additional fear psychosis. In several cases, VDC members have been found to be involved in cases of extortion. The creation of VDCs which could militarise the civilians space completely in the rural areas, which are worse hit by militancy is argued to have brought down the scale of massacres. But this has also caused fear, panic and pushed the disadvantaged minority (in terms of exclusion from this privileged and patronized group of armed people) to a stage where they are almost forced to sympathise with the militant outfits as a means of security.

One of the most recent and significant cases of VDCs creating both communal strains and resorting to unprovoked killings of innocents in Doda district is the Gandoh case that left a Muslim youth dead and sparked off migrations of Hindus to Chamba in Himachal Pradesh. The police which claims to be investigating the case has registered little progress 7 months after the incident took place.

Following the tragic Kulhand massacre in May 2006 in Doda where militants allegedly gunned down 17 people, a village defence committee was set up and the government reasoned that the people of the village had demanded the same. However, reports revealed that after the massacre majority of the villagers including Hindus, who earlier also resisted efforts by the security forces to create a village defence committee in Kulhand and ensured communal amity in their village, were still not in favour of a VDC being set up. Ever since the massacre, the strains between the two communities are visible, more so after the setting up of a VDC that has armed only members of one community.

In a similar case in Surankote's Hill Kaka area, comprising several hamlets including Marah, ethnic strains are more apparent ever since the creation of VDCs, at the initiative taken by locals working in Saudi Arabia, in the area just before the Operation Sarpvinash in May 2003. The operation itself was mired in mystery with claims of killings a large number of militants with a number ranging from 28 to 200. Later reports put the number at not more than 28 and maintained that most of the men killed and passed off as militants actually included militant sympathizers or porters. The security forces never really came out with a clear picture about this much publicized operation.

A year later on the intervening night of June 25 and 26, in the same area, in the dhoks of village Thiali Katha, 11 villagers were mowed down by suspected militants and 10 were injured. The victims who included 5 children and women were either VDC members or their family members.

Sources reveal that the incident was triggered by an old dispute with people of a different ethnicity in the neighbouring village. Some women family members of the local militants from the neighbouring village who were picked up for questioning by the army were handed over to these VDC members few days before the massacre. The VDC members reasoned that the women, who were well looked after, were simply to act as shields for them. It was believed that as long as those women stayed in their village, the militants would not attack them. Ironically, however, as soon as these women were sent back to their homes, the Thiala Katha massacre took place.

A day after this incident, union minister of state for home, SP Jaiswal, who rushed to Surankote, told media persons in a briefing at Jammu that the government would strengthen the VDCs and provide them with modern weaponry. All VDC members are provided with 303 rifles and they continue to fight in the hilly militancy affected areas with these weapons till date. However, at that time, Jaiswal had suggested, that the VDCs will be armed with the otherwise banned AK 47 rifles.

While VDC members have also been in the middle of several killings that were passed off as militancy related incidents and later turned out to be cases where VDC members had used their position to settle scores with old rivals, mostly over land disputes, there have also been incidents of looting weapons of VDC members. At least 50 such cases have been reported from all over the region in the last three years. In some cases, VDC members were found to be involved in the looting spree. In Garethher area of Doda district, 2 VDC members were arrested last month for their involvement in looting weapons of other VDC members and kidnapping of two of them.

This does not only point out to the cases of extortion and corruption within the ranks of the VDC members, it also manifests the vulnerability

of the VDC members and their family members. Most of the militancy related killings in the last one decade have claimed the lives of VDC members or their kin. On June 11, 2003, 3 VDC members were killed in Reasi area and houses of two VDC members were torched allegedly by militants. Few days before that, on May 27, 2003, 5 family members of the village defence committee persons, including children, were gunned down in Keri Budhal village of Rajouri. There have also been cases of more brutal forms of violence with ears and noses of VDC members and their kins being chopped off or killings by slitting throats.

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Kashmir Times

15 December 2006

'Demilitarisation' may end up converting J&K into 'Police state'

By Anuradha Bhasin Jamwal & Arun Gupta

JAMMU, Dec 14: Forced by several security compulsions and international pressure for de-militarisation, the Centre may finally begin the exercise of cutting down troops from Jammu and Kashmir. However, de-militarisation may not actually take place with state police gradually taking over the charge. The strength of the police force is likely to be doubled under the scheme of things.

The massive pace at which Jammu and Kashmir police set up is increasing in terms of manpower and arming of men who are working with the police department rings alarm bells.

Jammu and Kashmir police would soon have an additional five battalions, recruitment process for which has already begun. The five battalions are a part of the long term proposal of doubling the police force in the state in a bid to replace the army and other para-military forces gradually by the local police.

Though the Director General of Police Gopal Sharma denies there is a proposal in place seeking 50 additional battalions for J&K police, sources point out that the proposal was tabled during the recently held national level conference of chief ministers. The Centre has even given the assurance of 15 battalions, five of which stand sanctioned and recruitment process for the same is likely to be completed within the next few months.

The DGP admits there is a proposal in place for 15 battalions and maintains that only four of these have been sanctioned for and the battalions were to be raised soon. Sources in the police department, however, aver that there is a long term proposal of 50 battalions, which

may take a longer time and would finally pave way for sending the army and other para-military forces to the barracks.

Official sources point out that the need for withdrawing para-military forces, especially the army and the Border Security Force, has been necessitated less by the international pressure and demand internally raised in the state for de-militarisation and more by the security concerns in other parts of the country including matters of internal security like Mumbai and Mangalore bombings.

However, of greatest concern for the union defence ministry is the increasing military dispute on the Indo-Bangladesh borders. There are indications that Centre is keen that Army and BSF presence in Jammu and Kashmir is eased to enable it to send additional troops to Indian borders with Bangladesh. However, to ensure the same number of force within this state, and to provide the local police some role, the Centre is likely to soon give the green signal to the proposal of 50 additional battalions for J&K police.

The chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad is also reported to have taken up the issue of raising 50-51 fresh battalions of J&K police with the prime minister and the proposal is justified on the logic that this would pave for both withdrawal of troops from the state and also aid in reducing unemployment by opening up avenues for 60,000 to 70,000 youth.

A senior police officer confirming that there indeed is a proposal from the state government, pending disposal before New Delhi regarding sanctioning of 50 new battalions of police. But this is a long term proposal and would take a couple of years if it gets the final nod. It is after this that the modalities for the time frame for raising these battalions and the exact numbers would be worked out.

While the proposed battalions are proposed to take up the task of the para-military forces in the militancy infested areas, top police officials here dismiss this theory, maintaining that they would also be used for normal policing beats. A top police official confirmed that at present only 10 percent of the police force is engaged in counter insurgency operations. The counter insurgency grid at present includes 5 battalions including those tasked to provide security cover to VVIPs and vital installations.

The percentage of the cops engaged in counter insurgency is likely to go up once additional battalions come into being. Though police officers deny that all the proposed battalions would be sucked into simply the task of counter insurgency, they are tight-lipped on the how many of these battalions would be engaged in anti-militancy operations and how many on normal policing beats.

Sources also point out that some of the proposed battalions would be raised as part of the Indian Reserve Police Force (IRPF). Ten battalions of IRPF, which were sanctioned in 2002, already exist with a total force of 10,000.

If the need for doubling the strength of police force is felt in view of the prevailing security situation in the state, would these freshly proposed battalions of police continue to be in place after the situation improves? A senior police officer maintains that these would be permanent battalions. However, if the situation improves the IRPF battalions can be sent to other parts of the country, he avers. However, it is not known how much would be the ratio of the IRPF battalions in the proposed number of 50 new battalions for Jammu and Kashmir.

Whether the fresh battalions would be absorbed as part of IRPF or Special Operations Group(SOG) which are essentially tasked for militancy related operations and not normal policing beats or be a part of the larger police set-up, the fact is that such a high presence of police is likely to turn this state into a police state.

The numbers are alarming in a state which has a population of less than a crore. The fresh battalions would double the existing number of cops in the state, from 65,000 to more than 1.3 lakh. There is also a re-inforcement of five battalions of IRPF, which means an additional 10,000 cops. In addition to this, there are 23,000 SPOs, some other surrendered ultras, who are operating and engaged in counter insurgency operations and many of them have been given back the weapons they had earlier surrendered. Besides, there are over 3,000 village defence committee, who members range from anywhere between 6 to 175. By any reasonable estimates, the total number of VDC members in the state is not less than 40,000. The number of VDCs, their numbers and SPOs keeps increasing almost on an annual basis.

At the moment, over 1.5 lakh persons including regular cops, apart from the para-military forces, have been armed and given the license to either maintain law and order or kill and harass commoners. The raising of 4 or 5 battalions in the next few months may bring up this number to more than one and half lakh. If the expected proposal of 50 battalions sees the light of the day, the total force, inclusive of SPOs, surrendered ultras and VDCs, may go up to 2 lakhs. With likelihood of increase in the number of IRPF men, SPOs and VDC members by the time the proposal is executed, the number may exceed the 2 lakh mark.

Yet going by the figure of 2 lakh alone, it would mean one cop or a gunmen receiving official patronage for every fifty persons, including children, of the state.

Kashmir Times – 15 Dec 2006

**Army helipad on LoC cost them their land
Villagers in Uroosa regret denial of compensation, job**

By Shabir Dar

UROOSA (URI), Dec 14: Within three kilometers inside line of control (LoC) is Uroosa, a village where army has set up a helipad on the 12 kanals land of this village in 2003. The land belongs to three families of this village, who were promised full compensation of land along with a job to one person from each family, by army officials.

More than three years have passed since then; the poor families are yet to receive any money or a job. But have to experience the dilly-dallying tactics of army officials, as they approach them for claiming the price of their land.

Uroosa, the last village of Uri towards Line of Control is more than a backward village, where people, poor and deprived, are making their living only by cultivating the meager land which they possess. And in this village the families of Muzaffar Ali Khan and his two cousins Gulab Khan and Suliman Khan could only see choppers landing and taking off from their land, now a helipad of army, but cannot cultivate it. Their 12 kanals land was taken by army in year 2003 constructing a helipad on it. From then, these people are demanding the compensation for their land but the demands go unnoticed.

“We lost land. They (army) grabbed it without paying the price,” said Muzaffar Ali Khan of Uroosa. He added that army officer who got the land from them four years back, had promised full price of the land with a job in the army to one person from each family. But according to Khan, Army has totally failed to keep their promise. “We are poor people, with no source of income. Why has army made us fool by snatching our land on false promises,” questions Gulab Khan whose three kanals of land is under the helipad.

These poor villagers, unaware of the official procedures, have been visiting the army camps in Uri for last four years to claim the price of their land, but every time they are being avoided and asked to visit these army camps. again. “If this is the case, we need our land back,” the affected villagers said.

Perplexed by the attitude of army towards them, these three villagers of Uroosa have also approached the Air Force officials, who have adopted this village after last year’s October 8 earthquake. But villagers blame that IAF has also turned a blind eye towards them. Air Marshal A K Singh, Air Officer Commanding in Chief of Western Command, who visited the place on Wednesday, also admitted that the villagers’ demand was genuine. “Yes, these villagers have not received the price of their land that is under helipad. I will talk to army to settle the issue,” he said.

However, the army officials in Srinagar, when contacted, expressed their ignorance about the matter. "We have to inquire into the matter; if the land belongs to people they will be paid the compensation," said S. Juneja the in-charge public relations officer of army. Juneja was of the opinion that army's chief commanding officer at Uri has not brought the matter into the notice of higher officials at Srinagar to settle it.

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'Next war in Jammu and Kashmir will be fought in air'

by Iftikhar Gilani

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2006%5C12%5C24%5Cs_tory_24-12-2006_pg7_7

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Kashmir Times – 23 December, 2006

State police or police state?

Coinciding with talk of demilitarisation and withdrawal of forces, security forces in Kashmir are expanding their garrisons and creating new facilities

By Iftikhar Gilani

To address the alarming unemployment problem in the state, IHK Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad recently advocated raising 50 battalions of Special Forces within the J&K police, saying that it would help Army and para-military troops return to the barracks and also provide jobs for over 60,000 people.

How bad the employment problem is should be clear from the fact that an advertisement by the Service Selection Board [SSB] in Srinagar early this year sent policymakers into a tizzy when for 5,000 posts, including those for teachers, the Board was flooded with 400,000 requests for application forms.

Now, human rights groups say Azad's move to raise more battalions will turn the state into a "police state". In a state with a population of less than 10 million, 200,000 police men would mean one armed cop for every 50 civilians, including children. This police-people ratio is far higher than in any other state of India or any part of the world, critics say.

Azad's proposal will more than double the present J&K police strength of 65,000. The state also has another battery of 23,000 SPOs (special police officers), including surrendered militant, engaged in counter-insurgency operations, and 40,000 armed members of 3,000 village defence committees.

Associate Editor of The Kashmir Times Anuradha Bhasin says that the number of SPOs and personnel of village defence committees keeps increasing on an annual basis. She believes that more armed persons roaming the state will terrorise citizens even more than the presence of the central forces.

Though Azad's proposal of 50 more battalions is basically meant to replace paramilitary forces in militancy-infested areas, the state police brass stress that they would also be used for normal policing beats; even now only 10 per cent of the police force is engaged in counter-insurgency operations, including those tasked to provide security cover to VVIPs and vital installations.

Moreover, despite handing over operations to the central and state police forces, the Army and the paramilitary forces are loath to leave the properties or the real estate they have been holding in J&K.

Together they are holding over 170 square kilometres legally and almost an equal size illegally, sources in the government say.

While the State abolished the zamindari way back in 1951 through a revolutionary step taken by late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, these new army 'Jagirdars' have occupied vast tracts of land within Srinagar city and the countryside.

The army recently occupied vast tracks of the tourist resort of Mansbal, just 30-kms away from Srinagar. After occupying part of the 375-acre Exotic Cattle Farm (now Cattle Research Station) of the Agriculture University in 1991 to quell disturbances, troops claimed property rights over these lands. After negotiations between the state government and Army commanders, the University was left with barely 102 acres. After consolidating the hood, troops are now demanding another 69.375 acres of this land.

This will leave scores of farmers in the area landless, which is why thousands of people came out on the streets recently to protest acquisition. Several residential structures here are being bulldozed. Work is going on round the clock on land the Army has picked for its regional aviation corps headquarters. Ironically, the state government had been marketing this area world over as a prime tourist destination.

In Gulmarg, Kashmir's top tourist destination, 400 acres of forest land are currently occupied by the army. State government sources say while 130 acres have been formally transferred, compensation is still awaited; the remaining 270 acres continue to be occupied illegally without even informing state officials. Sources calculate the value of occupied land at Rs5 billion.

Coinciding with talk of demilitarisation and withdrawal of forces, security forces in Kashmir are expanding their garrisons and creating new

facilities. The Indian Air Force is seeking another 800 acres of land at Awantipora near Srinagar Airport. This will leave eight villages homeless.

President of ruling alliance partner People's Democratic Party (PDP) warns that if a natural disaster sweeps Kashmir, there will be no land for dislocated people because all safe plateaus are in the possession of the army. Mehbooba Mufti is planning to take up the issue with new Defence Minister AK Antony.

In 1999, the state government handed over vast tracts of land to the Army to inhabit their mountaineering division in Sharifabad which outskirts Srinagar city. But even after acquiring new land and building facilities, the mountaineering division continues to hold a camp in Tato Ground in the Batamaloo area in Srinagar.

In the last assembly session, communist leader Yusuf Tarigmai sought details about buildings occupied by security forces across the state. The government replied that 1572 buildings including 98 industrial estates and schools are currently occupied by the armed forces.

In Pattan tehsil alone, the Army has occupied 378.25 acres of land owned by 515 families. Official records suggest that 30 percent of the land taken over by security forces is being used to construct barracks.

In 2003, when National Conference MP Member Mirza Abdul Rashid raised this issue in the Rajya Sabha, he was told that the army and paramilitary forces together acquired 41,594.767 acres of land in J&K; officials in the state government say total occupied land is much more than these figures. In Ladakh, the army has requisitioned 4,354 acres and acquired 786 acres but is actually in illegal possession of 51459 acres.

Army commanders say they have occupied these land because of disturbances and will vacate them once the situation normalises. However, that permanent bases like that in Manasbal have been constructed means the army is going to be around for a long time.

After the revolutionary land-to-tiller law enacted in 1951, the operational landholding in J&K shrunk to a level such that 1.418 million families across the State hold an average of 0.66 hectares, a size which is unacceptable for banks when considering granting loans beyond Rs100,000. On the other hand, the army has access to as much land as it wants.

There is an interesting anecdote which former Indian Prime Minister IK Gujral narrates of the time when he was communication minister in Indira Gandhi's cabinet in the sixties. At the time, says Gujral, then chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq called on Gandhi and complained: "Madam, whenever I ask for a battalion of forces, you approve it without asking a question. But for the past several years, I

have wanted to set up an industry or some corporation in Kashmir Valley but no one in New Delhi pays heed to my request?"

According to Gujaral, Gandhi smiled at this and gave Sadiq a group of ministers to work with him and look into the possibility of setting up some industry and encouraging the private sector. Only two ministers paid heed to Gandhi, Gujaral himself and Industries Minister Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. Thus, only two industries came up at the end of this initiative: a unit of the Indian Telephone Industry and a watch-manufacturing component of Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT).

The mind set has not changed after all these years.

12 CRISIS WITHIN IN THE ARMED FORCES : STRESS AND SUICIDES

Indian soldier Killing spree

Why Indian soldiers are taking their lives and killing each other

BBC News – 14 December 2006

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6178421.stm

Army plans to hire 400 shrinks to cut stress

Times of India, India – Dec 29, 2006

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/NEWS/India/Army_plans_to_hire_400_shrinks_to_cut_stress/articleshow/987714.cms

13 Book Review

The Telegraph – January 05, 2007

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1070105/asp/opinion/story_7215817.asp

UNREST ALL THE WAY

Skirmish rules

A Region in Turmoil: South Asian Conflicts Since 1947

By Rob Johnson,

Reaktion, Rs 595

South Asia, which extends from the Hindu Kush to the Malay Peninsula, is a region full of turmoil. This area has experienced a series of

conventional and low-intensity conflicts after World War II. Rather than pre-colonial or colonial legacies, the issues behind these conflicts are traceable to the post-colonial era. Rob Johnson analyses the nature of the wars that had occurred in this 'zone of conflict'.

The biggest power and would-be hegemon in this region is India. By no means is its intention pacifist. It possesses the world's second largest army, boasting 1.1 million men. In 1992-93, the defence budget consumed about 15 per cent of the total budget. The second most powerful nation is Pakistan, with a 510,000-strong army. In the Nineties, Pakistan's defence outlay accounted for 30 per cent of the total budget, which amounted to 8 per cent of the GDP.

Both inter-state and intra-state conflicts threaten the south Asian states. Most of the states are composed of diverse ethnic communities, many of whom are demanding independence. Frequently, intra-state conflicts turn into inter-state conflicts. In 1947, as the Pakistani-supported raiders entered Kashmir, India went for a military solution. The result was the first India-Pakistan war which ended in 1948, with the United Nations brokering a ceasefire. The Pakistani plan to infiltrate insurgents into Kashmir in 1965 resulted in the second Indo-Pak war. However, the Kashmir problem still sours the relation between the two nuclear states.

Despite religious homogeneity, secessionist conflicts occurred in Pakistan. When the Muslims of East Pakistan demanded independence, the Pakistan army in May 1971 tried to crush the rebellion. The Pakistan air force used napalm against villages. As the civilians fled to India, the latter took military action, besides supporting the Mukti Bahini's guerrilla war against the Pakistani forces. The result was the 1971 India-Pakistan war and the birth of Bangladesh.

Pakistan's internal troubles continue to simmer. In the North-West Frontier Province, the Pushtuns demand an independent Pushtunistan. Just after the formation of Pakistan, the Pushtuns rebelled in 1949, and were replied with air strikes.

Transnational links among the insurgents and the use of child soldiers are the chief characteristics of south Asian intra-state wars. In Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam is conducting a guerrilla campaign for an independent eelam in the Jaffna peninsula. Most of the LTTE fighters are children and 40 per cent are girls. The LTTE acquires arms from Philippines and Pakistan.

Occasionally, conflicts in south Asia have been products of global rivalry. An example is the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan between 1979-89. The rise of taliban, which was trained by Pakistan's ISI and financially backed by the CIA, was a spill-over effect of the Cold War.

Numerous books have been written on various isolated conflicts that have occurred in India and Pakistan. But *A Region in Turmoil* is first of its kind. Johnson deserves praise for studying the various conflicts in south Asia in a comparative context. However, if Johnson extended his comparative analysis to include the conflicts that occurred in the Far East and in the Middle East, then he would have found out that in terms of manpower casualties, the interstate conflicts of south Asia were minuscule.

KAUSHIK ROY

14 MANIPUR and the Struggle Against AFSPA

(i)

Economic Times

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/726103.cms>

Editorial

Scrap AFSPA in Northeast

TIMES NEWS NETWORK[WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 06, 2006 12:51:06 AM]

The prime minister's recent declaration that the home ministry was working towards modifying the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in order to make it "more humane" is an inadequate response to the evolving situation. The PM should have had the political will to junk the Act in keeping with the popular demand of the Manipuris.

The AFSPA, essentially meant to give the Indian army and paramilitary forces a freer hand in dealing effectively with various insurgencies in both Manipur and the rest of the Northeast, has often been misused to suppress any expression of legitimate democratic sentiment that does not fit in the Indian state's bill. The army and paramilitary forces have abused the virtually unbounded powers conferred on them to arrest anybody, search any property and kill people so long as they think "it is necessary to do so for the maintenance of public order".

Dr Manmohan Singh would have done well to heed the recommendations of the five-member Justice B P Jeevan Reddy Commission, set up by his government, to repeal the Act. The popular opposition to the AFSPA in Manipur, ever since its implementation, and particularly over the past two years, indicates that the law has never enjoyed legitimacy.

Enforcement of public order is doubtless a crucial function of the state. The government would, however, do well to realise that such a function is

perceived as coercive in a situation where the state enjoys limited moral legitimacy. That has been true for much of Northeast, including Manipur. The state, which followed a different political trajectory during the British Raj, did not participate in the anti-colonial struggle that led to the emergence of the Indian Union. It was, in fact, assimilated into it in 1949 against the wishes of sections of its people. The government would do well to situate the insurgencies of UNLF and other ethnic outfits in that context. It can yet win the hearts and minds of people of Manipur by engaging them in a real dialogue, and heeding their popular demands. Continuing with the Act would further erode the moral authority of the Indian state.

(ii)

The Telegraph – December 13, 2006

Advantage army

The government has got human rights activists up in arms by signalling that the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act will be amended, and not repealed. Anirban Das Mahapatra reports

http://www.telegraphindia.com/1061213/asp/atleisure/story_7130998.asp

(iii)

Deccan Herald – December 6, 2006

Editorial

Repeal it : AFSPA has to be scrapped totally.

<http://deccanherald.com/deccanherald/dec62006/editpage1854512006125.asp>

(iv)

The Times of India – 1 Dec, 2006

Repeal only in name

Colin Gonsalves

The June 2005 report of the committee appointed by the central government to review the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, has recently been made public, though not officially.

The core of the report is Part IV — the recommendations — and Part V — the suggested amendments to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

The first conclusion the committee makes is that it is highly desirable and advisable to repeal the Act altogether, without, of course, losing sight of

the overwhelming desire of the majority of the region that the army should remain.

It advises that an appropriate legal mechanism must be devised for the same. Thus the committee begins with a highly dubious conclusion that the majority of the people of Manipur want the army to stay.

To justify the transfer of the provisions of AFSPA to another statute, in this case the UAP Act, it reasons: A major consequence of the proposed course would be the erasure of feelings of discrimination and alienation among the people of the north-eastern states who feel they have been victimised by the draconian enactment. The UAP Act applies to all of India so the complaint of discrimination would no longer be valid.

Over the years the constant complaint of many people in the region has been that it is almost impossible to get information about family members and friends who have been picked up and detained by security forces.

Many taken away without warrants have disappeared, or ended up dead or badly injured. The committee acknowledges that the UAP Act does not provide for an internal mechanism ensuring accountability of the forces and calls for one that is transparent, quick and involves authorities as well as civil society groups to provide information about missing persons within 24 hours.

It has reduced the grievances of the people of Manipur to the limited issue of non-provision of information. In a situation where the main grievances are torture, executions and disappearances, to say that information is the key is farcical.

As redress, the committee suggests the constitution of grievance cells composed of three members — a senior member of the local administration as chair, a captain of the security forces and a senior member of the local police.

The role of these cells would be to receive complaints, make prompt enquiries and furnish information to the complainant. The cells are designed to be dominated by the forces and police and have no power to punish.

After stating that the use of armed forces ought to always be for a limited period, the committee suggests an open-ended time schedule: While deploying the forces, the central government shall, by a notification published in the gazette, specify the state or the part of the state in which the forces would operate, and the period shall not exceed six months.

At the end of the specified period, it shall review the situation in consultation with the state government and check whether the deployment of forces should continue and till when.

There is another provision that is more pernicious than the provisions of AFSPA read together with the Supreme Court judgment in the Naga Peoples Movement for Human Rights case.

The Supreme Court interpreted the provisions of AFSPA to mean that the security forces cannot substitute the civil administration and police and are always to act in aid of civil power.

The suggested amendments are clearly at the behest of the security forces that see for themselves a larger role.

Then comes the clincher.

The suggested provision for opening fire is sweeping. Mere reasonable suspicion that a person is in possession of arms is sufficient to open fire.

There is no indication that the principle of the minimum use of force is applicable at all. A non-commissioned officer can give orders to open fire.

There are no guidelines for opening fire or for any enquiry to be conducted after the forces open fire and injure people in the process.

In sum, what is being repealed is only the name of the AFSPA statute and not the provisions of the statute itself.

The writer is a senior Supreme Court advocate.

(v)

India: Amnesty International renews its call for an unconditional repeal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/news/document.do?id=ENGASA200342006>

(vi)

The Hindu – December 4

Editorial

Repeal the hated Act

Welcome though the Prime Minister's latest promise to amend the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) is, the devil is going to be in the details. In a public address at Imphal's historic Kangla fort on Saturday, Dr. Manmohan Singh said the ...

<http://www.hindu.com/2006/12/04/stories/2006120403201000.htm>

(vii)

Kashmir Times – 5 December 2006

Editorial

Farewell to lawless laws

New Delhi must repeal all draconian laws

At last, it appears, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has positively responded to the international moral pressure generated by the famous lady peace activist of Iran, the Nobel Laureate Shireen Ebadi. She had recently been to India, addressed the press and human rights bodies and visited the AIIMS, where her Manipuri counterpart, Ms. Irom, is on formal hunger-strike, but is being force fed. She is on hunger strike for the last six years demanding the repeal of the universally-detested Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA), which gives the men in olive green almost unrestricted power to search, arrest, question and to shoot any one on mere suspicion. Whether she is at Imphal or in New Delhi she goes on hunger strike over that issue and is immediately lifted, taken to police custody and force fed. She had come to Delhi to arouse public opinion about the plight of the common Manipuri groaning under this lawless law and she was lifted and detained in the AIIMS, soon after she had addressed a press conference. However, Manipur being is a dim distant corner of the country her virtually silent protest has not stirred our national consciousness for long and one may say, even now. The explosion of popular rage that shook Manipur exactly two years ago, over the death of Ms. Manorama in army custody, made the people aware for the first time of this uncivilised act that had reduced the local population to virtual helpless animals. However, our national consciousness was not sufficiently stirred. Dr. Manmohan Singh rushed to Manipur, handed over the historic Kangla fort to civil authorities and the agitation was for the time being suppressed, with some minor modifications in the AFSPA. But, now the lady Iranian Nobel Laureate, by praising Ms. Irom's courage for her cause and castigating the Indian authorities for their rigidity on this issue, succeeded in lending an international touch to this purely domestic concern of India. Prime minister Manmohan Singh rushed to Imphal on the 2nd, admitted that, though the security forces were there for the safety of the common man, some of them occasionally may commit some thing improper, for which he should be punished, like any common citizen of India and that the AFSPA would be modified to meet the expectations of the people of Manipur. One is not very clear about what the PM has meant by "some modification" in this hated act. In fact, we would very much like to see this act and all similar draconian acts all over India completely repealed. Only a couple of days earlier had he hit the nail on the head, when he brushed aside the proposal of the Director, Intelligence Bureau that a harsh anti-terror law be passed. He rubbished his proposal by saying that existing laws, if properly implemented, are good enough for the purpose and that a harsher law would only alienate the common man further. In fact, what he had said about a proposed harsh law is equally true of all existing ones. The agitation that Manipur experienced after Ms. Manorama's death in custody is a convincing proof of the intense hatred the common Manipuri has for this atrocious act. What purpose will such a hated act serve in our national interest? The

humiliations connected with the searches, arrests and questionings carried out under this AFSPA regularly create bands of supporters of the alienated people keen on avenging the humiliation suffered by their kith and kins in the hands of the Indian security forces, whom they start to look upon a sort of occupation force. Security forces in such a situation only invite insecurity by further alienating the local population and by widening the gulf between themselves and the common man. In the process the essential emotional link between the people and the powers that be in the centre gets snapped and the path to a popular revolt is widened. So, sooner the expected objections of the security mandarins are brushed aside and the hated law is repealed the better it is for the people and the country. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have been suffering due to the existence of draconian laws like AFSPA, PSA and others. Their demand and that of the human rights activists have been dismissed so far.

(viii)

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2006/20061205/edit.htm#1>

The Tribune, 5 december 2006

Editorial

Go further, scrap the Armed Forces Act

PRIME MINISTER Manmohan Singh's statement that the Centre is working on amending the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act to protect human and civil rights in Manipur is most welcome. Addressing a meeting at Imphal, he said the people of Manipur were entitled to the same privileges and legal protection that those in other states enjoyed. This statement should help calm frayed nerves and convince the people about the Centre's determination to remove their sense of alienation and integrate them into the national mainstream. Equally important is his hint at amending the Act to make it "more humane". However, it is not clear which provisions of the Act the Centre would like to amend. The Justice B.P. Jeevan Reddy Committee, which was appointed a day before Dr Singh's earlier visit to Manipur in November 2004, had recommended the repeal of the Act in Manipur and elsewhere in the North-East. The committee called it "a symbol of oppression, an object of hate and an instrument of discrimination and high-handedness."

Unfortunately, the Centre is yet to make this report public, leave alone implement it, though it was submitted in June 2005. The high-powered committee has recommended the repeal of the Act but the Prime Minister has hinted at only amending it. It remains to be seen whether this would be acceptable to the people who have suffered long enough because of the flagrant abuse of the Act by the Army and the security personnel.

Undoubtedly, the Prime Minister is sincere and earnest in his commitment to restore peace in Manipur. But this should be clearly reflected in the

nature and scope of amendments that the Centre is contemplating to make the Act “more humane”. Human rights groups and women’s organisations have been demanding its repeal to stop its abuse. Significantly, Irom Sharmila, a young poet, has been on hunger strike for the past six years protesting against this draconian Act. Though the authorities have been force-feeding her through the nose, she is unrelenting in her campaign for repeal of the Act. The Centre would do well to keep the sentiments and expectations of the people in mind while working to blunt the repressive provisions of the Act.

15 ARMS SALES TO THE REGION – PLANS AND THE PLAYERS:

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2 Indian firms first beneficiaries of revamped defence policy

Times of India – Dec 23, 2006

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/NEWS/India/2_Indian_firms_first_beneficiaries_of_revamped_defence_policy/articleshow/911870.cms

o o o

Pakistan to get high-tech air defence system

The News – International – Dec 30, 2006

http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?Id=5036

o o o

Cabinet gives go-ahead for surplus arms sales

swissinfo – December 15, 2006

The Swiss government has authorised the export of war material to Saudi Arabia, India and Pakistan.

http://www.swissinfo.org/eng/top_news/detail/Cabinet_gives_go_ahead_for_surplus_arms_sales.html?siteSect=106&sid=7354886&cKey=1166262043000

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Row over BrahMos

Vladimir Radyuhin (Dec 18, 2006)

<http://www.hindu.com/2006/12/18/stories/2006121806511200.htm>

o o o

Russia offers to set up weapons service centres in India

Hindu – Dec 22, 2006

<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/001200612221966.htm>

o o o

Tehelka Dec 09 , 2006

http://www.tehelka.com/story_main23.asp?filename=Bu120906Private_sector.asp

Public-Private Partnership: Private Sector Guns For Defence

Giving defence deals to Indian firms may reduce our dependence on intermediaries and foreign countries

Shashwat Gupta Ray
Mumbai

The disintegration of the former USSR and the post-Pokhran sanctions hit India's defence modernisation programme badly, leading to an acute shortage of spare parts and upgraded versions of existing weaponry. The spate of defence scams starting from Bofors to the Scorpene submarine deal has not been helping the cause of defence acquisitions either.

To find a way out of the crisis, the Centre has ushered in phased liberalisation into the defence industry realising the synergy and linkage effects that an enhanced domestic production could bring to the industry. The policy to deregulate certain select areas of the industry is aimed at import substitution through higher domestic production for meeting domestic defence requirements. The key areas of growth identified within the industry are expected to arise from the upgradation of the production capacity, technology transfer, and modernisation of the defence infrastructure

"The defence industry is gradually liberalising and the public sector is facilitating greater private sector participation in the area of defence goods production. There are about 5,100 companies supplying around 20-25 percent of components and sub-assemblies to State-owned contractors, and the market size was estimated to be around Rs 27,900 crore in 2005, of which the Army alone accounted for Rs 15,000 crore. Of India's current defence procurement of capital items, more than 30 percent is imported; however, this is expected to change with the creation of more public-private partnerships," says Shumit Vatsal, research analyst with Frost and Sullivan in his research paper on the Indian defence market.

To facilitate the acquisitions, the Defence Budget has been increased from Rs 83,000 crore in 2005-06 to Rs 89,000 crore for 2006-07 with Rs 39,400 crore as capital allocations. As far as individual sub-allocations are concerned, the Army is entitled to Rs 41,000 crore while the Air Force and Navy are allotted Rs 25,000 crore and Rs 15,000 crore respectively.

The Centre expects its defence expenditure to exceed Rs 90,000 crore by 2008.

The defence industry in the past has been dominated by government-run public sector undertakings (PSU). This scenario has changed significantly with the ministry of defence providing licences to private companies to manufacture select aerospace and defence products.

“In 2001, the country opened up for up to 100 percent domestic private sector investments in the defence industry and allowed foreign direct investment of up to 26 percent in select areas. Some of the key non-PSU participants supplying defence equipment and services include Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Group, Kirloskar Brothers, Larsen & Toubro (L&T), Ashok Leyland, Jindal, Max Aerospace & Aviation, and Ramoss India,” says Commodore (retired) R. Balasubramaniam, president, Pipavav Shipyard.

L&T has proposed to design and construct weapons platforms, weapon launchers, small arms, anti-tank weapon systems, rockets, torpedoes and mines. Mahindra Defence Systems and Ashok Leyland Limited manufacture light armoured vehicles for both the Indian Army and for armed forces of other countries.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has a strong partnership with the domestic industrial sector for the execution of space programmes. Over 500 small, medium and large-scale enterprises work with ISRO, supplying hardware, undertaking fabrication jobs, and establishing fabrication and test facilities. The domestic industrial sector provides all raw materials and high-tech electronic items required by ISRO and has also contributed towards developing systems for launch vehicles and remote sensing and ground equipment. Around 231 technologies developed by ISRO were transferred to the domestic industrial sector for commercial use. ISRO also undertakes technical consultancy projects for industries.

According to a market research report by Sanjiv Khanna for Industry Canada, eight regiments of the Pinaka multi-barrelled rocket-launcher have cost Rs 2,812 crore; 250 Light Combat Aircraft for the Air Force have cost Rs 18,900 crore; missiles, including the Agni, BrahMos, Prithvi and tactical missiles have cost Rs 5,850 crore; radars and radio equipment have cost Rs 3,748 crore; 200 self-propelled guns being manufactured with foreign assistance would cost Rs 3,600 crore. India is seeking participation from the private sector for these projects in a bid to reduce their import component by as much as 30 percent.

“The best example of PSU-foreign-private collaborations in the defence sector is the BrahMos supersonic missile that can travel at a speed of Mach 2.8 and has a range of up to 300 km. It can be launched from various platforms — ship, land, aircraft and submarine,” says Commodore Balasubramaniam. As of today, this is the only supersonic

missile produced in the world. It is designed jointly by npom of Russia and India's Defence Research and Development Organisation. BrahMos is jointly funded by the two countries and involves inputs from 10 Russian and 20 Indian public and private sector industries, including L&T and Godrej.

Mass production of the missile has commenced and the company expects to supply India's armed forces with 1,000 missiles by 2015. BrahMos officials are cagey about revealing the cost of the missile. Defence analysts say it is roughly Rs 10 crore per missile. The BrahMos will equip all major Indian warships like the three under-construction Project 15A destroyers and project Project 17 frigates and will be retrofitted on one existing warship each year.

Godrej-PCS has been working on the development of this complex system for almost four years now. The system has more than 2,000 intricate precision components and subassemblies. L&T, whose revenue target for 2007-08 is Rs 1,000 crore from defence, aerospace and nuclear power contracts, is working towards building the major sub-assemblies for both airframe and aero-engines of the missile.

The Army too has placed a substantial order for the missiles that would be inducted into the force in 2007. The land-to-land version is designed to be mounted on a Tata vehicle produced by Bharat Earth Movers Limited and the command post has been designed by Hyderabad-based Electronic Corporation of India Limited.

It is not just hardware production that has private participation. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has announced the integrated materials management online services (IMMOLS), a nationwide systems-integration project addressing the computerisation needs of the inventory control and logistics management of the Continued from Page 25

Air Force. "Involving an investment of Rs 55 crore, TCS IMMOLS has been implemented in a distributed manner at Air Force stations to replace the current manual system for materials management," says a TCS source.

However, there are some major areas of concern. According to a US Congressional Research Service report, India's defence spending is likely to increase in the years ahead for two reasons. One, India has repeatedly stated that it will not compromise on spending for national defence. Two, for the second year running, the ministry of defence has surrendered Rs 4,500 crore earmarked for capital purchases, with major acquisitions such as those of the Advanced Jet Trainers (AJT) not being finalised.

A separate accounting head for capital equipment purchase may become the precursor for establishing a "rolling fund" over the next two-three years. This fund will allow the ministry to carry forward unused amounts allocated for equipment purchases from one financial year to the next.

Several important Indian defence projects remain at the development stage, hampered by a paucity of resources and a lack of technical know-how that requires technology transfer. These projects include the Light Combat Aircraft, Main Battle Tank, Air Defence Ship, Advance Technology Vessel and AJT.

“India’s defence exports were a moderate Rs 234 crore as compared to Rs 130 crore in 1999, Rs 180 crore in 1998 and Rs 585 crore in 1997. India aims to reach Rs 936 crore worth of defence exports per annum by the next five years,” the US report says.

Several initiatives are in place to achieve this target. India will manufacture spares for MIG-21 aircraft and service and overhaul MIG aircraft in the region. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is establishing a centre of excellence for the machining of forgings and castings. HAL has been shortlisted by Honeywell for global procurement, as have the Tata group, L&T, SKF Bearings, AT&S India and Kirloskar. Honeywell plans to source products worth Rs 1,125 crore annually from these companies.

HAL has finalised orders worth Rs 81 crore with four buyers. These include its first order for the Advanced Light Helicopter; a Rs 27-crore sub-assembly order for Sukhoi aircraft; a Rs 22-crore order for forgings and castings from Rolls-Royce; and a Rs 4.5-crore deal with Snecma of France, also for forgings and castings.

“With a greater role to play for the private companies in the defence sector’s indigenisation programme, we can certainly hope for a gradual decrease in the country’s dependence on foreign nations. We can save valuable foreign exchange and gradually eliminate middlemen who have been involved in major defence scams and thus have adversely hit the defence modernisation programme,” says N. Nigam, executive vice-president, L&T.

Agreeing with Nigam, former director general, military operations, Lieutenant General DB Shekatkar says, “Indian industry’s technical expertise is on par with global standards. We have made our own supercomputer param. Till recently our import content was 70 percent; indigenous content was 30 percent. But by 2015 we are hoping it would be opposite. If given the required design and the format, the industry undoubtedly would deliver.”

Shekatkar, who was also the additional director general, perspective planning, responsible for defence procurement and had worked closely with President APJ Abdul Kalam, who was then the scientific advisor to the defence minister, says that the industry could play a larger supportive role through partnerships with the ordnance factories and defence PSUs.

“These ordnance establishments lack the research and development (R&D) technological expertise, which the industry has. Initially the joint

venture could begin with a 60:40 ratio between the government and private industry. But as the profits grow, the share could change to equal or may be even 40:60 ratio, or even more depending upon the circumstances. Even the Kelkar Committee report has given the same recommendations,” says Shekatkar.

He however warned the defence forces from resorting to delaying tactics. According to him, the defence forces change their order specifications mid-way. Allegedly, PSUs first approve everything and suddenly backtrack.

There are also, reportedly, delays in R&D. This halts the entire manufacturing process and prevents the industry from delivering in time. Apparently, this forces the armed forces to look at foreign markets for fulfilling their requirements.

“There has to be a two-way approach. First is a firm commitment from the forces on not changing the parameters after being approved, as this procedure itself goes through a lengthy scanning. Second, the industry should deliver the goods within the scheduled time. Otherwise the entire indigenisation process would lose effect,” says Shekatkar. “The industry too should come out with its own design specifications. This will reduce the dependency on the services to provide the specifications. Hence the entire process can begin much faster by having their own design ready and start working on it as soon as it is approved. This would be much better than first waiting for the designs and then beginning the manufacturing”

A greater role in defence by Indian firms may well lessen the need for intermediaries and foreign firms, hopefully eliminating potential scams. But, this will be possible only if the process isn't derailed by bureaucratic tangles.

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Late import of de-mining vehicles flayed

Special Correspondent, The Hindu – Dec 13, 2006

NEW DELHI: A Parliamentary panel has slammed the “fast track” import of de-mining vehicles that arrived well after the requirement was over. As a result, the vehicles were used for removing just under one per cent of the nearly 10-lakh mines laid during Operation Parakaram, the year-long standoff between India and Pakistan in 2002.

[. . .]

<http://www.hindu.com/2006/12/13/stories/2006121301831500.htm>

India seeks Israeli help for surveillance system

Times of India, November 26, 2006

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Delayed_Divya_Drishti_seeks_Israeli_help_for_surveillance/articleshow/580526.cms

Submarine construction to resume at Mazagon Docks

Josy Joseph (Daily News and Analysis India – December 04, 2006)

<http://www.dnaindia.com/report.asp?NewsID=1067816>

Defence Ministry set to sign offset agreements

Elta of Israel agrees to meet the conditions

U.S. firms do not want it to be limited to military side

Sandeep Dikshit (The Hindu – 12 December 2006)

<http://www.hindu.com/2006/12/12/stories/2006121202101400.htm>

India largest buyer of Israeli arms

Economic Times, December 3, 2006

http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/News/PoliticsNation/India_largest_buyer_of_Israeli_arms/articleshow/1028291.cms

Pakistan to get advanced F16s from US

Daily Times

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2006%5C12%5C13%5Cs_tory_13-12-2006_pg7_17

Out of Rs 833-cr deal, Israel's Elta to invest 250 cr in India

Posted online: Thursday, December 21, 2006

<http://www.indianexpress.com/story/19033.html>

India's voracious appetite for arms

by Siddharth Srivastava (Jan 5, 2007)

http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/IA05Df05.html

Army plans for T-90s in jeopardy

NDTV.com, India – Dec 20, 2006

<http://www.ndtv.com/morenews/showmorestory.asp?category=National&slug=Army+plans+for+T-90s+in+jeopardy&id=98244>

India sets up intelligence task force

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2006%5C12%5C07%5Cs_tory_7-12-2006_pg7_33

IB: Need to raise special forces

Times of India – Dec 10, 2006

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/IB_Need_to_raise_special_forces/articleshow/763498.cms

India's defence imports to touch \$35 bn by 2026: Antony

<http://www.indiaprwire.com/businessnews/20070108/12978.htm>

16 MILITARISATION AND CIVIL SOCIETY:

Pakistan's Silenced Press

By Bob Dietz

Committee to Protect Journalists

January 8, 2007

The Wall Street Journal Asia

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To see the edition in which this article appeared, click here

<http://awsj.com.hk/factiva-ns>

As the Taliban embed themselves deeper into Pakistan's restive provinces along the border with Afghanistan, journalists covering the region are coming under attack and driven away from a story with global consequences for the U.S.-led coalition fighting militant Islamists.

On December 19 in Quetta, Baluchistan, New York Times reporter Carlotta Gall and her Pakistani photographer Akhtar Soomro were assaulted and harassed. Ms. Gall and Mr. Soomro were in Quetta seeking interviews with Taliban foot soldiers fighting in Afghanistan. The Taliban uses the province and its capital as a staging area for their attacks over the border. Ms. Gall says her attackers claimed they were from the government's Special Branch but did not show identification as they forced their way into her hotel room and assaulted her. Mr. Soomro, who they assaulted before Ms. Gall, has yet to identify his assailants. Instead, he returned home to Karachi and has not spoken publicly about the events.

While attacks on Western journalists are uncommon in Pakistan, the attack on the Times team is typical of what has been happening

increasingly to Pakistani journalists. Virtually all the incidents have gone unexplained and apparently uninvestigated by the government.

Many Pakistani journalists are intimidated and reluctant to speak publicly about their attackers. But the few incidents that have been made public follow a similar pattern.

Mehruddin Mari, a correspondent for the Sindhi-language newspaper the Daily Kawish in Sindh province was grabbed by police and held for four months. The government refused to comment on the case during and after his detention. Mari told the British Broadcasting Company that he was interrogated, beaten, and subjected to electric shocks in an attempt to make him confess ties to the Baluch nationalist movement—a regional militia that has waged a protracted conflict with Islamabad.

A three-person delegation from the Committee to Protect Journalists, or CPJ, met with dozens of journalists in Islamabad and Peshawar last July and heard numerous complaints of government abuse. CPJ met with government officials after the high-profile slaying of tribal journalist Hayatullah Khan in June. Khan had embarrassed the government with pictures of the apparent remnants of a Hellfire missile that killed a senior al Qaeda commander, Abu Hamza Rabia, in North Waziristan, along the Afghan border. Khan's pictures contradicted the government's claim that the explosion came from a bomb in the house, rather than a missile fired by U.S. forces at a target in Pakistani territory.

Hayatullah Khan was the eighth journalist to be killed in Pakistan since the murder of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl in 2002, according to CPJ research. The Pearl case has been the only case investigated competently and reported. Pakistani journalists deserve the same attention. Government officials promised to make public all information they had on our lengthy list of unexplained cases. Now, almost six months later, they still have no explanations.

Talk to officials in Pervez Musharraf's government and you will hear how the media are freer now than they have ever been. And while there has been an explosion of television and radio stations in a country with an already well-established print tradition, a pattern of brutal attacks is silencing those journalists who pursue stories that make the government uncomfortable.

As Mr. Musharraf's government balances its precarious domestic political position and its fight against militant Islam, it is Pakistan's journalists who are increasingly terrorized. Today, many Pakistani journalists fear their government's intelligence agencies more than any Islamic militant.

(Mr. Dietz is the Asia program director for the Committee to Protect Journalists.)

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RIGHTS–PAKISTAN: Reporting the Truth Can be Fatal

Inter Press Service – Dec 1, 2006

<http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=35679>

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Daily Times

January 14, 2007

POSTCARD USA: Pakistan's intelligence monster

By Khalid Hasan

While there has been an explosion of television and radio stations in a country with an already well-established print tradition, a pattern of brutal attacks is silencing those journalists who pursue stories that make the government uncomfortable

The roughing up of New York Times reporter Carlotta Gall by intelligence hoods in her Quetta hotel room on 19 December and the despicable treatment given her photographer has brought shame to Pakistan. I have been speaking to the Committee to Protect Journalists in New York as to what response their protest to the interior minister Aftab Sherpao has received. As of Friday 12 January, CPJ had heard nothing and was not expecting to hear anything either. That sums up the gangsterland that parts of Pakistan have become.

The intelligence establishment in Pakistan is now a government within a government, a dread entity that has gone rogue, that recognises no law, respects no rules, is bound by no code of conduct and brings the people of Pakistan, in whose name it acts, nothing but disgrace. In the last sixty years there has been only one attempt to look into the state of the intelligence establishment in Pakistan and to see how it could be reformed. Strangely enough, this exercise was ordered by Gen. Yahya Khan, though nothing came of it. Both that committee and the government that had appointed it were overtaken by the cataclysmic events that reached their blood-soaked climax with the breakup of Pakistan in December 1971.

For the last six and a half years, Pakistan has been under a military government and under military governments, not only intelligence agencies but all public servants are known to throw accountability to the winds. Military governments are by their very nature unaccountable since

they dance around the commands of a single individual. The question is where will reform start and how? So corrupted and power-drunk have, what the Urdu press calls 'sensitive institutions', become that they will have to be dismantled as they exist and rebuilt in accordance with law and a code of conduct.

Carlotta Gall is the daughter of Sandy Gall, a British television reporter who was in and out of Pakistan during the Afghan war and though he is now retired, there are many in Pakistan who know him as a friend. What happened to her is shameful in the extreme. CPJ told me that her great concern is not for herself but for Akhtar Soomro, the Pakistani photographer, who was handled with great brutality and who remains in fear of the hoodlums who beat him up and dealt with him as if he were a common criminal. In a letter Ms Gall sent out to Aftab Sherpao and some others, including CPJ, she detailed her ordeal in dispassionate language.

She wrote, "At 9.43 pm (on 19 December), I was speaking on the telephone when men broke open the door of my room and four men entered the room and began to seize my belongings. One snatched my handbag and when I tried to take it back, a second man punched me twice in the side of the face and head with his fist. I fell backwards onto a coffee table smashing the crockery. I have heavy bruising on my arms, on my temple and my cheekbone and swelling on my left eye and a sprained knee. The men searched my belongings, took my three notebooks, my laptop, my satellite telephone, two cell phones (although they gave one back when it rang) and several other papers and items. They were extremely aggressive and abusive. The leader, who spoke English, refused to show any ID, said I was in Quetta without permission (she wasn't), that I had visited Pashtunabad, a part of the town, which he said was not permitted, and that I had been interviewing the Taliban."

They also told her that Akhtar Soomro was a Pakistani and they could do to him what they wished. In other countries, being a citizen has advantages: in Pakistan it seems to be becoming a liability.

Tariq Azim is emerging as the government's 'damage control guy' because by midnight that day, he had managed to have Ms Gall's belongings returned and her colleague released and his equipment restored to him. While on the one hand, the government has made no statement, those who roughed up the two journalists were obviously government agents, otherwise how would Tariq Azim have managed to get done what he got done?

CPJ's Asia programme director Bob Dietz told me that the attack on Ms Gall and her colleague is typical of what has been happening increasingly

to Pakistani journalists. Virtually all the incidents have gone unexplained and apparently un-investigated by the government. This week, he wrote in the Wall Street Journal, “Many Pakistani journalists are intimidated and reluctant to speak publicly about their attackers. But the few incidents that have been made public follow a similar pattern.”

Dietz cited several cases that should make us hang our heads in shame. There is

Mehruddin Mari, a Sindhi journalist who was held illegally for four months with the government saying it knew nothing about it. The killing of Hayatullah Khan in NWFP remains unexplained, but everyone knows who his killers were. He was the eighth journalist to be killed in Pakistan since the murder of WSJ reporter Daniel Pearl in 2002.

When a CPJ delegation visited Pakistan last year, government officials promised to make public all information they had on CPJ’s lengthy list of unexplained cases. “Now, almost six months later, they still have no explanations,” Dietz wrote. He added, “Talk to officials in Pervez Musharraf’s government and you will hear how the media are freer now than they have ever been. And while there has been an explosion of television and radio stations in a country with an already well-established print tradition, a pattern of brutal attacks is silencing those journalists who pursue stories that make the government uncomfortable. Today, many Pakistani journalists fear their government’s intelligence agencies more than any Islamic militant.”

I should close this with the reminder that you are reading this in a newspaper whose editor Najam Sethi was abducted from his home, beaten up, kept in solitary confinement and physically and psychologically traumatised, though not by this government, but it could well have been this as that government. The fact is that as long as the intelligence establishment in Pakistan is not dismantled and rebuilt, what happened to Najam Sethi and Hayatullah and Mehruddin will happen again and again and again.

Khalid Hasan is Daily Times’ US-based correspondent.

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The Telegraph – December 05, 2006

PLAYING COPS AND REPORTERS

Nivedita Menon wonders what happens to police procedures and media reportage when nothing less than national security is at stake The author is reader in political science, Delhi University

Get the real picture

Here's an amusing little story. According to reports in a leading daily (August 26 and September 4), Hoshangabad police charged a couple with the murder of their twelve-year-old son. Their son was indeed missing, and a body was found near the railway track. The parents confessed to the crime, and spent over 45 days in jail. Six months after his murder, young Gabbar turned up in town. He had fallen asleep while selling peanuts on trains, and woke up in Jalgaon. There he was put into a correctional institution, and later, sent to Bhopal. Finally, he managed to convince someone to send him back home. Present in court, he listened to the government pleader arguing that the parents had confessed to the murder, so he could not be Gabbar; that the body found near the railway track was not that of Kallu alias Tufan, as claimed; and that neighbours had identified the dead body as that of Gabbar. The neighbours, meanwhile, told the reporter that they had never identified the dead body as his, and that this boy was indeed Gabbar. "We know him since he was born," said one of them simply, "how could we make such a mistake?"

As for the parents who confessed to the murder of a son who was alive — "They broke three of my fingers with sticks," said the father. The parents were tortured in custody for a night and made to sign a confessional statement the next morning.

A routine investigation in a poor neighbourhood, of a small boy's murder. Nothing at stake in it for the police but that of showing a solved case. And police pursuit of this mundane, low-profile incident involved torture, a forced false confession and falsified evidence (neighbours' supposed identification of the dead body). It further involved, in the face of incontrovertible evidence of the boy being alive, reiterations in court of the police version under oath, urging the court instead to prosecute Gabbar's family for producing another person as Gabbar.

Would this blatant miscarriage of justice have been reported in the media if the parents had been arrested on a different sort of charge? If Gabbar himself had not turned up alive? What if Gabbar had been killed in an encounter? So the amusing little story metamorphoses into a nightmarish question: what happens to police procedures and media reportage when nothing less than national security is at stake?

Last month, a woman widely known in academic and activist circles in Delhi — Sunita of Daanish Books, a small alternative publisher — was detained by the police in Chandrapur, where she had set up a book exhibition at an annual festival celebrating B.R. Ambedkar's conversion.

Books from her stall were seized, and she was interrogated for several hours over two days. She was able to contact friends and family in Delhi, and when concerned phone calls and faxes started pouring in, the police claimed that they had "clinching evidence" (a phrase they repeatedly

used) that this Sunita was a Maoist activist from Jehanabad, where her Maoist husband had been killed some years ago in an encounter. During her interrogation, the official insisted that she admit she was from Jehanabad, despite her assertion that she is from Bhagalpur, and that she had never lost a husband to police bullets. A policeman told her confidently at one point, “Hum saabit kar ke rahenge ki aap vohi Sunita hain, Jehanabad ki (We will prove that you are the Sunita from Jehanabad).” Reports in local Hindi newspapers published the police version without any further comment or corroboration.

Let me pass quickly over the alarming fact that the books that were “seized” as threatening to national security were books by and on Marx, Lenin, Mao, Clara Zetkin and Bhagat Singh. That during interrogation Sunita was asked, “Why do you sell books on Bhagat Singh? The British have left, haven’t they?” That other questions included demands that she explain why she does not use a surname and why she wears a bindi when her husband is dead (the one killed in Jehanabad, remember?) We will pass over these questions only because the one that concerns me here is this. Sunita is a well-known figure among people who can make a noise in high places, and so the police attempt to manipulate her identity failed. What of all the others?

In September, three letter-bombs went off hours before the president visited Kerala. Immediately, several Muslim youths were arrested and kept in police custody for weeks, being interrogated to reveal their links with Islamic organizations. But as investigations continued, the culprit turned out to be a Hindu man with personal grudges to settle. The slick website of the Thiruvananthapuram city police announced the closing of the case with the information that the accused was a “meek character with a scientific temperament, using an innovative method to intimidate his enemies.” In psychoanalytic mode, the police statement adds: “The accused always aspired for peer respect as an innovator. The mail bombs seemed to be a ‘deviant expression’ of the desire to seek revenge and prove oneself at the same time.”

So, not a word about the wrongly detained and most probably tortured Muslims, and a veritable certificate of merit for the Hindu culprit. Maybe they should induct him into the police force so that he can redirect his lack of self-esteem and scientific temperament more fruitfully — in hunting down the real anti-national elements.

Like, for example, Mohammad Afzal? All those members of India’s democratic public, filling the coffers of mobile phone companies by SMS-ing TV channels that Afzal should hang — what is the basis of their informed decision?

The media, of course, pliantly reproduce police hand-outs as news. The police say they have arrested two Pakistani nationals, and Pakistani

nationals they become for ever after, in newspapers and on TV screens, with not a single “alleged”, “claimed”, and after the first time (and sometimes not even then), “according to police reports”. Even in stories that use the last phrase, the total lack of analysis and commentary makes them news items rather than reports of police briefings. A recent story in a national daily reported in alarmist style that senior police officers informed the paper on the basis of intelligence tip-offs that Maoists have “launched a campaign” across Jharkand, Bihar and Chhatisgarh — a campaign to do what? Exterminate the class enemy? Blow up police stations? Turns out the “extremists”, as the police call them, have a sinister plan to concentrate on local weekly markets and perform plays and sing songs in local dialects! Further, taking advantage of the villagers’ newly acquired literacy, the police said disapprovingly, they sell books on and by communist thinkers, some of which have been vigilantly seized. So there they are, the Maoist extremists, singing and performing in public places, and selling widely available books at local markets — you need “intelligence tip-offs” to know this? And why does the reporter not have an intelligence tip-off from his own intelligence, to add one single word more than what the police gave him? This story carried a by-line, mind you.

Of course, not always do the media simply report police briefings as news. Sometimes, they are proactive. A new Hindi TV channel last week indignantly reported that dangerous leftist literature is freely available in the cultural festivals that are a tradition in Punjab. Having spoken to the person handling one such stall — who acknowledged that they do use these occasions to propagate their political ideology — the channel then interviewed the SSP of police. What was the police doing about this blatant availability of books and CDs that incite people against the state? The SSP assured the reporter that he would act immediately.

People of India, I give you the media — democracy is safe in their hands.

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Why Army wants to be exempted from RTI

Shiv Aroor (Indian Express – January 10, 2007)

<http://www.indianexpress.com/story/20546.html>

War of Memory – dead or alive

Even 35 years after the India–Pakistan war ended on December 17, 1971, the families of 54 soldiers who were declared ‘missing in action’ do not know the fate of their kin. Simmi Waraich reports on the trials and trauma of the affected families.

(The Tribune – December 17, 2006)

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The Telegraph – 2 January 2006
Editorial

ARMY IN SHAME

One of the cardinal principles of any democracy is the subordination of the army to civilian rule. The symbolic manifestation of this principle is the salute that the military gives to the president of India on Republic Day. It is this subordination of the entire military machine that distinguishes the Indian polity and the Indian army from the dictatorship in Pakistan. A group of soldiers led by a senior officer of the army violated this fundamental principle of democracy on New Year's Eve in Calcutta. Two officers of the army in mufti were apprehended because they were misbehaving with women during festivities in a hotel on Park Street. After their arrest, soldiers appeared in full uniform and armed with sophisticated weapons at the Park Street police station and proceeded to ransack it and beat up policemen. They opened the lock-up cell to free the two officers who had been arrested. In short, armymen took the law into their own hands in a classic show of gamekeepers turning into poachers. The officers who misbehaved and those of their colleagues who perpetrated the violence have brought disgrace to the Indian army. Some of the guilty may have been officers, but they were certainly not gentlemen. The last day of 2006 has turned out to be a day of great shame for Indian democracy and for the Indian army.

At an overall policy level, it is true that the Indian army has maintained its subordination to civilian rule. But at the level of the everyday, there have been many instances when members of the armed forces have behaved as if they are above the law, and in a manner that suggests that they see themselves to be beyond the norms of civilized behaviour. Sunday's incident on Park Street is a grotesque example of this appalling trend. If such a gross violation can actually occur in the heart of Calcutta on a festival night, there is good cause to fear what the army can do when it is actually conducting operations in areas like Manipur or Jammu and Kashmir. The authorities, civilian and military, should take a stern view of such violations. Some armymen have disgraced their uniform. The least that can be done is to strip them of their uniforms and to court-martial them. The punishment meted out should be exemplary, with no attempt to cover up the seriousness of the offence. Soldiers and officers should be instructed about where they stand and how they should behave, whatever be the provocation. The Indian army is an army in a democracy, not in a tinpot dictatorship.

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The Hindu – January 03, 2007

Editorials

When army men run riot

It is a matter of grave concern when the members of the Army — a force invested with the principal responsibilities of safeguarding the territorial integrity of the nation from external aggression and assisting the civil administration in providing internal security — take the law into their own hands. The army men who forced their way at gunpoint into a Kolkata police station in order to free two officers arrested on charges of molestation and disorderly behaviour have badly damaged the image of the force. What is particularly shocking is that this rampaging group of eleven — which assaulted policemen, damaged furniture, and freed civilians in the same lock-up — was led by three officers. It is imperative that the inquiry instituted by the Army into this violent and unruly act is completed quickly and that those found guilty are strictly punished. The Kolkata police would have done well to inform those at the helm of the Eastern Command about the incident soon after the two Army officers were apprehended — under the law, it is the Army that has the jurisdiction to inquire into any criminal charge against its personnel with the exception of very grave ones such as rape and murder. But it is important to underline that the germane issue here is not about procedure. It is about a rogue group of army men that breached the law by behaving in an outrageous manner.

This is not the first instance of brutality by army personnel in civilian environment. Early last year, a group of jawans from the Rajputana Rifles threw six passengers out of a speeding train in Uttar Pradesh, killing five of them instantly. The provocation for this savagery was a trifling dispute over whether the compartment they were travelling in was reserved for armed forces personnel. The armed forces, by the very nature of their responsibilities, wield an extraordinary amount of power. The most effective way of checking the misuse of this power is to ensure that firm action is taken whenever there is an infraction. Any successful democracy is founded on the legal and civilian control of the armed forces. It would be dangerous if even a small group within the armed forces goes out of control and takes on the police or other civil authority. The armed forces have a strict code of discipline, but much more has to be done in sensitising individual army men to the need for proper conduct and interaction with outsiders. The regrettable incident in Kolkata is bound to have dented public confidence in the Army. It is now up to the Army to demonstrate its commitment to the rule of law by taking firm and speedy action against the errant group of automatic weapon brandishing army men that beat up policemen and vandalised the police station in Kolkata.

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rediff.com – January 02, 2007

<http://www.rediff.com/news/2007/jan/02kumbh1.htm>

‘Terrorist spotters’ deployed in Kumbh

Sharat Pradhan in Allahabad

A special team of ‘terrorist spotters’ drawn from a dozen militancy affected Indian states has spread out in the sprawling 4,000-acre Kumbh Mela area to keep a round the clock vigil against a possible militant strike in or around the largest human congregation in Allahabad.

Specially trained in the skill of spotting terrorists, these sleuths will keep an eye for “suspicious” characters.

While he declined to give out details of their deployment, Mela Police Chief Rajeev Sabharwal made it quite explicit that the security personnel were fully geared to tackle any contingency.

While denying any direct terrorist threat to the mela, he said, “Yes we have sounded a general alert. After all with millions landing here over the coming days in what is the single largest gathering of people on this earth, we cannot take any chances, and we are taking every possible measure against any possible terrorist strike.”

“As many as 10,000–11,000 policemen will remain on round the clock vigil all over the vast 4,000-acre spread to ensure safety and security of the mammoth gathering. We have also created a special task force of men without uniform,” he added.

The large police force includes about 3,000 heavily equipped men drawn from India’s ace paramilitary organisations—Border Security Force and Central Reserve Police Force.

Meanwhile, heavy infrastructure has been put in place to handle routine crime and law and order.

As many as 25 police stations and 25 police outposts have been set up. “We have also created five special camps for ‘lost and found’ persons,” Sabharwal added.

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17 India Pakistan: Communal and Sectarian Violence

(i)

aiindex – 15 December 2006

Re-investigate Malegaon Bomb Blasts

by Subhash Gatade

http://membres.lycos.fr/sacw/article.php3?id_article=40

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(ii)

Daily Times January 04, 2007

EDITORIAL: Dangerous phase of sectarianism

According to our security agencies, three incidents of terrorism in Karachi in 2006 — the blast at the US Consulate, the Nishtar Park massacre and the murder of Allama Hasan Turabi — were all carried out by the sectarian militia Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and were planned in South Waziristan under the tutelage of Al Qaeda. The new combination is Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Wana and Al Qaeda. One can also say that Lashkar-e-Jhangvi is the blanket term now used for all manner of jihad in which all the Deobandi-Ahle Hadith militants have made common cause.

We also know that all three incidents were staged through the device of suicide-bombings. This is clearly the Arab signature in the violence spreading in Pakistan. The same signature was appended to the attempts made on the lives of President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz earlier. Therefore one of the lessons that those who object to the hanging of Saddam Hussein on the day of Hajj should remember is that sectarianism is blind to such considerations: the Nishtar Park massacre in which scores of Bareilvi leaders died took place on Eid Miladun Nabi!

All three incidents have been traced to Wana by the investigators: one ostensibly committed for Al Qaeda and two for the local sectarians. The bombing jacket of the boy who killed Allama Turabi was made in Darra Adam Khel at the behest of Al Qaeda, now spearheaded by Abdullah Mehsud who was released by the Americans from Guantanamo Bay in 2003. He returned to Pakistan and took his first revenge for the death of his mentor Mufti Jamil at the Banuri Mosque by abducting two Chinese engineers in the Tribal Areas, one of whom was killed during the rescue operation.

The Lashkar-e-Jhangvi has finally moved to centre stage. Past news of its demise after the capture of Akram Lahori were, it seems, highly exaggerated. In fact now the entire conglomerate of jihadi militias has accepted a common sectarian banner, and this has come in the wake of

Al Qaeda's own transformation from an intellectually fashioned anti-American organisation into an intra-Islamic exterminator of the Shia. This has been done through the mental somersault of equating the Shia — the government in Iraq plus, strangely, Iran — as allies of the United States!

To understand what is going on we have to go back to the late 1980s when Al Qaeda was formed in Peshawar in the midst of a gathering sectarian storm in Pakistan. Because this wave was orchestrated by Saudi Arabia, Al Qaeda tried to keep away from it. But later, starting with the return of Osama Bin Laden and other Al Qaeda elements to Jalalabad from Sudan after 1996, Al Qaeda had to accept a kind of coexistence with the sectarian militias which were taking training in its camps. That is why whenever Pakistan demanded the return of the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi killers from the 'friendly' Taliban government, a deaf ear was turned to it, and the Lashkar terrorists continued to live in Al Qaeda camps outside Kabul.

There were times when Al Qaeda was actually helped by Iran, especially during the tenure of Abu Musab Zarqawi as head of a training camp in Herat from where he infiltrated into Kurdistan through Iranian territory. After 2003, however, there was a cleavage of opinion inside Al Qaeda. Mr Zarqawi spearheaded the new trend of viewing the Shia of Iraq — and Iran itself — as the beneficiaries of the American invasion. At first Mr Al Zawahiri resisted this trend and Al Qaeda officially advised him in Iraq to stay away from Shia-killing, but later the prospect of a grand Sunni Arab consensus against Iran became irresistible and Mr Zarqawi was hailed as a martyr when he finally died in Iraq.

Now Lashkar-e-Jhangvi is supposed to have planned a fresh targeting of the Shia community in the cities where they are found in large numbers: Lahore, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Multan, Khanewal, Layya, Bhakkar, Jhang, Sargodha, Rahimyar Khan, Karachi, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Kohat, Parachinar, Hangu, Hyderabad, Nawabshah, Mirpur Khas and Quetta. This is certainly a new challenge for the government in charge of facing up to sectarian violence in the country. Both the mainstream parties — the PPP and the PMLN — faced it when they were in government but failed because of the exclusive handling of jihad by the intelligence agencies. Today all parties must stand united to reject what is coming.

Above all, it is the MMA which has to look deep into its conscience and separate the biggest curse of religion, sectarianism, from the Taliban-style governance it supports. The alliance has lost many of its leaders to this curse without taking any effective action against some of its own members. It must not exploit the new situation by pinning the blame on the current government alone. If the opposition takes some sneaking pleasure in the rise of sectarianism in Pakistan as an instrumentality of

removal of government, it will live to regret it. Pakistan is a large Muslim state with Shias that outnumber the Shias of Iraq. Its population has never been sectarian but is now gradually succumbing to the fear of violence.

All politicians must come together to save the next generation of Pakistanis from the new orientation spreading in the Muslim world. Already, in some of the cities — like Gilgit, Parachinar, Bannu, etc — a kind of sectarian war among the people seems to have started. It must not spread further. So far the venting of anger has been targeted and not general. But the very foundation of a state founded by a Shia leader — the Quaid — is now at risk. Once they throw down roots these budding ethnic and sectarian conflicts never go away. And the states that allow them to become embedded are then faced by their own annihilation. We must learn this lesson before such a fate befalls us. *