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## FROM NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TO COUNTER PROLIFERATION: THE SHIFTING PARADIGMS OF US ANTI- PROLIFERATION POLICIES

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### Preamble

In recent years, there has been a visible shift in the approach to deal with the growing threat of proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their associated technologies. The anti-proliferation policies of major international power centres, namely the United States and the European Union, have undergone substantive and far-reaching changes. The direction of current and future US policies can be clearly discerned from some key policy documents, such as the Nuclear Posture Review, the National Security Strategy, Strategy to Counter the WMD Threat and the Proliferation Security Initiative. The distaste of the Bush Administration for multilateral approaches and its preference for unilateralist actions, including the pre-emptive use of military force, is also well known. The European Union has laid down a set of principles and a plan of action, to achieve the anti-proliferation objectives. The EU approach is not very different from the US approach in so far as the goals and the means of achieving these are concerned. It does not rule out the use of force, as in the EU strategy, it is a low priority instrument and would only be used as a last resort.

As a result of these policies, multilateral negotiating fora, such as the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva have been rendered ineffective and dormant, while the focus has been shifted to the United Nations Security Council which was subjected to ridicule and sidelined in the run up to the Iraq War. UNSC is obviously not the ideal forum for finding solutions to the non-proliferation related problems because of its un-equitable structure with the veto wielding P-5 and limited representation of non-permanent members. The UNSC Resolution 1540,<sup>1</sup> adopted in April 2004 under Chapter-VII of the UN Charter, obligates all member States to implement certain legislative and administrative measures to strengthen their national export controls, which will hopefully contribute towards the international efforts to curb the menace of proliferation. However, as of now the international security environment is passing through a turbulent phase, the existing non-proliferation regime is

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004), S/RES/1540 (2004).

under severe stresses and strains and the newer and more complex problems are emerging with every passing day.

The term 'counter-proliferation' has been frequently used in the print and the electronic media, and heard during discussions at public fora in the past few years but not many people are clear about either its origins or its far reaching implications. An effort, therefore, is being made here to trace the origins of the concept, highlight its various elements, practical application of the policy and briefly analyse its implications for the international security in general and for South Asian security in particular.

### **The Origin of Counter-Proliferation Policy and its Elements**

The current Bush Administration is credited with the employment of counter-proliferation as the primary tool for the advancement of its anti-proliferation goals and perhaps for conceiving this apparently aggressive approach. The fact, however, is that it has evolved through three successive US Administrations. It originally started as a response to the inadequacies of the existing non-proliferation regime highlighted as a result of the 1991 war against Iraq. During the war Iraq itself was effectively deterred from using its chemical and biological weapons but the fact that it had the potential to use these WMDs against the US and allied forces, raised the spectre of any other hostile country using such weapons in a future war contingency. This appraisal of the security environment led the US Department of Defence to conceive the counter proliferation initiative. As would be expected of a DOD led initiative, the salience was on the use of the military instrument. The purpose behind the new idea was that in the event of the failure of non-proliferation the Department will have to develop requisite military means to defeat the proliferation threats. Initially, the official thinking was based on pre-emptive strikes against budding WMD and missile programmes, emulating the Israeli operation against Osirak reactor in Iraq in 1981. However, in the face of criticism against such an approach, the objectives of the Initiative were scaled down to deterring strikes with WMDs against the US and allied forces and mitigation of damage in case such weapons were used.<sup>2</sup> Shortly before the launching of 'Operation Desert Shield', US Defence Secretary Cheney had established a 'Directorate of Proliferation Countermeasures' but it had modest goals and was primarily aimed at devising ways and means to protect the US and allied expeditionary forces against the growing threat of Third World ballistic missiles in the late 1990s.<sup>3</sup>

Counter-proliferation Initiative was itself unveiled by Clinton's Secretary of Defence, Les Aspin, on 7 of December 1993 before an audience

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<sup>2</sup> Henry D. Sokolski, *Best of Intentions, America's Campaign Against Strategic Weapons Proliferation*, (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2001), pp. 6-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.88.

at the National Academy of Sciences, with the stated purpose of developing policies needed to ‘prevent proliferation, roll it back where possible and to ensure our forces are prepared to defeat challengers armed with weapons of mass destruction.....’<sup>4</sup> Military services were asked to develop requisite military capabilities for the execution of the Initiative. However, some segments of military were uncomfortable with the ‘pre-emptive war’ undertones of the counter-proliferation initiative due to its serious legal, moral and operational repercussions and the practical difficulties involved in the acquisition and effective destruction of the intended targets. Military services were not alone in their concern, the arms control community was also worried about the actual significance of the pre-emptive war aspect of the initiative, the true extent of which was not discernible in public pronouncements. The non-proliferationists were also concerned about the declining salience of arms control as a policy objective but also due to the fact that the pursuit of the initiative will actually provide a more justifiable rationale for the targeted countries to pursue nuclear weapons programmes. The possibility that the initiative might employ the preventive war also generated a heated debate.<sup>5</sup>

Analysts such as David Fischer, believed that the two fundamental premises on which the rationale for counter-proliferation was mainly based were firstly, the end of the Cold War which had unhinged the bipolar international security environment and the assessment that proliferation of WMDs has assumed such serious proportions that it cannot be successfully addressed without a recourse to the use of force.<sup>6</sup> While others such as Lewis Dunn acknowledged the need to move beyond the traditional non-proliferation approaches but cautioned about the technical complexities and operational difficulties that will be confronted in their application. Dunn, therefore, suggested that the traditional tools such as export controls should not be abandoned but supplemented with new non-traditional measures.<sup>7</sup> Amongst the non-traditional measures suggested by him were encouragement

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<sup>4</sup> Mitchel B. Wallerstein, “Concept to Capabilities: The First Year of Counter-proliferation”, in ‘Stuart E. Johnson and William H. Lewis (eds), *Weapons of Mass Destruction: New Perspectives on Counter-proliferation*, (Washington, DC, National Defence University Press., 1995), pp. 17-18 & Sokolski, op. cit., pp. 88-9.

<sup>5</sup> Sokolski, op. cit., pp. 90-93.

<sup>6</sup> David Fischer, “Forcible Counter-proliferation: Necessary/ Feasible?”, in Mitchell Reiss & Harald Muller eds., ‘International Perspectives on Counter-proliferation’, *Working Paper No. 99*; (Washington, DC., Woodrow Wilson Centre, January 1995), p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Lewis A. Dunn “Proliferation Prevention: Beyond Traditionalism”, in Stuart E. Johnson & William H. Lewis (eds), *Weapons of Mass Destruction: New Perspectives on Counter-proliferation*, (Washington, DC., National Defence University Press., 1995), p. 27.

of regional restraint, presumption of Security Council action against non-compliance and contingency planning for possible military action.<sup>8</sup>

In reality, the US policy in the post Cold War uni-polar world was to perpetuate its pre-eminent position as the most powerful nation in the world and viewed any possibility, even the remotest one, of a Third World country acquiring a semblance of WMDs and requisite delivery means as a direct challenge to its primacy, especially if such a country belonged to a group of countries which were variously described as 'rogue States', 'countries of concern' or 'axis of evil'. The reason was simple enough to understand since weaker countries armed with WMDs and ballistic or cruise missile could seriously interfere with the ability of the lone super power to intervene in regional conflicts by threatening it with asymmetrical warfare. In case of Iraq and Iran, the additional consideration is the Israeli security concerns. In case of North Korea, it was not the fear that North Korea could directly threaten the US mainland but fear of undesirable responses to North Korea's nuclearisation by Japan and South Korea in case these two allies decide to go nuclear in turn.

### **Difficulties in the Execution of the Policy**

There are serious practical difficulties in the implementation of the policy as is evident from its track record over the past decade and a half. In case of war Iraq in the early 1990s, the war was not intended as a counter proliferation action but was aimed at restoring the sovereignty of Kuwait by vacating Iraqi military occupation of that country. After the war it was left to the UN inspectors under the UNSCOM mandate to systematically dismantle Iraqi WMDs. These efforts were augmented by UN mandated sanctions against that country. From that point of view, the anti-proliferation effort against Iraq could be characterised as 'strengthened non-proliferation'. The second major challenge confronted by the proponents of the new policy was in 1994 when a nuclear crisis erupted on the Korean Peninsula. However, the Clinton Administration ultimately settled for a negotiated deal, though the threat of use of force was always kept in the background. It is therefore, not easy to describe this event as a non-proliferation effort or counter-proliferation wherein only threat of use of force was employed. In reality, since the force was not used, it is impossible to gauge the impact of the potential use of force by the US in influencing the North Korean decision-makers. Even otherwise, the distinction between the two concepts in most cases would be blurred. There is also no clear-cut sequence in which various actions would be taken. For instance, it is not necessary that all non-proliferation tools would be exhausted before moving on to counter-proliferation measures. The two

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 31.

actions may commence simultaneously or counter-proliferation may be employed without waiting for the non-proliferation efforts to be exhausted.<sup>9</sup>

Then there is the question with regard to the timing of a counter-proliferation action. The only possibility of a successful action is apparently well before the targeted nation has actually acquired or is close to acquiring a WMD capability as was the case with Israeli attack in 1981 against the Osirak reactor in Iraq.<sup>10</sup> The Israelis are in fact advocating a similar strike against Iranian nuclear facilities while it is still estimated to be some years away from a nuclear weapons capability. There is, therefore, a strong possibility of an Israeli, American or a joint Israeli-American strike against Iran's nuclear facilities within this year or in 2008. Nevertheless, any such action would basically be speculative and would boil down to the perceptions of the enforcers. In case the assessment of the threat is mistaken it could seriously backfire as has been evident in the case of US attack against Iraq in 2003 ostensibly to neutralise its alleged WMD programme. The costs of a botched strike will again be very serious since it would not only harden the resolve of the suspected proliferators along with the possibility of a catastrophic retaliation. It is, however, understandable that the chances of a successful counter-proliferation would recede and costs would mount as the suspected proliferator nears the achievement of a usable nuclear capability. That may well explain the reason for lack of any consideration of a counter proliferation operation against North Korea now that it has already demonstrated its nuclear weapons capability. David Fischer has referred to a meeting held at the Woodrow Wilson Centre in October 1994, during which it clearly emerged that counter-proliferation would be employed against new proliferators, and not against those that had already crossed the line. Even in the case of new proliferators, a distinction will be made between those that are hostile to the US or its allies or 'tacit allies' such as Israel.<sup>11</sup> This aspect has also been alluded to by Sokolski in his formulation that for the success of any future campaign against proliferation a distinction has to be made between nations that believe in liberal democracy and those opposed to it.<sup>12</sup> Sokolski's statement is indicative of the fact that counter-proliferation measures would be applied selectively on the basis of a determination arbitrarily made by the US as to who is a 'good guy' and who is a 'bad guy'. A similar approach is clearly discernible in the recently concluded US-India nuclear agreement wherein India has been characterised as a 'responsible' nuclear State.

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<sup>9</sup> Benjamin Sanders, 'Counter-proliferation-How does it play on the International Stage', in Mitchell Reiss & Harald Muller eds., 'International Perspectives on Counter-proliferation', *Working Paper No. 99*; (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Centre, January 1995), pp. 4-5.

<sup>10</sup> Fischer, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Sokolski, *op.cit.*, p. 11.

Sokolski also appears to suggest a policy of regime change, which was enthusiastically espoused by the Bush Administration but is fraught with dangers as has been proven by the Iraqi experience. However, Ben Sanders has been critical of this approach and has raised many serious issues, which would create uncertainties with regard to many factors that would have to be taken into account in case of a decision to undertake a counter-proliferation operation and warns of serious consequences of any misjudgement in this regard.<sup>13</sup> Other analysts such as Harald Muller believed that the probability of employment of the military instrument for prevention of proliferation would remain very low because of severe practical constraints besides the grave risks of serious collateral damage not only to the population of the target country itself but its neighbouring countries as well.<sup>14</sup> This assessment however, predated the US attack on Iraq. This military campaign was initially justified as a counter-proliferation action but the failure to find the alleged WMD stockpiles or even an active programme, brought about a change in emphasis to issues such as regime change, war against terrorism and spread of democracy *etc.* The risk of far reaching collateral damage has been highlighted by an expert in a paper presented at an international conference recently held at Geneva, arguing that once the Busher plant is loaded with Russian supplied fuel in November 2007, the risk of emission of dangerous radiation from any attack on this reactor would dramatically increase and has, therefore, speculated that a strike against Iran could take place before that time.<sup>15</sup>

In 1998, two major CP operations were launched by the US employing cruise missiles against a suspected Sudanese chemical factory and Iraqi chemical, biological, and missile production facilities. The success of these operations was doubtful especially in view of the post attack reports suggesting that the so called Sudanese chemical weapons plant may well have been a benign pharmaceutical plant. The Sudanese, in fact, demanded compensation for the damage caused by the strike. Due to these earlier botched attempts at application of aggressive CP measures, a shift in emphasis was visible in the CP Policy by the year 2000 to more modest objectives of damage limitation in case of a WMD attack against US forces. As a result though the term CP survived but the hopes that through this initiative the proliferation threats to the security of the US and its allies would be eliminated did not.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the ill-conceived war against Iraq with the express purpose of taking out its elusive WMD stockpiles, has further dented the efficacy of counter-proliferation approach. However, unlike the Clinton Administration

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<sup>13</sup> Sanders, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> Harald Muller, "Counter-proliferation and the Non-proliferation Regime: A view from Germany", in Reiss & Muller *op.cit.*, pp. 29.g.

<sup>15</sup> M.J. Akbar, "What is India-US Deal for", *Dawn*, (Karachi), 7 January 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Sokolski, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-7.



the Bush Administration has failed to moderate its policies and counter-proliferation continues to occupy a high priority in its menu of anti-proliferation tools.

There are other important issues such as the availability and accuracy of the intelligence about the location of weapons storage sites and the design features of buildings housing such storage facilities which would ultimately determine the failure or success of such a strike especially keeping in view the necessity for limiting the collateral damage. This is, by no means, a simple or easy task as the technologically most advanced and best-equipped intelligence agencies can falter in their intelligence gathering or analysing the available evidence. The more the premium on precision, the greater would be the requirement for precise information. For instance, if weapons with pin point accuracy such as cruise missiles are to be employed up to date information about the terrain in the form of digitised maps would be needed. Repeated failures of CIA over the years starting from its projections of a 'bomber gap' and a 'missile gap' vis-à-vis the Soviet Union in the late 1950s and early 1960s, its failure to detect the Indian nuclear tests in May 1998 and its bungling of intelligence about Iraqi WMDs are cases in point. Dr Ashton Carter acknowledged such difficulties who served as Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Security and Counter-proliferation with Secretary Aspin during the Clinton Administration.<sup>17</sup>

### **Criticism of Counter-proliferation Policy**

Serious doubts have been expressed about the efficacy of the CP Policy due to the extremely negative consequences of the Counter-proliferation Initiative. Ben Sanders, for instance, is of the opinion that instead of complementing the existing non-proliferation structures built over many decades the new initiative is more likely to damage and undermine it.<sup>18</sup> In Sokolski's view the presumption about availability of clear-cut military-technical solutions to proliferation is fallacious.<sup>19</sup> John Simpson has expressed his scepticism by pointing to three weaknesses of the US internal debate on CP:

- Its insular nature, which tends to prompt the assumption that US perceptions are identical to global ones.
- The tendency to ignore that the US no longer has the economic and diplomatic leverage in the nuclear field that it had in the early 70s, so that its policies can no longer be imposed on the rest of the world and;

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<sup>17</sup> Sokolski, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>18</sup> Sanders, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> Sokolski, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

- A tendency to ‘hanker after unilateral US solutions, often simple technical and military ones’ to security problems.<sup>20</sup>

David Fischer, on the other hand, seriously questions the value of counter-proliferation and has referred to the so called ‘Begin Doctrine’ pronounced in the aftermath of the Osirak attack, which exhorts every future Israeli Prime Minister to adhere to this as a dangerous precedent and adds that CP Initiative is being seen as a threat of US military strikes against Third World targets during peace time emanating from a process wherein the US assumes for itself the mantles of the prosecutor, judge and the executioner. It is, therefore, bound to accentuate anti-American sentiments and would play in the hands of those who characterise the NPT as a means to divide the world into ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’.<sup>21</sup> The CP also seems to ignore the fact that it has to move within the established international laws and norms. It is also bound to attract criticism due to the anomalous situation in which the ‘original sinners’ want to punish the late comers for the same sin and the legitimacy of any unilateral action will not only come under close scrutiny but will also cause irreparable damage to the existing non-proliferation regime.<sup>22</sup> However, in the existing international environment with the lone super power willing to unabashedly use its military muscle for the achievement of its politico-economic objectives with scant regard to international norms, diplomatic niceties or multilateral mechanisms such concerns are not likely to be given much weight.

### **The Post 9/11 Policy Developments**

The post-9/11 security environment has undergone a rapid and substantive transformation. In the year following the terrorist attacks against US targets, three major policy documents emanated from the US. The First of these documents, the Nuclear Posture Review<sup>23</sup> (NPR) based on Quadrennial Defence Review was released on 9 January 2002. This document suggested the development of a new triad based on ‘Non-nuclear and Nuclear Strike Forces, Missile Defences and Responsive Command, Control, Intelligence and Planning infrastructure. The next in the series was NSS, released in September 2002. This document was mainly built around the ideas propounded by President George W Bush in a speech at West Point Military Academy on 1 June 2002. A statement from that speech which was also repeated in the preamble to the document embodies the essence of this policy document. The

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<sup>20</sup> Sanders, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

<sup>22</sup> Muller, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

<sup>23</sup> US Department of Defence, *Findings of the Nuclear Posture Review* (9 January 2002).

President said that, ‘the gravest danger our nation faces lies at the cross roads of radicalism and technology.’<sup>24</sup> The salient features of the strategy are:

- Proactive Counter-proliferation Efforts. This will entail integration of key capabilities such as detection, active and passive defences and counter force capabilities in the doctrine, training and equipping of forces and in defence and homeland security policies.
- Strengthened Non-proliferation Efforts. This will be achieved through the employment of diplomacy, arms control, multilateral export controls and, where necessary, interdiction of technologies and materials.
- Effective Consequence Management.

The pre-emptive undertones of the strategy are discernible from the emphasis on adaptation of traditional concepts of pre-emption, based on ‘imminent threat’ to ‘capabilities’ and ‘objectives’ of adversaries. This was further amplified by the statements such as ‘The US has long maintained the option of pre-emptive attacks to counter a sufficient threat to our security; ‘the US will act pre-emptively’ and ‘US cannot remain idle while dangers gather’.<sup>25</sup>

The NSS was closely followed by ‘National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction’, which became public in December 2002. According to this document, the three principal pillars of US National Strategy are:

- Counter-proliferation to combat use of Weapons of Mass Destruction.
- Strengthened Non-proliferation to combat proliferation of WMDs.
- Consequence Management to respond to WMD use.

The three main ingredients of Counter-proliferation were identified as Interdiction, Deterrence and Defence and Mitigation.<sup>26</sup> In February 2003, the sub-committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs of the US House of Representatives’ House Policy Committee, issued a document entitled ‘Differentiation and Defence; An Agenda for the Nuclear Weapons Programme’. Besides codifying the main themes reflecting in the NPR, NSS

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<sup>24</sup> National Security Strategy of the United States, op. cit., pp. 4, 7, & 17.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 18-19.

<sup>26</sup> National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction-December 2002’, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

and National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction' into specific policy objectives, the document reiterated the salience of pre-emption by insisting that in addition to the development of Ballistic Missile Defences, the US must also develop necessary tools to detect, defeat or disrupt WMDs, before they could be used against the US interest.<sup>27</sup>

### **The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI)**

On 31 May 2003, during the course of a speech in Poland on the eve of the G-8 Summit, President Bush announced the establishment of PSI, which would ostensibly lead to the creation of international agreements and partnerships that would enable the US and its allies to search aircraft and ships, suspected of carrying sensitive cargoes related to WMDs, missiles or related technologies.<sup>28</sup> PSI was endorsed by the G-8 in their Statement of 2 June 2003, calling upon all states to establish requisite mechanisms and procedures to control the export of sensitive technologies. It also called for individual and collective efforts to respond to the challenge of the emerging nexus between WMDs and international terrorism. In his testimony before the Congress on 4 June 2003, Under Secretary of State, John Bolton stated that, 'We aim ultimately not just to prevent the spread of WMDs, but also to eliminate or roll back such weapons from rogue states and terrorist groups that already possess them or are close to doing so.' He also made it clear that US and its allies must be willing to employ the following tools for achievement of this purpose:-

- Economic sanctions.
- Interdiction and seizure.
- Pre-emptive military force, where required.<sup>29</sup>

At the conclusion of a meeting of eleven nations participating in the PSI, held at Paris on 4 September 2003, a statement outlining the interdiction principles was issued. Some of the salient features of the statement are:

- Undertaking effective measures either alone or in concert with other states to interdict the transfer of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems and related technologies

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<sup>27</sup> Differentiation and Defence: An Agenda for the Nuclear Weapons Programme, House Policy Committee- Sub-Committee on National Security & Foreign Affairs, US House of Representatives, February 2003, p.4.

<sup>28</sup> Remarks by the President to the people of Poland, Office of the Press Secretary, White House, 31 May, 2003 & <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/psi.htm>>

<sup>29</sup> John Bolton, Testimony before the Congress, 4 June 2003.

destined to or originating from states or non-state actors of proliferation concern.

- Adoption of procedures for quick exchange of information related to suspected activities of the proliferants and dedication of adequate resources and efforts to undertake interdiction operations.
- Review and work to strengthen their relevant national legal authorities for the accomplishment of these objectives.
- Specified actions to be taken to support efforts to interdict cargoes of WMDs, delivery systems and related technologies.<sup>30</sup>

The National Military Strategy of the US to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction, which was released on 13 of February 2006, few weeks before the unveiling of the New National Security Strategy and almost three and a half years after the announcement of the National Strategy to Combat WMDs in December 2002 does not indicate any change in the direction of US policy. The new military strategy to combat WMDs (NMS-CWMD) is aimed at translating the principles and objectives laid down in the 2002 document-which predates the Iraq war- into concrete military missions and tasks with a view to providing guidelines for creating necessary capabilities and force configurations suited to the accomplishment of assigned tasks. It is built around the three basic pillars laid down in the 2002 document. These three pillars are 'Counter-proliferation' to combat WMD use, strengthened 'non-proliferation' to combat WMD proliferation, and 'consequence management' to respond to WMD use. A closer look at the three basic principles indicates that the accent of the policy is on 'combating' and for that reason Counter-proliferation was given a higher priority than non-proliferation. This change of emphasis is a clear departure from the traditional US policies and the 2002 national strategy to combat WMDs stated that it represents a 'fundamental change from the past'. President Bush had made it clear in the NSS-2002 that 'the gravest danger our nation faces lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology', which was further amplified in 2002 WMD Strategy that 'we will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes and terrorists to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons.' Under Counter-proliferation were included measures such as 'Interdiction', 'Deterrence', 'Defence and Mitigation', which includes 'pre-emptive measures' in appropriate cases, and active defences including air and missile defences. Non-proliferation includes 'active non-proliferation diplomacy', support of 'Multilateral regimes', which

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<sup>30</sup> <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/psi.htm>> & Fact Sheet, Proliferation Security Initiative, Statement of Interdiction Principles, Office of the Press Secretary, White House, 4 September 2003.

was more rhetoric than out of any conviction, ‘non-proliferation and threat reduction cooperation’, which was basically reiteration of the commitment in the Nunn-Lugar programmes designed to address the large inadequately protected nuclear stockpiles in Russia and former Soviet Republics and ‘Controls on Nuclear Materials’ aimed at discouraging the worldwide accumulation of separated plutonium and to minimize the use of highly enriched uranium’. The last stated objective i.e. discouraging the accumulation of plutonium has already been violated by the US by signing the nuclear deal with India which would yield large reservoirs of plutonium laden materials. Additional measures include strengthening of US Export Controls and using ‘Non-proliferation Sanctions’ as a component of the strategy against WMD proliferation. The policy suggested an improvement in Intelligence Collection and Analysis capabilities especially focusing on WMD related facilities and activities. It also talked, in an obvious reference to Iraq, Iran and North Korea, about a ‘few states’ that are ‘dedicated proliferators, whose leaders are determined to develop, maintain and improve their WMD and delivery capabilities, which directly threatens the United States’. This statement read in conjunction with the determination to use pre-emptive measures led to the subsequent invasion of Iraq.<sup>31</sup>

The National Military Strategy to Combat WMDs was followed by the National Strategy of the US 2006. It is evident that despite the rising costs of the Iraq war and other missteps the Bush administration is not willing or prepared to change course and to nobody’s surprise the strategy continues to be anchored in ‘pre-emptive use of force’ and ‘unilateral action’. Saying anything otherwise would have meant a loss of face, acceptance of failure and a sign of weakness, but refusing to learn lessons from past mistakes could lead to further costly mistakes and serious consequences not only for the United States but also for many other countries.<sup>32</sup>

### **Likely Impact on Pakistan**

Pakistan has long been at the wrong end of international, and especially, US non-proliferation and technology denial policies. It has suffered decades of sanctions imposed under the provisions of the Symington, Pressler and Glenn Amendments. It has also suffered sanctions related to Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). It is, therefore, natural that there would be some anxiety about the possible implications of the counter-proliferation policy for Pakistan. These concerns have been accentuated after the US deal with India for cooperation in civilian nuclear technology through which India has been certified as a ‘responsible nuclear State’. India is now being viewed as a partner

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<sup>31</sup> US Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy of the US to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Washington, D.C.: February 2006).

<sup>32</sup> ‘National Security of the US 2006’, issued by White House, Washington, D.C.

in anti-proliferation and not as a target any more. It naturally gives rise to the question as to whether Pakistan would be singled out for application of counter-proliferation measures in collaboration with India. While there is no room for complacency, it has to be kept in mind that despite repeated criticism of Pakistan's past proliferation record, it is still not considered as a hostile country and the current US policy makes a clear distinction between friends and foes in the application of its policies. Secondly, Pakistan is a country with an operational nuclear capability along with a variety of delivery means enough to deter any hostile intent. Pakistan is in a post-proliferation stage and is consolidating its nuclear capability, which means that the time for any counter-proliferation action has long passed. Pakistan should learn to start behaving like a self confident and responsible nuclear power, and stop getting jittery on reading studies conducted by American think-tanks, which, in most cases, serve the agendas of lobbies and interest groups that provide them with financial sustenance. These groups are not necessarily honest in their assessments and frequently carry out analyses and draw conclusions on the basis of shallow understanding and superficial knowledge about the ground realities.

### **Conclusion**

It is apparent from the foregoing analysis that Counter-proliferation is not a new concept and has been a part and parcel of the US anti-proliferation policy since 1993. The basic tenets, of what has now come to be known as the PSI, were being advocated by analysts such as Lewis Dunn as far back as 1995. The major change that has taken place is in the world-view of the Bush Administration as compared to the Clinton Administration. Despite the fact that Counter-proliferation operations, including interdiction of cargoes as well as pre-emptive use of military force, were actually employed during the Clinton period the Counter-proliferation Policy generally remained low key. However, the Bush Administration does not feel shy of projecting Counter-proliferation as a major policy tool for the achievement of anti-proliferation objectives. That is why it has been a common strand in the NSS 2002 as well as NSS 2006 and has also been identified as one of the three main pillars on which the 'National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction' has been built. This has, however, been made possible by the drastically changed international security environment as a consequence of the events of 9/11, wherein there is a heightened international concern about the terrorist threat and the possibility of terrorist acquisition and use of WMDs. These security concerns have provided an enabling environment for the implementation of aggressive strategies such as the Counter-proliferation, including the PSI. Counter-proliferation was originally seen as an American enterprise and was viewed with lot of scepticism by friends and foes alike, has a wider following

now with the EU also endorsing the concept in its own strategy to counter the WMD proliferation. Similarly, the number of participating countries in the PSI is also growing.

Another factor behind the growing salience of counter-proliferation in the US policy, is the visible discomfort of the Bush Administration with multilateral and treaty based approaches to prevention of proliferation and its preference for unilateral actions or at best within the coalitions of the like-minded. Proponents of counter-proliferation policy in the US can claim some successes such as the interdiction and seizure of shipments of aluminium pipes and chemical substances, headed towards North Korea and the interception of a German flagship the 'BBC China', carrying centrifuge components for Libya. The Iraqi experience should logically lead to a rethink and review of the policy but this not likely to happen in the next two years because any stepping back would be seen as a loss of face for the administration. The immediate concern of the international community at the moment is as to whether counter-proliferation would yet again be employed possibly against Iran with unpredictable consequences. Israel is already threatening a military strike against Iranian nuclear facilities and may force the American hand and lead them into this catastrophic action. Some analysts even believe that the Israelis are aware that if at all they have to launch a military strike on Iran they have a window till the end of 2008, not only because of possible developments in Iran's nuclear programme but the coming to an end of the Bush era. Would an Israeli attack be considered as an extension of the US Counter-proliferation policy? What consequences such an attack by a non-NPT State against an NPT member State will have for the existing non-proliferation regime? Similar questions can be raised about the possible negative repercussions of the PSI on international trade, especially of dual use items and its impact on the industrial development and growth of the developing countries, complications arising out of frivolous interdiction of shipping based on faulty intelligence and its ramifications for the law of the sea treaty and the international aviation conventions.■



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## INDO-US NUCLEAR DEAL: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE REGION

**Dr Rashid Ahmad Khan\***

### Introduction

**O**n 18 December 2006, US President George W. Bush signed the legislation that allows nuclear civilian cooperation between India and the United States, under a deal signed on 2 March, during President Bush's visit to India. The legislation called the Henry J. Hyde United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act of 2006 is the final piece retaining the main provisions of the bills passed earlier in the House and the Senate. The Senate had cleared the bill on 17 November with 85 votes in favour and 12 against it. Commenting on the Senate vote, President Bush stated, 'I appreciate the Senate's leadership on this important legislation and look forward to signing this bill into law soon'.<sup>1</sup> Earlier, the House passed the bill with an equally overwhelming majority (359-68) in July, a month after Senate Foreign Relations Committee, endorsed the bill by a 16-2 margin.

The deal received a large and bi-partisan support in the Congressional circles, but it did meet criticism, both inside and outside the United States. Most of this criticism has, however, focused on global implications. A strong argument against the deal was that it would seriously undermine the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and would encourage other countries to embark upon the path of nuclear weapon development programmes. Even those countries, such as Brazil, South Africa, Ukraine, and possibly others, who had given up their nuclear pursuits, could be tempted to review their positions.<sup>2</sup> The discussion on the implications of the Indo-US deal for the South Asian region has been missing from this debate. Pakistan, on the contrary, did express its fears that civil nuclear deal has the potential of triggering a nuclear arms race in South Asia. This paper, therefore, focuses on the regional implications. The region is broadly defined here to include China and Iran as well.

### Background

While discussing the implications of the deal, the following facts have to be kept in mind:

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<sup>1</sup> *Dawn* (Islamabad), 18 November 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Adil Sultan Mohammad, "Indo-US Civilian Nuclear Agreement: Implications for South Asian Security Environment," The Henry L. Stimson Centre, July 2006.

Firstly, that it was an unprecedented agreement, which entitled a non-NPT State to purchase nuclear fuel from 45 member States of Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), without joining NPT. US Under Secretary of State, Nicholas Burns, has called it 'a unique agreement with a unique country'.<sup>3</sup> The deal also marked a departure from around three decades of US policy on nuclear proliferation. The US had refused to grant both India and Pakistan the status of *de jure* Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) following their nuclear tests in May 1998. It had sharply reacted by clamping down sanctions against the two countries and insisted on their joining of NPT as non-NWS. Obviously, the deal is a failure of American proliferation policy in South Asia.

Secondly, the deal, ever since it was signed on 2 March 2006 had been subjected to intense India-US negotiations to address a number of Indian concerns, especially on the operational side following changes/adjustments made by the Congress during lengthy debates. The Indians had raised objections to what they called 'language' of the bill as it was passed by the Senate, and objected to some of 'the prescriptions' the bill, contained. Burns acknowledged that the Indians had raised certain concerns about the certification and amendments detailed in the bill. On 18 November, a day after the Senate vote, Burns had 'extensive discussions' over telephone with India's chief nuclear negotiator, Shyam Saran. Regarding his conversation with Saran, he acknowledged that the Indian Government had raised 'some questions' about the language and certifications. 'We are talking,' said Burns, 'to law makers and we hope the conference will iron out any remaining issues'.<sup>4</sup> According to the Indian sources, the Senate and the House bills contained certain provisions that are a matter of concern to New Delhi. These provisions included a demand that India would support the US in its nuclear dispute with Iran. In addition to that there were other restrictive clauses in the bills, which India said, ran counter to the original promise of full scale civilian nuclear commerce. For example, Section 106 of the Senate bill prohibited the export of any equipment, materials or technology related to the enrichment of uranium, the reprocessing of the spent fuel, or the production of heavy water. Similarly, Section 107 required an end-use monitoring programme to be carried out with respect to US exports and re-exports of nuclear materials, equipment and technology sold or leased to India; and annual certification by the US President that India was in compliance with non-proliferation commitments.<sup>5</sup>

Thirdly, the deal discriminated between Pakistan and India. The United States refused to sign a similar deal with Pakistan. Following the signing of Indo-US deal on civilian nuclear cooperation for the generation of

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<sup>3</sup> *Dawn* (Islamabad), 19 November 2006.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 December 2006.

energy, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, Richard Boucher, stated: 'Our energy dialogue with Pakistan is going to be different from our energy discussions with India. One should not expect that (Pakistan's) energy needs would be met the same way, given different geography, different history and different resource base'.<sup>6</sup> The US Energy Secretary, Samuel Bodman, who visited Pakistan in March 2006, also made a similar statement, which ruled out the supply of nuclear reactors to Pakistan for the production of energy.<sup>7</sup> In his discussions with Pakistani officials on the Pakistan's energy needs, the issue of nuclear energy, according to Bodman, was not included. He said, 'Our strategic partnership with Pakistan does not include discussion on civilian nuclear energy. It was not at all, the subject of my discussions with the Pakistani authorities'.<sup>8</sup> Pakistan, quite understandably, felt perturbed. The Foreign Office reacted with a statement, in which it was made clear that the discriminatory treatment on civilian nuclear cooperation would not be acceptable. At the same time, Pakistan warned that the US grant of waiver as a special case (of India), would have serious implications for the security environment of South Asia as well as for international non-proliferation efforts.<sup>9</sup> The Foreign Office reaction reflected Pakistan's disappointment at the US treatment of India, as an 'exceptional' case. This was especially so because Pakistan was a US ally in war on terror; yet the US was not willing to treat it as a special case along with India.

Fourthly, the deal split public opinion in India. The main opposition party, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M)-a part of Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) ruling coalition, both strongly, although for different reasons, condemned the deal as an unequal pact with provisions that humiliate India. In a press conference in New Delhi, former Union Minister, Yashwant Sinha, claimed that the purpose of the deal was to bilaterally impose on India conditionalities that were worse than those in NPT and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Sinha held that the contours of the US Congress passed legislation suggested that the sole objective of the deal was to cap India's nuclear weapon programme. The bill, according to him, militated against full civil nuclear cooperation with India. The certification and reporting requirements continued to be rigorous and there was no assurance of uninterrupted fuel supply for the civilian reactors. In his statement, Sinha complained that India could not reprocess the used fuel

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<sup>6</sup> *Dawn* (Islamabad), 13 March 2006.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 March 2006.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 March 2006.

nor could it ship it back to the United States, unless the US Congress approved the reshipment.<sup>10</sup>

It may take some time before the full implications of the Indo-US deal became clear as various provisions of the law covering a highly complex and acerbic agreement would be subjected to different interpretations by the two parties. . But from the debate that has taken place during the last about nine months, we can identify certain areas in which the deal would have its impact on regional security and stability. For this purpose it is necessary to first, have a brief summary of the deal and, then, proceed towards a discussion on how it will affect the environment of peace, security and cooperation in South Asia.

### **Indo-US Deal on Civilian Nuclear Cooperation**

The joint Indo-US statement issued on 18 July 2005, during Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to the U S, provided the framework for the deal, which Bush and Singh later signed in New Delhi on 2 March 2006. In the statement, the two leaders expressed their resolve to transform India-US relations and establish a global partnership. The promotion of democracy and fight against terrorism comprised the two main features of the global partnership envisaged in the statement. The statement also referred to Indo-US strategic partnership initiative launched in 2004, which, according to the statement, "provides the basis for expanding bilateral activities and commerce in space, civil nuclear energy and dual use technology."<sup>11</sup> The statement committed both U S and India to make joint efforts to expand bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, energy security, technology, infrastructure development, agriculture and environment. An important area of bilateral cooperation, identified in the statement was the promotion of democracy under US-India Global Democracy Initiative. According to the statement, the two countries also pledged to work together for the prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), enhancement of cooperation in the defence technology, disaster management under US-India Disaster Relief Initiative and finalising a framework for cooperation in high technology and space.<sup>12</sup>

The context for a discussion on India's plans to develop its civilian nuclear energy programme, was provided by what the statement described as the recognition of "the significance of civilian nuclear energy for meeting growing global energy demands in a cleaner and more efficient manner."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The *Hindu*, 11 December 2006, <<http://www.hindu.com/2006/12/11/stories/2006121105280100.htm>> (Accessed on 11 December 2006).

<sup>11</sup> "Indo-US Joint Statement, 18 July 2006," *The Hindu*, <<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/nic/indousjoint.htm>>, cited in *IPRI Fact File*, Islamabad Policy Research Institute, Islamabad, April 2006, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 1-3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

From the American perspective, India needed energy to sustain its economic growth rate, which is one of the fastest in Asia. The sustainable economic growth rate, in U S view, would not only strengthen democracy in India that would also help India play its role in enhancing regional and global security. It fits into the US policy, championed by Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, of building India as a strategic counterweight to China. The joint statement also reflects US perception of India as a responsible State with advanced nuclear technology and strongly committed to preventing WMD proliferation. On the basis of this perception, President Bush considered that India 'should acquire the same benefits as other such states'.<sup>14</sup> This implied that the U S was willing to create an exception for India on the basis of its mere perception that the former was a so-called 'responsible nuclear State'.

Under the deal, India has agreed to a number of measures that it will voluntarily undertake in respect of its nuclear programme. Among these, the most important is the separation of civilian military nuclear facilities from the military ones in phased manner. However, India has not given a time frame. India also insists that the decision on which facilities would be designated as civilian and military would be its sovereign prerogative. India's other obligations include: filing a declaration regarding its civilian nuclear facilities with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and putting them under its safeguards. India is also required to sign an additional protocol with respect to civilian nuclear facilities and secure nuclear materials through comprehensive export control legislation, harmonization and adherence to Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and NSG guidelines.

The US objectives of civilian nuclear deal with India were outlined in a statement by Under Secretary of State, Robert J. Joseph, in a *Hearing on 'US-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative,'* before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 2 November 2005, in the following words:

'We believe it is in our national security interest to establish a broad strategic partnership with India that encourages India's emergence as a positive force on the world scene. Our desire to transform relations with India is founded upon a contemporary and forward-looking strategic vision. India is a strong global power and an important democratic partner for the United States. Today for the first time, the United States and India are bound together by a strong congruence of interests and values. We seek to work with India to win the global War on Terrorism, to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction and missiles that could deliver them, to enhance peace and stability in Asia and to advance the spread of democracy. India and the US are on the same side of critical strategic objectives. Our challenge is to transform our

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

converging interests into shared goals and compatible strategies designed to achieve these aims'.<sup>15</sup>

According to Joseph's statement, India has made following public commitments through the Joint Statement.

- I. Identify and separate civilian and military nuclear facilities and programmes and file a declaration with IAEA, regarding its civilian facilities.
- II. Place voluntarily its civilian nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards,
- III. Sign and adhere to an additional protocol with respect to civilian nuclear facilities,
- IV. Continue its unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing
- V. Work with the US for the conclusion of a multilateral Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) to halt production of fissile material for nuclear weapons,
- VI. Refrain from the transfer of enrichment and reprocessing technologies to states that do not have them and support efforts to limit their spread; and
- VII. Secure nuclear and fissile material technologies, through comprehensive export control legislation and adherence to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and NSG guidelines.<sup>16</sup>

These public commitments by India have provided the ammunition for the opposition political parties to fire on the government. According to the opposition point of view, the deal is highly intrusive, as India will have to accept control and inspection by IAEA. Responding to the criticism by the opposition political parties both Prime Minister Singh and Foreign Minister Paranab Mukerji have asserted that the deal would not restrain India from further developing its strategic nuclear programme. In view of the mounting criticism of the deal not only by the opposition political parties, but also by some of the coalition partners of the Singh Government, India's ability to fulfil all the commitments is being doubted.

### **US Commitments under Joint Statement**

On a reciprocal basis with India's commitments, the U S, according to Joseph, has committed to work to achieve full civilian nuclear cooperation with India. In this context, he quoted what President Bush had told Prime Minister Singh during their summit meeting in Washington in July 2005 that he would:

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<sup>15</sup> <<http://www.state.gov/t/us/rm/55968.htm>>

<sup>16</sup> Joseph, *Ibid*, p. 3.

- Seek agreement from Congress to adjust US laws and policies,
- Work with friends and allies to adjust international regimes to enable full civil nuclear cooperation and trade with India,
- Consult with partners on India's participation in the fusion energy International Thermonuclear Experiment Reactor (ITER) consortium and the Generation IV International Forum, the work of which relates to advanced nuclear energy systems.

For effective implementation of the steps to be taken under the Joint Statement, the Bush Administration worked hard to secure the support of the Congress and also actively lobbied with international partners, like the G-8 States and members of NSG.

The US, however, made it clear that it 'does not and will not support India's nuclear weapon programme'. 'As it is for other states', Joseph said in his testimony before Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 'this is a red line for us. We are obligated under NPT not to assist India's nuclear weapon programme. Our initiative with India does not recognize India as a nuclear weapon State, and we will not seek to renegotiate the NPT, whether to change the Treaty definition of a nuclear weapon state or in any other way. We remain cognizant of, and will fully uphold, all our obligations under NPT and we remain committed in principle to universal NPT adherence'.<sup>17</sup> This meant that the US was fully cognizant of the problems, which were likely to result from the U S renunciation of NPT regime. Within this context, the U S wanted to demonstrate its adherence to NPT and yet find a way out, which would allow India to be treated as a special case.

The claims made by the Bush Administration regarding the nuclear deal with India are, however, strongly contested by critics, who believe that the agreement is overly beneficial for India and lack sufficient safeguards to prevent New Delhi from continuing to produce nuclear weapons. In an article captioned; 'Good Day for India, Bad for Non-proliferation', former Deputy Secretary of State and presently, president of a Washington based American think tank, Brookings Institution, Strobe Talbott, observed that the deal had put NPT into jeopardy; and that under the deal, the Indians had received more leniency than the five established nuclear 'haves' had asked for themselves.<sup>18</sup> 'We are going to be sending and allowing others to send, fresh fuel to India-including yellow cake and lightly enriched uranium-that will free up Indian domestic sources of fuel to be solely dedicated to making many more bombs than they otherwise would have been able to make,' says Henry Sokolski,

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Strobe Talbott, "Good Dy for India, Bad for Non-proliferation", *Daily Times* (Lahore), 25 July 2005, cited in *IPRI Fact File*, op cit.

executive director of the Non-Proliferation Policy Education Centre.<sup>19</sup> While India has pledged that any US assistance to its civilian nuclear energy programme, will not be used for the development of nuclear weapons, experts say India could use the imported nuclear fuel to feed its civilian energy programme, while delivering its own nuclear fuel to the weapons production programme. New Delhi has done similar things in the past. India claimed it was using nuclear technology for civilian purposes right up till its first nuclear weapon test in 1974. A Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report on the agreement says: ‘There are no measures in this global partnership to restrain India’s nuclear weapon programme’.<sup>20</sup> A US Congressman, Markey, (Democrat from Massachusetts), while raising serious doubts about the agreement had said: ‘I believe there are very serious security questions, not just for the United States but for India itself.’ His words hinted at the complex relationship between the nuclear deal and the possible adverse consequences for both the US and India, at military, political, societal and economic levels.

These concerns were confirmed by Prime Minister Singh’s statement in the Parliament, following the signing of the nuclear deal with the US in March 2006. In the statement he made it clear that India would ‘not be constrained in any way in building future nuclear facilities, whether civilian or military, as per our national requirements’. He stressed that there would be no capping of country’s strategic programme and that Washington had assured uninterrupted supply of fuel to Indian reactors under international safeguards.<sup>21</sup> At another occasion, Singh asserted that under the deal, the integrity of India’s Nuclear Doctrine and its ‘ability to sustain a minimum credible nuclear deterrent is adequately protected’.<sup>22</sup> The statement clearly indicated that India had no intention of abandoning its programme of enhancing the capability of its nuclear weapon development programme, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

### **Regional Implications**

At this juncture, it is necessary to explore the implications of this deal for South Asia and certain adjacent quarters. In order to understand the implications of this deal, it is very important to consider the relationship of this deal with certain factors: China’s reaction, Pakistan’s response, war on terror in South Asia and controversy within India, regarding the deal.

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<sup>19</sup> Esthar Pan, “The US-India Nuclear Deal,”

[http://www.cfr.org/publication/9663/usindia\\_nuclear\\_deal.html?breadcrumb=default](http://www.cfr.org/publication/9663/usindia_nuclear_deal.html?breadcrumb=default).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Indian PM’s Statement in the Parliament.

<<http://in.rediff.com/news/2006/mar/07nddeal12.htm>>. Cited in *IPRI Fact File*, April 2006, p. 56.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p. 60.



*The China Factor*

Geographically, China is not included in the South Asian region; yet, India claims its (Indian) nuclear weapon development programme is closely related to its threat perception emanating from China. There is already close cooperation between Pakistan and China in the civilian nuclear energy with speculations that disappointed by the US refusal to agree to civilian nuclear cooperation similar to the one provided under the Indo-US deal, Pakistan is trying to clinch an agreement on civilian nuclear cooperation with China. Chinese stakes in the peace, security and stability in the South Asian region have been reinforced by growing economic and trade relations with the countries of South Asia, especially India and Pakistan. China, therefore, cannot remain indifferent to developments related to the Indian nuclear programme.

The initial Chinese reaction to the Indo-US move for civilian nuclear cooperation appeared in the *Peoples Daily* in the form a comment on the Joint Statement of 18 July 2005. The article in the *People's Daily* refrained from directly criticizing India. However, it was critical of the US, for making an exception for India that would 'bring about a series of negative impacts, particularly, on the Iranian and North Korean issues. In fact *The Hindu*, in February 2006, reported Chinese ambassador to India, Sun Yuxi, as saying that China fully understood India's energy needs and as well as India's push for closer ties with Washington, just as China too sought closer relations with the US.<sup>23</sup> After this initial reaction, China has softened its position on the deal. During Chinese President Hu Jintao's visit to India in November 2006, the two countries decided to promote civil nuclear cooperation. The decision was a part of ten-pronged strategy to intensify Sino-Indian cooperation in all areas and to give a 'greater content' to their strategic partnership. In the declaration issued at the end of Chinese President's visit to India, the two countries announced their commitment 'to non-proliferation objectives and agree to expand their dialogue on the related issues, in bilateral and international fora.' This announcement coincided with a statement by Chinese Foreign Ministry in Beijing, which said that China was 'willing to conduct cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear energy with all countries, including India, on the pre-condition that all parties should honour their international obligations'.<sup>24</sup> In a subsequent report, *The Hindu* quoted senior Indian officials feeling after talks between Prime Minister Singh and President Hu, that China would not come in the way of any decision of the NSG to lift restrictions on international civilian nuclear cooperation with India. The paper, citing from the Joint

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<sup>23</sup> Jabin T. Jacob, "Indo-US Nuclear Deal: The China Factor," Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi, *Special Report 14*, March 2006, <[http://72.14.235.104/search?q=cache:-Do42GL-\\_jU8J:www.ipcs.org/IPCS-Special-Report...12/19/2006](http://72.14.235.104/search?q=cache:-Do42GL-_jU8J:www.ipcs.org/IPCS-Special-Report...12/19/2006)>

<sup>24</sup> *The Hindu*, 21 November 2006. <<http://www.hindu.com/the-hindu/holnus/0011200611211567.htm?headline='Partners'-India>>

Declaration, issued at the conclusion of the Chinese president's visit to India, mentioned the commitment of the two countries 'as advanced scientific capabilities to stress the importance of further deepening cooperation bilaterally as well through multilateral projects such as ITER, and enhance exchanges in the related academic fields'.<sup>25</sup> Following the approval of the deal by the US Congress, the Chinese position on the Indo-US deal became further pragmatic. In a dispatch from Beijing, Indian *Rediff News* reported what it described 'Chinese turn around' quoting Foreign Ministry spokesman, who, when asked to comment on the US Congress's overwhelming approval of the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal, said:

We consider the cooperation between the countries to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes will be beneficial for maintaining effectiveness of international nuclear non-proliferation.<sup>26</sup>

There could be a number of possible explanations for easing of Chinese opposition to the Indo-US nuclear deal. For example, the Indian assurance to China (as well as Pakistan) that the deal was not directed against any country, the Chinese belief that India would not be swayed away by the Americans, China's own desire to enter into nuclear commerce with India and the consistently pursued Chinese policy of avoiding confrontation with the United States. However, the Chinese persistently underline the importance of meeting international obligations of non-proliferation, something they had earlier accused the United States of deviating from nuclear deal with India.<sup>27</sup>

*Pakistan: The Threat of Nuclear Arms Race?*

Majority of the smaller countries of South Asia believe that the agreement is not only a serious set back for efforts, aimed at universalising NPT regime; but would also trigger a nuclear arms race in the region. Similar concerns had been expressed by some of the US law-makers, during the discussion on the bill in the House as well as in the Senate. Pakistan, which like India, is an overt nuclear weapon State, has already expressed concerns about the effect of this treaty on the security environment of the region. Initially, Pakistan adopted a

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<sup>25</sup> *The Hindu*, 22 November 2006.

<<http://www.hindu.com/2006/11/22/stories/20061122132550100.htm>>

<sup>26</sup> *Rediff News*, "China backs Indo-US Nuclear Deal,"

<<http://www.rediff.com/news/200/dec/13nddeal.htm>> (Accessed on 19 December 2006).

<sup>27</sup> In an editorial, the *Renmin Ribao* (Peoples Daily), the mouthpiece of the ruling Communist Party of China, accused the United States of not being "at all a guard of NPT..." It called the Indo-US nuclear deal as a hard blow on America's leading role in the global proliferation prevention system as well as the system itself."

<<http://in.rediff.com/news/2005/nov/04nddeal.htm>>, cited in *IPRI Fact File*, op cit, p. 15,16.

cautious approach to the signing of the deal. The spokesperson of Pakistan's Foreign Office, Taslim Aslam, while giving her reaction to the deal on 2 March 2006, only underlined Pakistan's right to similar concession to non-NPT nuclear weapon State. The spokesperson said 'Pakistan has the same claim and expectations for international cooperation under safeguards for nuclear power generation, especially because Pakistan is a fossil fuel deficit country and has a significant and fully safeguarded nuclear power generation programme'.<sup>28</sup>

A month later, when the details of the Indo-US nuclear deal were out and the Indian Prime Minister Singh had given his country's perspective on the deal, Pakistan's uneasiness about the agreement became apparent. This uneasiness or displeasure was expressed in a statement by the spokesperson of Pakistan's Foreign Office, which disputed a claim, reportedly made by the US that the US Government had kept Pakistan fully informed about the deal while it was in the works. In the statement, which was described by a correspondent short of conveying a sense of betrayal, spokesperson said, 'we were not told by step-by-step approach'. She further said that 'in fact initial information about what this deal would look like is slightly different from what has come out finally'.<sup>29</sup>

On April 12 2006, a meeting of National Command and Control Authority (NCA) was held in Islamabad. President General Pervez Musharraf chaired the meeting that was attended by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, ministers for defence and foreign affairs, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS), services chiefs and senior scientists. Briefing the pressmen about the deliberations of the meeting, Information Minister, Sheikh Rashid Ahmad said that Pakistan was genuinely concerned about US-India nuclear deal, which, according to him, would give India free hand to maintain eight such nuclear stations that would be above any international inspection to give it cushion to produce significant quantities of fissile material and nuclear weapons. The NCA meeting noted with concern the implications of Indo-US nuclear deal on strategic stability in South Asia.<sup>30</sup>

The United States has ruled out a similar deal with Pakistan because, as Under Secretary of State, Nicholas Burns, stated the Indian deal was a unique deal with a unique country.<sup>31</sup> In this case, Pakistan would try to get nuclear cooperation from China. Nuclear cooperation between the two countries is already in place. Pakistan is operating one nuclear power plant,

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 3 March 2006.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 11 April 2006, cited in *IPRI Fact File*, April 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 13 April 2006, *IPRI Fact File* April 2006, p. 93

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 19 November 2006. In yet another statement, Mr. Burns reiterated his earlier position of not concluding a civilian nuclear cooperation deal with Pakistan similar to the one the US did with India. The United States, Mr. Burns said had no plans to offer a nuclear deal to Pakistan as the agreement President Bush signed on 18 December was unique to India. Ibid., 19 December 2006.

Chasma I supplied by China and another Chasma II is planned to be set up with the Chinese help. The prospects of further nuclear cooperation between China and Pakistan have become brighter after China's virtual endorsement of Indo-US nuclear deal. Even India seems to have reconciled to such an arrangement between Pakistan and China. In a statement in New Delhi, the Indian Foreign Minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherji said that India had no problem with China offering to help Pakistan in civil nuclear energy projects.<sup>32</sup>

It is not only Pakistan, which has expressed fear of a nuclear arms race in the region; similar apprehensions have been expressed even by some US circles as well. In his article, Mr. Talbott indicated that the countries such as Brazil, Japan, South Africa and South Korea, who have, for decades, stuck with the original NPT deal and forgotten the nuclear option, may review their positions.<sup>33</sup>

There is every reason to believe that Indo-US civil nuclear agreement will prompt Pakistan to ensure that its credible nuclear deterrence remains not only intact but is also further developed to cope with the situation likely to be created by an augmentation of Indian strategic nuclear deterrent. This became evident from the statement issued after the meeting of NCA on 12 April. The NCA was of the view that Indo-US nuclear deal would enable India to produce significant quantities of fissile material and nuclear weapons from unsafeguarded nuclear reactors. It, therefore, expressed firm resolve that any requirement for a credible minimum deterrence would be met.<sup>34</sup> This is a strong indication that Pakistan would be forced to expand its nuclear arsenal and perfect its delivery system in order to correct the strategic imbalance, which the Indo-US deal is likely to create.

It is interesting to note that although Indo-US deal on civilian nuclear cooperation is a bilateral matter, in the non-binding Statement of Policy pertaining to South Asia, the legislation calls on the United States to achieve at the earliest a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear explosive devices by India, Pakistan and China.<sup>35</sup> Referring to this provision (Section 103 B-1) in the legislation, a Pakistani nuclear expert, Brigadier (Retd) Naeem Salik has said that the deal seeks to cap Pakistan's nuclear capability besides that of China.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 27 November 2006.

<sup>33</sup> Talbott, op cit, p. 6.

<sup>34</sup> *IPRI Fact File*, April 2006, Ibid. p.93-94.

<sup>35</sup> Sridhar Krishnaswamy, op. cit.

<sup>36</sup> *Indian Express*, 11 December 2006, <[http://www.expressindia.com/full\\_story.php?newsid=78028&headline=Indo-US-deal-lim....12/12/2006](http://www.expressindia.com/full_story.php?newsid=78028&headline=Indo-US-deal-lim....12/12/2006)>. "If India is required to do something in return for what it is getting from the US, it is understandable. Why should China and Pakistan be required to place moratorium on their programmes? What they are getting in return? Brigadier Salik was quoted saying by a Pakistani English daily, reported *Indian Express*.

The fear of arms race in South Asia has been expressed also by some leading non-proliferation experts, who warned that the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal would lead to New Delhi's expanding its weapons production and encourage Pakistan and China to do likewise. In a letter to US Congress in February 2006, three prominent experts-David Albright, Leonard Weiss, and Daryl G. Kimball, had expressed the fears that unless India was asked to agree to a 'cut-off of Indian fissile material production for weapons, the nuclear cooperation deal should not be finalized'.<sup>37</sup>

In another report released by a Washington based think tank-Centre for American Progress (CAP), it has been said that the legislation adopted by the US Congress 'would also allow international nuclear trade with Israel and Pakistan' that have developed their nuclear programmes outside the NPT, like India. 'That would mean the unravelling of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty,' the report said. The report also warned that the deal would trigger a nuclear arms race in South Asia. 'Pakistan is sure to match India's capability, while China may reconsider its fissile material production halt for weapons', the authors of the report said.<sup>38</sup>

It is not only nuclear arms race which the South Asian region is most likely going to witness in case India is permitted under the deal to improve and expand its nuclear weapons, the already existing strategic discord between India and its smaller neighbours would further widen. This would undermine Washington's plan to raise the status of India from a regional power to a global power. In this regard, the United States would be unable to secure the strategic objective of building India as a countervailing force against China.

From the statements made by the Indian side on the deal so far, it is clear that India would not agree to FMCT, its moratorium on further nuclear tests is not permanent, it will continue to improve its nuclear stockpile, both qualitatively and quantitatively and will keep large part of its nuclear facilities outside the inspection regime. This could make other nuclear weapon states in the region uncomfortable. It is feared that 'Pakistan and China may react to this deal by retching up their own suspicions and nuclear weapons-including making additional weapon materials and weapons'.<sup>39</sup>

#### *Iran and Afghanistan*

According to some observers, Indian support for US on its nuclear dispute with Iran is a *quid pro quo* for meeting American commitments under the deal. The legislation passed by the Congress and signed by President Bush, says that the US will secure 'India's full and active participation in the United States'

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 17 February 2006.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 12 December 2006.

<sup>39</sup> Sam Nunn, "Nuclear Pig in a Poke," 24 May 2006, *The Wall Street Journal*, cited in Adil Sultan Mohammad, op cit. p.15.

efforts to dissuade, isolate and, if necessary, sanction and contain Iran for its efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction, including a nuclear weapons capability and the capability to enrich uranium or reprocess nuclear fuel and the means to deliver weapons of mass destruction'.<sup>40</sup> According to Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report, a potentially major area of friction in US-India relations could be future dealings with Iran in view of traditionally 'positive' relations between India and Iran. In January 2003, India and Iran entered into a strategic partnership with the signing of New Delhi Declaration and seven other substantive agreements. India has also been assisting Iran's nuclear energy programme to the extent of violating, as claimed by the United States, the US Iran Proliferation Act of 2000. In September 2004, the State Department sanctioned two Indian scientists for violating this law.<sup>41</sup> Some Indian analysts offer that Indian relations with Iran will be a litmus test of Indian Government's pledge to pursue an independent foreign policy. The leftist parties led by CPI-M are particularly watchful in this regard. The future of Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline will be of particular significance. According to Burns, US wants to free India of its dependence on Middle Eastern oil by offering it nuclear technology.<sup>42</sup> This could also mean freeing India from the dependence on Iranian oil and gas. However, Pakistan, Iran and India have covered quite a long distance in giving a final shape to the plans for the building of 2600 km long and worth US\$ 4.7 billion gas pipeline to deliver gas to Pakistan and through Pakistan to India. The project is being opposed by the US on the ground that it would provide Iran resources to finance its nuclear programme, which the US suspects is a cover to acquire capability to manufacture a nuclear bomb. Both President Bush and Secretary Rice, have issued statements strongly opposing the project. As an alternative, the US has offered to support the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) project that would transport gas from Central Asian reserves to India through Afghanistan and Pakistan. Under a US law, any company that invests more than US\$ 20 million in one year in Iran's energy sector can be sanctioned. Despite this, Pakistan and India seem to be determined to pursue this project. Close relations between India and Iran, particularly Indian refusal to support the referral of Iran's nuclear issue to the UN Security Council, has been viewed by the US law makers with serious concern. According to CRS Report, during a House International Relations Committee hearing on 8 September 2005, some senior members on the panel suggested that full Indian

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<sup>40</sup> Sridhar Krishnaswamy, "Final bill on Indo-US nuclear deal in House of Rep., DNA-world, <<http://www.dnaindia.com/report.asp?NewsID=1068233>> (Accessed on 8 December 2006).

<sup>41</sup> *Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report: US-India Bilateral Agreements in 2005*, cited in *IPRI Fact File*, op cit, p. 11.

<sup>42</sup> *Dawn* (Islamabad), 19 December 2006.

cooperation with the U S on this matter should be a pre-requisite for US-India cooperation in the civil nuclear field.<sup>43</sup> Faced with severe criticism, it seems unlikely that India will oblige the United States on the Iranian nuclear issue. However, it may drag its feet on IPI gas pipeline issue, on one pretext or the other, to satisfy the American demand.

Being a member of SAARC, Afghanistan has been integrated into the South Asian region. Hence, whatever affects South Asia would also affect Afghanistan. Kabul enjoys good relations with New Delhi but its relations with Islamabad are under severe strain. Afghanistan has accused Pakistan of supporting Taliban in their attacks across the border in Afghanistan, particularly in the southern and eastern regions that lie close to the border provinces of Pakistan.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, Pakistan has accused the Government of President Hamid Karzai of allowing Indian Consulates in Jalalabad and Kandhar to promote, support and finance terrorist and separatist elements in Balochistan. This indicates how closely Pakistan-Afghanistan-India relationships are interlinked. On the basis of this historical fact, it could be argued that improvement in Pakistan-India relations would lead to an improvement in relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, as it would remove a major irritant between the two neighbouring Muslim countries. Unfortunately, U S decision to make India an exception for cooperation for civilian nuclear cooperation and denying the same concession to Pakistan has made little contribution to the improvement of Indo-Pak relations. To make matters worse, the deal has introduced a new element of instability and uncertainty in the region. Voicing this concern, the CRS Report says:

Closer US-India relations growing from an overt US desire to increase India's power have implications for US relations with other regional countries, as well as for the dynamics among those countries. Policy makers in Beijing, Islamabad and Tehran are among those who follow closely the course of a US-India 'global partnership' with an eye toward how their own geographical standing is affected.<sup>45</sup>

Among Beijing, Islamabad and Tehran Kabul could also be included as a capital of the country, whose dynamics of its relations with Islamabad would certainly be affected by the Indo-US deal. In a recent statement, the Afghan Foreign Minister Rangeen Dadfar, Spanta expressed his view that closer India-US relations would fuel increased terrorist activities in Afghanistan.<sup>46</sup> The Afghan Foreign Minister did not elaborate. But in the light of repeated allegation by Kabul that following signing of Indo-US deal infiltration of militants from across the border with Pakistan had increased

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<sup>43</sup> *CRS Report*, Ibid. P.15.

<sup>44</sup> See the statement of President Hamid Karzai, accusing Pakistan of trying to enslave Afghans, *Dawn* (Islamabad), 15 December 2006.

<sup>45</sup> *CRS Report*, op cit, p. 8.

<sup>46</sup> *Dawn* (Islamabad), 12 July 2006.

manifold, it is not difficult to understand what he meant. In the context of repeated charges of Pakistani involvement in the resurgent Taliban activities, Rangeen's statement could be dismissed as without any basis; but it cannot be denied that Pakistan feels hurt by the discriminatory treatment on the issue of civilian nuclear cooperation.

### **Conclusion**

Although Indo-US deal on civilian nuclear cooperation is a bilateral matter between the two countries, it has serious global and regional implications. The deal poses a potential threat to international non-proliferation regime under NPT, as under pressure from the White House and the Indian Government lobbyists, the Congressional conference giving final shape to the legislation dropped a Senate provision that would have barred the U S from supporting the changes to NSG rules to favour India. It can trigger a nuclear arms race in the region, involving Pakistan, India and China. It can adversely affect the movement of already slow peace process between Pakistan and India. If the peace process is stalled it can have over spilling effect, affecting Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan.

The strategic stability in South Asia is most likely to be disturbed as a result of Indo-US nuclear deal because the deal would enable India to acquire additional nuclear material to feed its military nuclear facilities. The deal contains an assurance from the United States for a continued and uninterrupted supply of nuclear fuel. This will enable India to divert its indigenous uranium reserves to the exclusive use for making more and improved nuclear weapons. Under the agreement, India has consented to place 14 of its 22 nuclear facilities under IAEA monitoring, to ensure that nuclear fuel in these reactors would not be used for production of weapons. But it has kept eight and an unlimited number of future reactors outside international safeguards. These reactors would continue to produce fissile material for producing nuclear weapons, free from any international control. The Indo-US deal therefore would continue to draw criticism for its possible impact on strategic stability in South Asia and universal non-proliferation regime. ■



## PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS: WAY OUT OF IMPASSE?

Dr. Maqsudul Hasan Nuri \*

### Background

It has been almost over five years since the US forces ousted the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. A period of relative calm ensued and lasted for a few years when the Taliban decided to assume a low-lying posture. Admittedly, certain positive developments did take place in Afghanistan: holding of a *Loya Jirga*, first national elections for the parliament and then for the office of president. Moreover, women representation took place for the first time in Afghanistan. Ever since April 2006, this relative calm was disturbed when President Hamid Karzai and his government apparently lost control over nearly half of the country, as violence spread to the country's north and west, which bordered Iran. Due to the spiralling violence, an estimated 3,700 Afghans were killed which quadrupled the number of violence-related deaths since 2005.<sup>1</sup> Casualties among foreign troops were nearly 198; almost 100 suicide bombings have occurred <sup>2</sup> while around 600 militant attacks were carried out each month.<sup>3</sup> Nearly as many as thousand bombs were dropped in the last six months, which were more than the firepower used during the first three years of the campaign against the Taliban forces; the US air force also fired nearly 150,000 cannon rounds in support of NATO troops.<sup>4</sup>

Afghan militants, who were trained in *Jihad* had hitherto held caches of weapons, bought fresh weapons from drug sales but lately a new phenomenon is emerging: they are now learning new techniques from Iraqis, of Al-Qaeda type suicide attackers. It is also alleged that Iran is also involved in supporting some former *Jibadi* commanders like Gulbadin Hekmatyar. In the second week of December 2006, Karzai, thrice accused Pakistan for openly supporting the Taliban forces in attacks in waging attacks in his country. Branding Pakistan as the 'boss' of Taliban, he stated that the recent visit of Pakistani Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri, to Kabul was

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<sup>1</sup> "National caveats: the condition hobbling NATO's Afghan mission," *Daily Times* (Islamabad), 29 November 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Karzai government is struggling for salvation. See *The Los Angeles Times*, reported in *Daily Times* (Islamabad), 14 November 2006.

<sup>3</sup> See Patrick Seale, "Losing the war in Afghanistan," *Daily Times* (Islamabad), 19 December 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

for 'enslaving him'.<sup>5</sup> Karzai emphasised that it was not the Pakistani nation but the government that was responsible for deterioration in relations between the two countries. From the Pakistan side, there is a strong denial of any such support. Taliban's representative remarked that the Taliban represent 'purely a national resistance' and that they would continue their struggle until the 'invading forces were ousted' and Karzai government [was] toppled [in Kabul].<sup>6</sup> Historically, Afghanistan was called as the 'graveyard of empires,' for giving fierce resistance to the invaders. Through the ages, all the invaders found the Afghans either too fiercely resistant or their land too forbidding to occupy and settle down. Not long ago, Afghanistan saw the rout of former Soviet forces and, currently, the US and NATO forces are realizing that their occupation is becoming unsustainable.

There are three reasons for the resurgence of the ousted Taliban forces and the general breakdown of law and order in Afghanistan. First, it has greatly to do with the foreign occupation. The Afghan history shows that when earlier Babrak Karmal, rode into Kabul aboard Russian tanks, and, recently when Hamid Karzai was catapulted into power after US troops entered Kabul, the Afghan people questioned their legitimacy. Second, although a Pukhtun that makes him representative of the largest ethnic group, Karzai has tried to garner support from the minority Tajik and Uzbek communities, by alienating his own numerically larger community. Third, he did not rely on political means but relied greatly on foreign forces to secure his rule.<sup>7</sup> Besides, some sound reasons exist for the serious failure in controlling Afghanistan, which has a population of nearly 30 million, and has the world's most rugged terrain and a backward tribal society. It has 34 provinces, out of which especially Zabul and Uruzgwan and four in the in the south and southeast are extremely trouble-ridden. The foreign troops that were assigned to quell trouble in Afghanistan were meagre — comprising only one-fourth of those in Iraq and comparatively far less in Kosovo, a tiny province of nearly two million.<sup>8</sup> Besides, NATO forces lacked helicopters and mobility and most of its forces had to operate under certain serious constraints.

The 26-nation NATO forces have a combined strength of nearly 2.2 million armed forces but the organisation remained hesitant to commit more troops to Afghanistan. The EU approach was not to get involved in the internal wars of nations. The Iraq war diverted forces and attention away from the Afghan theatre, thus weakening the domestic structure of Afghanistan. No wonder, Lt. General David Richard, the British commander of NATO forces

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<sup>5</sup> See Hamid Karzai's accusation, *Dawn* (Islamabad), 14 December 2006.

<sup>6</sup> As mentioned by Mohammad Hanif, Taliban spokesman to AFP as cited in "Karzai's charges rejected," *Ibid.*, 17 December 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Editorial, "The Afghan mess," *Ibid.*, 6 December 2006.

<sup>8</sup> J. Chirac, "France's vision of NATO," *Daily Times* (Islamabad), 29 November 2006.

in Afghanistan starkly warned that over 70 per cent of Afghans who supported the Western presence could switch over towards rebels if the NATO forces did not do well by winter.<sup>9</sup> In the recently-held NATO heads of states meeting in late November in Riga, Latvia, most of these concerns were raised. Afghanistan also needs a properly equipped national army of 150,000-200,000. The Bonn Accord of 2001 stipulated for a 70,000 strong army; currently only a fledgling force of 36,000 exists, which is fighting alongside NATO and US troops.<sup>10</sup> In finding a viable solution to the Afghan imbroglio, there is a need to take a concerted action by all parties concerned. Afghanistan's security and well being is crucial for the global war against terrorism, and stability in Southwest and South Asia.

## Policy Guidelines:

### *A. Global Efforts*

#### *(I) NATO's Problems*

While the European Union is suffering from an expansion fatigue for bringing in new members, the NATO alliance is facing some strains.<sup>11</sup> For example, the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan faces a number of national caveats. These range from original mission of peace-keeping role, lack of troops, geographical limitations to operate, avoidance of night fighting, paucity of better equipment, *etc.* These forces, almost 32,000 in number, are supplemented by another 13,000 from the US and are duly backed by air force. While the US and Britain, and, to some extent, Netherlands are facing the brunt of fighting in the turbulent south and south-eastern regions, Germany, France and Italy, are confined to relatively peaceful northern Afghanistan and are responsible for training and peacekeeping. The US and British forces have sustained more than 90 per cent casualties in Afghanistan. In September 2006, the US NATO Supreme Commander, General James Jones, called for an additional 2,500 troops for support (1000 combat and 1,500 for logistical purposes) in September 2006.<sup>12</sup> It is now increasingly felt that the diversion of resources from Afghanistan to theatres like Iraq, had diverted resources and led to 'draining all the oxygen [out] of the policy process in Washington'.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> "Kabul says NATO summit ignored long-term needs," *Daily Times*, (Islamabad), 2 December 2006.

<sup>10</sup> *The News* (Rawalpindi) 6 September 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Editorial, "A strained alliance," *Dawn*, (Islamabad), 6 December 2006.

<sup>12</sup> "Caveats..." *op. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> See Joseph. S. Nye, "NATO after Riga," *Daily Times*, (Islamabad), 10 December 2006.

*(II) Foreign Aid*

Afghanistan needs more foreign development assistance. To meet its requirements, President Pervez Musharraf has proposed a US\$ 4/5 billion 'Marshall Plan' for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.<sup>14</sup> Due to shortage of funds, Afghanistan has seriously ignored important areas such as reconstruction, national development, building of judiciary, police, and army. Foreign donors spent nearly \$16 billion in Afghanistan, out of which the US donated over \$10.3 billion. The Afghan government's lack of resources and control over spending over the available money has eroded the credibility amongst the Afghan population. A US scholar, after a recent visit to Afghanistan, observed that the US needed to increase its construction aid from the present level of US\$ 2 billion to US\$ 10 billion dollars.<sup>15</sup> Further, he emphasized that economic aid should precede policies of drug eradication. In his view, the provision of drinking water, repairing irrigation channels, building roads, schools and clinics, must take precedence over drug eradication. Given the present milieu, it is no surprise that amongst the common Afghans, there is nostalgia for the Taliban days when security and economic conditions were relatively better. This could lead to the strengthening of Afghan nationalism through the Taliban under the leadership of Mullah Omar.

*(III) The Drug Factor*

Today, Afghanistan has acquired the 'dubious distinction' of being the largest narco-state in the world after Colombia, South America. NATO military commander, General James Jones, has called the drugs in Afghanistan its 'Achilles heel.'<sup>16</sup> The opium centre happens to be in Helmand province, along with five other southern provinces. In 2006, opium records hit to the level of 6,100 tonnes, generating more than US\$3 billion in illicit revenues, which is equivalent of almost to almost one-half of Afghan GNP.<sup>17</sup> Employing 13 percent of the population, poppy production takes up less than 4 per cent of the total cultivable land and accounts for more than 90 per cent of the world's opium supply.<sup>18</sup> At least, six drug-producing provinces produced the bulk of opium. Although there may not be direct correlation of drugs with increased

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<sup>14</sup> Khalid Hasan "Afghan allegations grossly exaggerated: Pakistan," *Daily Times*, (Islamabad), 9 Dec 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Anthony Cordesman, Center of Strategic and International Studies as cited in Seale, op .cit.

<sup>16</sup> As cited in Antonio Mario Costa, Executive Director of UN Office in Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) "Afghanistan's opium war," *Daily Times*, (Islamabad), 26 November 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> World Bank and UNODC Report, "Afghanistan Drug industry: strengths, funding, dynamics and implications for counter narcotic policy, as cited in Yusuf Nazar, "The drug threat from Afghanistan," *Dawn* (Islamabad), 9 December 2006.

insurgency, drug trafficking, money laundering and illegal weapons, pose major challenge to the authority of the Afghan government. On the eve of the Riga NATO summit on 25 November 2006, President Bush telephoned President Karzai, demanding more action against Afghanistan's drug trade.<sup>19</sup>

Is poppy growing a better option for the Afghans? Drought conditions and scarcity of water make its cultivation convenient and economical crop. In the drug trade, provincial governors, tribal chiefs and high police officials are all involved. Of course, the demand factor in developed countries is also very important, and, according to knowledgeable observers, it might take a generation to win the battle against the menace of drugs.<sup>20</sup> Illicit trade flourished in the 1980s during the Afghan Jihad and infested Pakistani society with drugs and Kalashnikov culture. During the brief Taliban rule, both drug production and its trade were curbed to a great extent. However, unless alternative means of livelihood are created or suitable incentives provided to the poor, drug production and illicit trade would continue. For Pakistan, in order to enforce its writ in Balochistan and NWFP, the country would have to strongly seek UN help and cooperation from the Karzai government to prevent the menace from spreading into Pakistan.

### *B. Pakistan's Efforts*

The recently- released, Iraq Study Group (ISG) report, has underlined the need to deal with Afghanistan and has maintained that diversion of resources to Iraq was detrimental to Afghanistan. Pakistan is not in favour of 'cut and run' policies for the NATO forces in Afghanistan, although it would welcome a timetable for withdrawal. Perhaps some neutral Muslim countries could take on this responsibility. Lately, Pakistan and Afghanistan have been blaming each other for their respective failures. Pakistan has listed its own difficulties in controlling the nearly 2,500 km long border and tackling of the insurgency, despite stationing of nearly 80,000 troops and about 600 check posts. It was, however, unable to control refugees from daily crossing the border from Chaman side. Moreover, Pakistan remains keen to expeditiously register and repatriate the 2.6 million Afghan refugees under UN auspices. Pakistan has also proposed selective mining and fencing of the Afghan border. However, the Afghan government has strongly objected to it, as this step is seen as foreclosing its stand on Durand Line as final boundary between the two countries and curtailment of historical movement of co-ethnics across the borders.

Admittedly, Pakistan could not check the massive inflow of nearly 3.2 million refugees on its soil in the wake of the 1979 Soviet military invasion. It

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Antonio Maria Costa, "Afghanistan drug war will take a generation to win," *Daily Times*, (Islamabad), 26 November 2006.

acted in the spirit of Islamic hospitality and brotherhood, but when the refugees decided to overstay, they started posing a threat to Pakistan's national security. They created law and order problems, brought in an influx of weapons and drugs, damaged economy and environment, wrested jobs from locals and were responsible for an increase in crime. On the contrary, Afghanistan's western neighbour, Iran, dealt prudently with refugee problem by restricting their movement and sheltering them in refugee camps. Today, part of the problem, if not the whole, has arisen from the bitter harvest left by Gen Zia ul Haq's so-called Islamisation policies and concepts such as 'strategic depth,' meaning Pakistan's quest for influence and control in Afghanistan. However, these have been compounded by different factors, some of which are not of Pakistan's making.

*(I) Economic Development*

The pace of development work in the FATA region should be accelerated. Despite limited absorptive capacity for funds, this has to be done in order to bring the tribal regions into the national mainstream and address their problems of gross underdevelopment and years of neglect. While the government has allocated generous grants, the benefits have to percolate fast and palpably to the people. Only then, it will reassure them of government's good intentions and ensure their stake in the system. To win the battle of 'hearts and minds' is crucial. The fast dwindling control of tribal Maliks has to be restored, as it has lately been wrested by the mullahs of the Taliban elements. Pakistan needs to increase its development funding for Afghanistan from 250 million dollars and launch some tangible aid projects as the Indians have done, such as building of roads, the Afghan national parliament, Indira Gandhi Hospital and Habibia College in Kabul. Such type of projects could act as visible symbols of Pak-Afghan friendship in order to win their 'hearts and minds.'

*(II) Immediate Repatriation of Afghan Refugees*

There is a dire need to immediately repatriate the 2.6 million refugees residing in Pakistan, as they could include some Taliban militants who criss-cross borders and sympathise with their counterparts. It is being increasingly felt that these refugees should be withdrawn from main cities (Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta) and regrouped in guarded camps. Admittedly, there are some problems of these refugees returning to Afghanistan. First, most of them cannot go back to Afghanistan where the security situation is fragile and where economy is almost shattered. Secondly, most of them were born in Pakistan and bear no emotional attachment to their native land. Thirdly, many enjoy a relatively comfortable existence in Pakistan. Fourthly, many fear that they would be treated as 'fifth columnists' due to prolonged stay in Afghanistan.

However, their fast track registration is being completed in all camps by 31 December 2006.

*(III) Opening Up to Moderate/ Centrist National Parties*

The Musharraf government had been supporting the religio-political parties, which came into power after the 2002 general elections in the country. One of them, forming part of the six-party MMA alliance, rules NWFP, while the other forms a coalition government in Balochistan. However, over a period of time, these political parties have demonstrated sympathy, if not support, to the Taliban elements in Afghanistan. Following the armed attack in Dargai in October on a terrorist Madrassah, and, as a consequence, the retaliatory response in Dargai military camp which killed army training recruits, the government is rethinking to evolve a fresh strategy against terrorism. There is some inkling that the government is reversing its policy of closely linking itself with some religious parties. In this regard, President Musharraf, has on many occasions, exhorted Pakistanis to support progressive and liberal forces in the 2008 general elections and reject the extremists. In his view, these retrogressive forces previously held only 3-4 per cent votes, but now they had almost 17-18 per cent representation in the assemblies.<sup>21</sup>

*(IV) Blocking Foreign Funds*

It is not only the ideological frenzy but also continuous money supply which motivates militancy. This is done either through a sense of philanthropy or charity for the 'Islamic cause.' It is important that flow of funds from certain Gulf countries be stopped in Afghanistan and also in the tribal regions of Pakistan.

*(V) Identifying and Eliminating Foreign Elements*

If the foreign militants, allegedly around 500 to 2,000, are still operating, then the intelligence agencies should identify them and soon eliminate them.<sup>22</sup> These militia elements are either Afghans, militant Taliban, Chechens or Uzbeks,

*(VI) Engagement Policy*

Some highly respected elders, and politicians, from across the borders, are needed to sort out the problems. Unfortunately, the *Ulema* and tribal elders have not been able to play any effective role in taming the clerics'

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<sup>21</sup> See Transcript of Musharraf's interview to NDTV as reported in *Daily Times*, (Islamabad), 7 December 2006.

<sup>22</sup> S. Carlotta Goll, "Talibans and allied tighten grips in north of Pakistan," *The New York Times*, as cited in Najmuddin A. Sheikh, "Worsening ties with Kabul," *Dawn* (Islamabad), 13 December 2006.

inflammatory role. Taliban are now an Afghan phenomenon. There is a need to engage them and some other radical elements. By not engaging them would tend to reinforce their strength. Instead of waiting for more NATO troops to arrive, it is appropriate to engage them and bring them to the side of the moderates. All Pushtuns are not Taliban but latter's influence is spreading due to increase in poor governance and poverty levels. A policy of tolerating pluralism may be more prudent than eliminating the Taliban completely.<sup>23</sup>

*(VII) Countering Foreign Elements*

There is a dire need to watch out certain 'third countries,' who are trying to fish in troubled waters. On complaints about increase in number of Indian consulates in eastern Afghanistan for alleged anti-Pakistan activities, a better counter tactic might be to marginalize them through engagement with NGOs, construction companies, cultural programmes, educational cooperation and other such ventures.<sup>24</sup> On this issue, the Afghan version is contrary to that of Pakistan. Their claim is that Indians are involved in road construction, trade and other construction activities. As an analyst contends, if India is creating problems, there is all the more reason to resolve problems by engaging Afghanistan through a similar peace dialogue.<sup>25</sup>

*(VIII) Media Responsibility*

The media, on both sides, has to show greater maturity, responsibility and restraint in building trust. The media, especially electronic can play a major role in making or tarnishing perceptions. By overcoming bureaucratic hurdles and promoting responsible and balanced reporting, it could play a positive role in neutralising the politically charged atmosphere and minimizing distrust between the two countries.

*(IX) Limiting People- to- People Contact*

In order to bring down the high political temperature, which has resulted from accusations and counter accusations, a 'moratorium' on statements, should be observed by both sides. According to Najmuddin Sheikh, a former diplomat, Pakistan should not indulge itself in blame game even if it means limited Pak-Afghan relationship at the cost of outside powers' increased influence.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> See Michael Vati Kotis, "Let's talk to religious radicals, too," *Daily Times* (Islamabad), 29 November 2006.

<sup>24</sup> Asad Durrani, "Whither strategic depth?," *The Nation*, (Islamabad), 27 May 2006.

<sup>25</sup> See Hussain Haqqani, "The need to befriend Afghanistan," *Ibid.*, 20 December 2006.

<sup>26</sup> Sheikh, *op. cit.*



*(X) Dialogue and Jirga*

Dialogue on multiple tracks must start, including political leaders, intellectuals, people, civic groups, journalists and traders, *etc.* On 8 December 2006, the planned Pak-Afghan talks on border security did not achieve any breakthrough on tribal councils due to the Afghan preference for involvement of all Afghans, while Pakistan insisted on having only Pushtuns from the border areas. As agreed, tribal *Jirga* should be held on both sides of the border, even if national *Jirga* is not held.

*(XI) Understanding the Afghan Psyche*

If Pakistan chafes under Indian patronizing attitude and terms it hegemonic, so do the Afghans, given their country's size, shattered economy, and landlocked status. They need empathy, not blame. Just as Pakistan resents India behaviour as a 'big brother', so do the Afghans as a proud people. Their economy is shattered and they themselves are traumatized by wars. Pakistan is bigger, economically stronger and a nuclear power. A seasoned senior diplomat, who served in Afghanistan, aptly remarked: 'if you keep on advising an already sick person, he is going to resent, not listen, but only talk back at you'.<sup>27</sup>

*(XII) Role of Political Parties*

Surprisingly, all other parties other than the ruling party, have not shown much interest in happenings in either Waziristan, or northern areas or on the Pak-Afghan border. Only MMA keeps quiet links with the Taliban. Afghanistan is a question of national interest and not that of military alone. It is time that Musharraf government took into confidence the moderate and progressive parties, instead of letting the MMA re-capitalise emotively in future elections.

*(XIII) Jettison the Strategic Depth Concept*

It is high time for Pakistan to quit the 'strategic depth' doctrine. It smacks of the 'Great Game,' when the imperial powers —Britain and Russia —competed for influence in Afghanistan. It was probably based on the assumption that Pakistan's Afghan policy should be pro-Pukhtun, since the latter forms the largest ethnic majority in that country. Or, it could be to keep Afghanistan 'friendly,' while the situation on the eastern borders, with the ongoing Indo-Pak peace process, remains uncertain. Contrarily, Afghanistan strongly objects to this policy and maintains that Pakistan takes them for granted as its 'fifth province'.<sup>28</sup> Pakistan's policy should not be to side openly, or favour one group

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with a senior retired Pakistani diplomat who served in Kabul during the Taliban regime.

<sup>28</sup> See Imtiaz Alam, "Afghanistan: missing links in the war against terrorism," *The News* (Islamabad), 19 December 2006.

over another. Any government in power in Afghanistan would willy-nilly, enter into workable relations with Pakistan due to geography and common ethno-historical connections.

### *C. Role of China*

As Pakistan comes under incessant criticism from the Afghan and US governments for allegedly supporting the Taliban, many Pakistanis feel that China could play a mediating role. Although China is normally reluctant to get involved in domestic affairs of others, yet given its friendly and special relations with Pakistan, it could take the initiative. Besides, developmental stakes in Balochistan and elsewhere in Pakistan could enable China to play mediating role in overcoming the ongoing mistrust between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

### **Conclusion**

At the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, many perceptive analysts had warned about the adverse repercussions on the region. At that time, Pakistan had opened its borders in an unusual act of magnanimity and in the spirit of Islamic brotherhood to help its Islamic brethren in distress. On their part, Iran and other Central Asian states happened to be more circumspect. The streaming waves of 3.2 million refugees settled in Pakistan permanently, while the local population had to suffer in terms of rising competition in jobs, land, and social services. In return, Afghanistan exported Klashnikov, drug and crime culture to Pakistani society. It is easy to offer policy guidelines that often border on wishful thinking and fond idealism. All actors in the Afghan imbroglio bear a responsibility to set things right. The international community faces 'assistance fatigue' syndrome, and, has not lived up to its promises for reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan. NATO and the U.S troops are rather few in number and ill-equipped, with Iraqi diversion, telling heavily on their performance. The Karzai government is too tardy to build up institutions — army, police, judiciary alone. Pakistani government, on its part, faces the 'tyranny of geography' - of long porous western borders and an incomplete writ in its borderlands. Some recent pronouncements of key U.S officials, including the CIA chief, suspect Pakistani commitment to fight the Taliban.

Under the circumstances, no quick and easy solution to the Afghan imbroglio is foreseeable. Very patiently, all sides to the conflict, need to think of some 'out of the box,' innovative solutions. As the Taliban phenomenon took decades to grow, it would require years to dismantle it. Being next-door neighbour of Afghanistan, Pakistan's foremost national interest lies in the latter's stability. Hopefully, certain outside powers would not interfere and the level of violence would be arrested. The bi-partisan Iraq Group Commission

(IGC) report has come out, with nearly 79 general and specific recommendations. The Bush Administration may not immediately follow them, but the indications are that the process of change in US policies is underway. In participatory systems such as the US, policy course corrections are possible. Whereas in Pakistan, the input is limited, as foreign policy has become the exclusive domain of certain bodies. Course correction, therefore, is a difficult and slow process. The outcome could be worse, when military solutions are preferred to problems that are essentially political.

The US, as a military-cum-economic power, can afford to absorb many shocks and yet make an exit if required, but for smaller countries like Pakistan, the space to manoeuvre and indulge in mistakes is very limited. Lying in a shatter zone and as a front line state, the consequences could be grim to national security and integrity. No doubt, the front line syndrome accords certain expedient benefits, but the consequential cost to the nation could be dire. According to a scholar, 'Afghanistan's troubles have been and will be Pakistan's troubles'.<sup>29</sup> Pakistan has already paid a heavy price in the 1980s and the 1990s and is repaying the price yet again. An enlightened and robust foreign policy is an outcome of sound domestic policies. Both domestic and foreign aspects are sides of the same coin. When people remain unrepresented by mainstream national parties and when political process is orchestrated, *ipso facto*, foreign policy would remain skewed and out of tune. After all, foreign policy is a means to achieving national interests by maximizing possible gains in an increasingly semi-anarchic regional and international environment, while, limiting potential harms. While Pakistan is doing relatively well on its eastern front with India through the on going peace process, its western side is in trouble, as it faces inflamed borders of two provinces. Pak-Afghan relations will continue to pose a major challenge to policy managers in the foreseeable future. One can only hope that vision and sagacity will guide the policies of both countries, which would then support their national interests and promote stability in the region. ■

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<sup>29</sup> Rasul B. Rais, "Incredible line in Afghanistan," *Daily Times* (Islamabad), 25 December 2006.

## EMERGING REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN EAST ASIA: CHALLENGES AND CHOICES FOR PAKISTAN

Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik \*

### Introduction

South and East Asian countries that became independent after the end of World War II (1945), faced enormous economic problems as a result of colonial exploitative policies that spanned over centuries. This resulted in creating absolute economic backwardness, underdevelopment, and ultimate poverty. Both South and East Asian leadership fully realized the unimagineable brunt of colonialism and thought of devising ways and means to tackle the after-shocks of colonial exploitation.

Therefore, a number of regional economic cooperation initiatives were taken at different times with slightly different objectives after 1945 in Asia. Nevertheless, the core of the objective remained the same, i.e., economic development by minimizing political differences and enlarging common security concerns. Starting with Colombo Plan in 1951, supposedly it was the first unified effort by Western countries to create better living conditions both in South and South East Asia. Then came the most pivotal regional economic Organisation in the shape of the Association of the South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967 along with a diversity of objectives by mainly focusing on South East Asia. The Australian initiative, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), taken in 1980, was intended to integrate the larger Asia-Pacific region during the last stages of the Cold War. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) came into being in 2000 to handle the issues stemmed from the demise of the Soviet Union with a focus on China, Russia, and Central Asia rather than focusing on East Asia. In this sense, SCO is an extra-East Asian set up. The post 9/11 gave birth to another two regional economic groupings i.e., the Thai initiative of Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) in 2002 and the Malaysian initiative, the East Asian Community (EAC) that came into being in 2005. All these regional organisations tended to create economic integration in East Asia. Against this backdrop, the primary purpose of this paper is to make a critical review of regional economic organisations and analyse challenges being faced by Pakistan and opportunities and choices available for the country in the future.

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## **Economic Integration**

The concept of economic integration dominates the central theme of almost every regional organisation. Economic integration falls within national interest of countries as they adopt measures to join such organisations in their respective regions or blocs. Economic regionalism leads to economic integration among member States. Politically, containment of any country, by a relatively powerful country, also finds its way in a regional economic organisation. Economic regionalism, in fact, is a sort of 'economic nationalism' that lies within respective States.

The main idea behind regional economic integration is the acceleration of pace of growth, development, low-cost production, efficiency, removal of territorial and institutional barriers, promotion of trade, and increasing of income. Theory of economic integration derives from the theory of international trade. In fact, economic integration focuses on free trade. Until J Viner developed the theory of economic integration in 1950, no major breakthrough was made on this subject.<sup>1</sup> Later Balassa, Robson, and El-Agra pointed out that economic integration removes restrictions within respective regional bloc and produces goods efficiently.<sup>2</sup> The focus of economic integration theories was Europe and North America because of high level of economic development, cooperation, and coordination. Economic integration in East Asia began with the idea of economic and social development in the 1950s, fostering cooperation and coordination, enhancing trading links, increasing investment, and receiving assistance and to a lesser extent the containment of Western hegemony. The successful attainment of these objectives further pushed the idea of a Common Market – probably the ultimate objective of regional organisations so far.

In the following section, an effort will be made to ascertain the overall performance of regional economic organisations in East Asia, their thrust toward economic integration, and challenges as well as choices being faced by Pakistan in such organisations over the past several decades. On the basis of analysis drawn, policy recommendations will also be made in order to enable Pakistan to play much more assertive role in such organisations in the future.

## **Regional Economic Organisations in East Asia**

As stated earlier, a number of initiatives have been taken to create an environment that could lead toward economic development in East Asia

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<sup>1</sup> J. Viner, *The Customs Union Issue* (New York, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1950).

<sup>2</sup> Bela Balassa, *The Theory of Economic Integration* (London: Irwin Inc, 1961), P. Robson, *The Economics of International Integration* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1987) & *Transnational Corporations and Economic Integration* (London: Routledge, 1993), & Ali M. El-Agraa, *Economic Integration Worldwide* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

during the 1950s and 1960s. Foremost of them were the Colombo Plan and the ASEAN. In the following section, a critical analysis of these two regional economic organisations will be made and to see how these efforts have led toward economic integration of East Asia with particular reference to Pakistan.

#### *A. The Colombo Plan*

Although the Colombo Plan was a British Commonwealth initiative, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (India), J. R. Jayawardne (Ceylon, now Sri Lanka) and Ghulam Muhammad (Pakistan) were the forerunners of the Plan that aimed at economic and social development of both East and South Asia. These leaders realized that a plan for Asia, similar to that of the Marshall Plan, was badly needed for Asia to meet the economic challenges posed by the colonial subjugation and exploitation. The Colombo Plan, which resulted from these deliberations, was the first multilateral effort with regard to obtaining foreign aid for Asia. The key donor countries were Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Britain and the United States, and the organisation included Asian members of the Commonwealth such as India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.<sup>3</sup>

Consequently, a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Commonwealth was convened at Colombo (Sri Lanka) in January 1950 along with the primary aim to set an aid programme for South and South East Asia. The Plan, sometimes referred to as Spender Plan<sup>4</sup>, came to be called the Colombo Plan. The Plan began with Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Later, United States, Japan, Malaysia, (then Malaya), Indonesia, Philippines, Burma (now Myanmar), and Laos joined the Plan in 1954. Singapore joined the Plan in 1963. Although economic development was the main idea behind the Colombo Plan, it could also ward off any Communist threat in the region and create better political understanding among members in the region.

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<sup>3</sup> See speech of Alexander Downer, Australian Minister For Foreign Affairs, Australia, "Launch of Australia and the Colombo Plan 1949-1957"; Canberra, 23 May 2005. *Historical Publications*, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Australia.

<sup>4</sup> Named after Hon. Sir Percy Spender, Australian Minister for External Affairs, Government of Australia, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Historical Publications*, 7 *Extract From Dispatch 7/50 From Cutler to Spender Extract*, (Secret), Wellington, 15 May 1950.

**The Colombo Plan Member Countries**

Year	Members
1951	Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India, Pakistan, & Sri Lanka
1954	United States, Japan, Malaysia, (then Malaya), Indonesia, Philippines, Burma (now Myanmar), & Laos
1963	Federation of Malaysia, & Singapore

*B. ASEAN*

As Colombo Plan appeared somewhat a loose geographical organization, ASEAN was formed on 8 August 1967 at Bangkok as a political and economic organization comprising of South East Asian countries namely Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and Singapore. Their objective was to display solidarity against Communist expansion in Vietnam and insurgency within their own borders. Following the Bali Summit of 1976, the organisation embarked on a programme of economic cooperation, which floundered in the mid-1980's only to be revived around a 1991 Thai proposal for a regional free trade area.<sup>5</sup>

Pakistan became a Sectoral-Dialogue Partner of ASEAN in 1993 at the instance of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei. Since the establishment of the Sectoral Dialogue Partnership, Pakistan has been making concerted efforts to raise the level of diplomatic and official interaction as well as trade and commercial linkages with ASEAN member states. Trade, industry, investment and environment were identified as potential areas of cooperation between Pakistan and ASEAN. Pakistan actively participated in trade fairs, business and investment seminars held in ASEAN countries after assuming the status of the Sectoral-Dialogue Partner. This led Pakistani businessmen to Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Brunei and Indonesia in 1995 and 1996 to participate in trade fairs.

The inaugural meeting to officially launch the Sectoral-Dialogue Partnership was held at Islamabad in November 1997, which affirmed the setting up of the ASEAN-Pakistan Joint Sectoral Co-operation Committee (APJSCC) as the inter-governmental consultative body to coordinate the ASEAN-Pakistan Sectoral Dialogue Partnership. It also decided to establish the ASEAN-Islamabad Committee (AIC) comprising ASEAN diplomatic heads of missions accredited to Pakistan. The AIC was intended to facilitate ASEAN Sectoral Dialogue relations with Pakistan. The First APJSCC was held on 5 February 1999 at Bali (Indonesia). Pakistan made several proposals aimed

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<sup>5</sup> See Mya Than, *ASEAN Beyond the Regional Crisis*. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001).

at enhancing Pakistan's cooperation with ASEAN including the Pakistan-ASEAN Fund of US\$ 4100,000, a Workshop on Trade Facilitation between Pakistan and ASEAN held back with the First ASEAN-Pakistan Joint Business Council (APJBC) meeting in Pakistan. It has also broadened the scope of scholarships being offered to ASEAN countries (a total of 48 scholarships with country-wise break-up was as under: Indonesia 10, Malaysia 19, Thailand 10, Philippines 7, & Singapore 2) in the field of medicine, engineering, dentistry, and pharmacy on subsidized rates at institutions in Pakistan. Its proposal to host workshop on composite materials, food sciences and technology, renewable energy, remote sensing, and GIS applications were greatly appreciated by the ASEAN side. Pakistan and ASEAN agreed to encourage direct contacts between their governments to develop feasible mutual activities. In spite of geographical distances, transient economic and financial difficulties in ASEAN member countries should not deter the Association from its onward looking orientation to work closely with Pakistan to strengthening cooperation.

Moreover, engagement with ASEAN countries is on the rise in Pakistan's diplomatic and economic agenda by the beginning of 2004. As Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Myanmar became ASEAN members, their significance has also increased. The year 2004 marked a new beginning in Pakistan's relations with Cambodia and Laos when Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali visited these countries – first ever visits by a head of State or Government of Pakistan in 58 years. However, economic ties between Pakistan and ASEAN countries have not taken any concrete shape as yet. There is a need to really hit this 'forbidden' area.

Since 9/11 Pakistan has been emerging a front-line State to combat terrorism. Subsequent developments suggested that South East Asia could be the second front of terrorism.<sup>6</sup> Some of terrorist groups in South East Asia got links with their Pakistani counterparts as a result of a two-decade long Afghan war. Terrorist attacks in South East Asia such as the Bali bombing and the similar worsening security situation in the Philippines together with Islamic separatist movement in that country along with security threat in Thailand, made Pakistan relevant to Full Dialogue member of the ASEAN. Therefore, all South East Asian countries particularly the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia as well as Australia and New Zealand in the Pacific need Pakistan's cooperation in dealing with terrorism in Asia-Pacific. Therefore, Pakistan's status as being Sectoral-Dialogue Partner and ARF member together with the 9/11 realities are demanding that Pakistan should become a Full Dialogue Partner of ASEAN in 2006. Pakistan has not been viewed as hegemonic

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<sup>6</sup> Paul J. Smith (ed), *Terrorism and Violence in Southeast Asia: Transnational Challenges to States and Regional Stability* (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2005).



power amongst ASEAN countries. Rather it has been regarded as a development partner. This eventually facilitates Pakistan's role in ASEAN.<sup>7</sup>

### **Extra-Regional Economic Organisations**

Beginning in 1981, APEC was formed to represent broader economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. Similarly, SCO, along with security objectives, came into being to safeguard economic interests of China, the only East Asian country, Russia, and four Central Asian countries. Moreover, like ASEAN, ACD had been another South East Asian initiative taken by Thailand to extend economic cooperation beyond East Asia. The latest effort came in the form of EAS, a Malaysian initiative to help integrate East Asia with varying objectives.

#### *A. APEC*

APEC is a large regional body representing countries across Asia-Pacific. Four G-Eight (Group of Eight industrialised countries) such as United States, Canada, Japan, and Russia) are its members along with seven members from ASEAN, in addition to South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Australia is also playing a crucial role in the activities of APEC since its inception in 1989.<sup>8</sup>

Pakistan has been trying to obtain APEC membership. However, at the APEC Summit held at Vancouver (Canada) in 1997, imposed a ten-year moratorium on membership. Pakistan, nevertheless, has been participating at various fora, seminars, meetings, and workshops convened by APEC on vital global issues such as terrorism, corruption, and free trade. Pakistan also participated at the APEC Counter-Terrorism Task Force Meeting held on 26 May 2003 at Khon Kaen, Thailand. Later, Pakistan also participated at the APEC Working Group Coordination Meeting on Counter Terrorism proposed by Japan on 29 February-1 March 2004 held at Santiago. Yet it participated at the APEC Anti-Corruption Meeting held on 25-26 September 2004 at Santiago (Chile). It was realised that corruption in governments, private sector, and society in the Asia-Pacific region is eroding welfare and stability. Therefore, it was imperative that Asian-Pacific countries should fight against corruption with the ADB/OECD (Asian Development Bank & Organisation of Economic Cooperation for Development, respectively) initiative to create a transparent system for public service. Pakistan also participated at the APEC Workshop on Identifying and Addressing Possible Impacts of RTAs / FTAs Development on APEC Developing Member

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<sup>7</sup> See Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik, Pakistan's Vision East Asia: Pursuing Economic Diplomacy in the Age of Globalisation, *IPRI Paper 11*, (July 2006) pp. 39-43.

<sup>8</sup> Jurgen Ruland, Eva Manske, Werner Draguhn (ed), *Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)* (London: Routledge, 2002) & Jiro Okamoto, *Trade Liberalization and APEC*. (London: Routledge, 2004).

Economies held on 28-30 June 2005 at Hanoi (Vietnam). Pakistan's participation at seminar and workshop level and its commitments shown at various vital global issues across Asia-Pacific, would eventually help it to achieve a membership status at APEC particularly when moratorium would expired in 2007.

### B. SCO

Originally called the Shanghai Five, the SCO formed in 1996 largely to demilitarise the border between China and the former Soviet Union. In 2001, the organisation added Uzbekistan and renamed itself the SCO. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan are also its members. By 2000 all such border issues between the two giants were resolved. The declaration that established the SCO was signed on June 15, 2001 in Shanghai to promote mutual trust and friendship between the member states, and foster effective political, economic, scientific, and cultural cooperation, as well as to promote mutual contacts in education, energy, transport, and environment. Uzbekistan was included as a new member this year along with four semi-members with Observer status – Mongolia, India, Iran, and Pakistan that promoted its membership beyond China's borders. There should not be obstacles to not include North and South Korea into the organisation. If SCO's continued its southward move, other members such as Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia may be included into the organisation in the future.

The inclusion of Pakistan as an Observer in the SCO on 5 July 2005 at the Astana Summit has been seen yet another positive step to further strengthen Pakistan's relations as well as to enhance its increasing role in the region. India, Iran, and Mongolia were also included as Observers in the organisation. With the granting of the Observer status to Pakistan in SCO would indeed further promote cooperation between Pakistan and the SCO member countries – a region of much wider importance in terms of both security and economic cooperation.<sup>9</sup> The organisation presents almost half of world mankind with two veto powers sitting on the United Nations Security Council and with four nuclear powers. These considerations are making the organisation significant and effective.

Pakistan expressed its hope that its participation in the SCO forum 'would open new avenues of cooperation with other countries in the region' and would present various issues of regional and international importance at the forum that would ultimately strengthen Islamabad's ties with other nine countries.<sup>10</sup> This would also result in increasing diplomatic activities and enhance prestige among the international comity. Closer regional cooperation

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<sup>9</sup> Based on Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik's two articles "SCO Challenges", *The Nation* (Islamabad), 10 July 2005, & "SCO: Pakistan's Choices", *Ibid.*, 16 June 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik, "SCO Challenges", *The Nation*, 10 July 2005.

in a wide range of fields such as from economy to anti-terrorism, implementation of cooperation agreements already reached among the SCO members, UN reforms, and communication with non-member countries, and international organisations, would lead toward economic coordination and trade expansion.

In terms of Pakistan's economic relationships such as trade, investment, and mutual economic assistance, the region of SCO has not emerged as a vital area for such interactions. For instance, as far Pakistan's bilateral trade with SCO is concerned, Pakistan's total two-way bilateral trade with this bloc was recorded US\$ 2,082 billion that makes SCO's share of Pakistan's exports as low as 2.5 percent and imports 9.6 percent in 2004 respectively. Moreover, major chunk of this bilateral trade was destined for China and this increase was a result of Pakistan's Vision East Asia that aims at increased trade and commercial linkages with the countries of East Asia rather than SCO's overtures. If China was excluded, Pakistan's total two-way bilateral trade with SCO is merely US\$ 283 million that further makes SCO's share of Pakistan's exports as low as 2.1 percent and imports 0.2 percent or in absolute terms, only US\$ 44 million in the period mentioned above. Moreover, intra-regional trade between SCO members is also quite negligible as well as the level of economic coordination and cooperation is at the lowest ebb among SCO member countries.

Therefore, Pakistan's trade analysis with SCO suggests that the bloc is not vital for Pakistan's trade so far if Pakistan's bilateral trade with China was excluded knowing that Sino-Pakistan ties have remained vital even without the consideration of SCO. In addition to this, it can be concluded that SCO does not seem to be a trading bloc yet but it might emerge as a potential trading bloc. However, present level of economic complementarity among SCO members does not permit the bloc toward the achievement of a trading status. In this sense, most of interaction between SCO members is simply like 'Eldorado'. Their interaction with ASEAN is thus essential to expand their trading and economic links.

However, as far security, defence, and strategic overtures are concerned, SCO seems to be more prone toward these issues. It has great potential to emerge as a military, defence, security, and strategic bloc countervailing Western hegemony and US dominance in the vast Euro-Asian region by excluding 'white Russian hegemony'. Russian cooperation or eventual integration with Asia makes a significant departure in its foreign policy behaviour in several centuries. There may be a strong feeling of realisation about the emerging strength of Asian economies with the rise of China, ASEAN, South Korea, and above all, Japan. Nevertheless, SCO's success would largely depend on how much strategic understanding has been built and achieved between China and Russia. Other members would be either revolving around China or Russia for support and guidance.

SCO will promote the free flow of commodities, capital, technology, and services among its members in the next 20 years. Pakistan has signed FTA with two regional blocs such as with SAARC (Association of South Asian Countries) and ECO. The same agreement would be in operation with China by 2006. Therefore, SCO would help promote Pakistan with the signing of FTAs with other members and observers of SCO in the near future to accelerate trade particularly the land-born trade via the ancient Silk-Road.

Besides India, Pakistan's relations with Russia are also improving which manoeuvred to get India into SCO. China, on the other side, that helped Pakistan to get into the organisation as Observer, is the corner-stone of Pakistan's foreign policy together with Pakistan's increasing friendly ties with other Central Asian countries. After assuming an observer status, Pakistan got tremendous privileges and opportunities to strengthen and improve its relations with several countries at both multilateral and bilateral level. For instance, Pakistan interacts with several of these countries at ECO, and with India and China at ARF besides interacting with India at the SAARC summits.

Challenging the Western and more clearly US supremacy seems to be the basic cause of this new regional grouping representing half of human population. The Astana Declaration that demanded a time framework for the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, but at the same time, their commitment to fight against terrorism and colour revolutions to bring stability, has indeed challenged the so-called white supremacy in a much wider Euro-Asia region for the first time in years. This collective demand indeed has signalled a dazzling change in the existing international order and this challenge may also up set the position of US troops deployment in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan in the near future depending on the success of SCO. The participation of ASEAN as a guest in SCO is a welcome move. This would not only convert SCO into a more authoritative Euro-Asian regional organisation.

After Astana, Pakistan has participated at the fifth SCO Summit held at Shanghai on 15 June 2006. At this Summit Pakistan was keen to elevate its status from Observer to Member along with India, Iran, and Mongolia. The entry of Pakistan into SCO should not be taken as a simple affair of goodwill and Pakistan should critically evaluate its choices and opportunities as well as concerns while becoming a member of SCO.<sup>11</sup> Pakistan is located at the crucial strategic crossroad of Asia that makes it (Pakistan) a vital energy corridor and trade transit route for the future economic needs of China, Afghanistan, and Central Asian Republics that are longing for access to the Arabian Sea. At the same time, Pakistan has been pursuing Vision East Asia that aims at strengthening its ties with Japan, China, ASEAN, Oceania, and the South Pacific. Pakistan has to see whether or not SCO converts into an anti-Western

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<sup>11</sup> Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik, "{SCO} Choices for Pakistan", *The Nation* 16 June 2006.

bulwark. In case, SCO adopts an anti-Western posture, Pakistan's Vision East Asia could become a failure as Japan, South Korea, ASEAN, Australia, and New Zealand would be resisting any such move. Pakistan has more vital economic ties such as trade and investment in the region of East Asia than the Euro-Asian SCO region.

### *C. ACD*

Pakistan has been actively playing its role in the regional organisations working for the purposes of achieving common objectives and goals in Asia. Besides playing its role in ASEAN, Pakistan has been actively supporting the Thailand's initiative that created the 18-founding member ACD in 2001 to promote a vast cooperation at continental level in Asia where over 60 percent of mankind live, and to help integrate other regional organisations such as ASEAN, SAARC and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). In 2003, four new members namely, Kuwait, Oman, Sri Lanka, and Kazakhstan were admitted into ACD. Following year Iran, UAE, and Mongolia also became members, while Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Bhutan were admitted in 2004. First two meetings of ACD were held in Thailand in 2002 and 2003 respectively. The third meeting was held at Qingdao (China) in 2004. Pakistan is one of the founding members of ACD and actively participated in the promotion of the very idea of ACD. After Thailand and China, fourth meeting was held at Islamabad on 4-6 April 2005 that was attended by as many as 26 countries.

Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao delivered keynote addresses at the Islamabad moot as the former was on an official visit to Pakistan. The Meeting endorsed the guidelines for granting the status of ACD Partner for Development, which was aimed at engaging non-ACD countries. The meeting admitted Russia and Saudi Arabia as the new members. The meeting demanded that the next UN Secretary-General should belong to Asia.<sup>12</sup> Pakistan's participation at ACD assured that it was not only interested in a wider Asian cooperation to create a feeling of much larger Asian security but also integrate the region economically in the fast changing globalisation to maximize the benefits of trade and other commercial activities for relatively disadvantaged countries. Thus they would overcome the causes that often lead to distortion and terrorism. Pakistan strongly advocated that economic cooperation would ultimately diminish terrorism. Pakistan's Initiative on Economic Cooperation was fully endorsed by the 4th Islamabad Meeting that laid a greater emphasis on cooperation in various socio-economic sectors. Pakistan strongly emphasized on the need to create a human resource development centre, investment and capital flow, and the development of infrastructure and transportation network among ACD countries on bilateral

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<sup>12</sup> Now former South Korean Foreign Minister, Ban Ki-Moon, has been nominated as Secretary-General of the United Nations.

and multilateral level Pakistan also proposed to set up an Asian Institute of Standards to pool services of the ACD experts, enhance their close collaboration and forge a common position on standard related matters in the international fora.

The ACD would be a great step toward economic integration in Asia. The forum includes the leading economies of Asia, namely Japan, South Korea, and China besides ASEAN, the hub of Asian business. Oil-rich GCC and energy-rich ECO are its members. This initiative would serve as a driving force behind common Asian prosperity.

#### *D. EAS*

The height of the East Asian regionalism has culminated in the shape of the East Asian Summit (EAS) that was held in Malaysia on 14 December 2005 with trade and security as the main regional agenda. The Summit envisioned as a stepping-stone to an East Asian Community (EAC) was modelled on the European Community (EU) pattern. The decision to hold the first EAS Summit was made at the Eighth ASEAN-Plus 3 Summit held at Vientiane on 29 November 2004. The EAC is the largest regional grouping formed by East Asian countries after 1945. The bloc included all ten ASEAN Plus-3 (Japan, South Korea, and China) members, Australia, New Zealand, and India. Russia has also expressed its desire to become a member. This is an issue for further discussion at the 2006 Summit.

This is a clear manifestation of Pan Asianism as perceived in East Asia as a result of economic prosperity and societal uplift carried out by East Asian Tiger economies under Japan's economic leadership from North East Asia to South East Asia and beyond. Originally, Mahatir put forward the idea of East Asian Economic Caucus in 1991, but Western opposition that was mainly led by the United States prevented East Asians from forming such a regional grouping that intended to exclude the United States and Western influences. It was also realised that the forming of the East Asian grouping would be a setback to US declining influence in Asia. Nevertheless, to keep preventing East Asians from forming such a 'pure regional grouping' nonetheless disappeared. Now EU and the United States also wanted to play some role in EAC. However, the inclusion of non-East Asian countries such as Australia and New Zealand did invite huge criticism from Dr Mahatir and others who termed these countries as neither 'East' nor 'Asian' in their flavour. This would be an inherent difficulty with EAC from its very inception as a regional bloc of the East Asians.

In spite of these inherent difficulties, EAC seemed to be the most profound regional development in East Asia after the restructuring of East Asian financial crisis that occurred in 1997. It also appeared that EAC would be the most important regional bloc from an economic viewpoint should the combined GDP of Japan, China, South Korea, ASEAN, Australia, New

Zealand, and India and Pakistan is taken into account as well as by knitting together ASEAN-Plus 3, SCO, ACD, and non-Asian Australia and New Zealand.

Pakistan is most appropriately positioned to be included in EAS because the country has already become a Dialogue Partner of ASEAN, a member of ARF, and forged strong links in the field of trade and commerce and economic development together with security understandings combating terrorism and reinforcing defence to build peace in the wider region of East Asia and Oceania. Against this backdrop, it would be highly unwise to keep Pakistan away from entering this new regional bloc as Pakistan has been actively engaged with this whole region over the past nearly six decades. Pakistan's participation would make the bloc more active and affective as well as more 'Eastern' and 'Asian' to achieve its goal. Once Pakistan becomes Full Dialogue Member of ASEAN, it would naturally qualify to enter EAC. However, this should not be considered as a precondition for Pakistan's entry into EAS / EAC because Australia and New Zealand are simply Dialogue Partners of ASEAN, yet they participated in the EAS. Moreover, India is a non-East Asian country but it was included in the EAS. These powerful arguments that should justify Pakistan's entry into EAS /EAC keeping it mind that Pakistan is actively pursuing a Vision East Asia policy toward this region over the past several years.

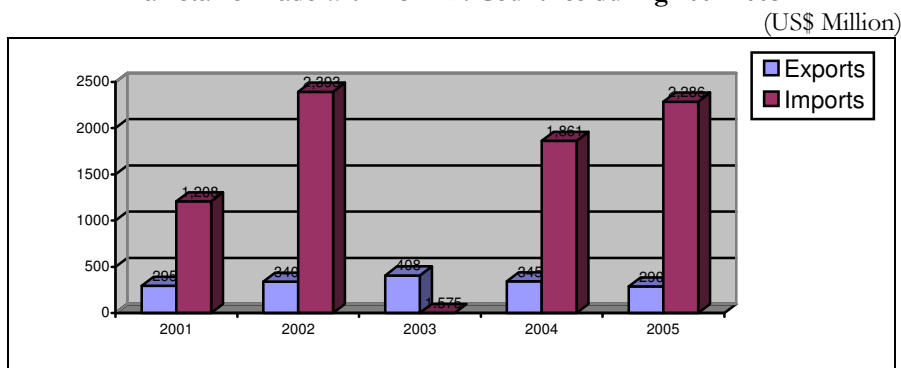
### **Pakistan's Trade in East Asian Regional Perspective**

Having explained Pakistan's political and diplomatic initiatives, links, and challenges with a number of regional economic organisations in East Asia during 1950-2005, there is a need now to look at the level of commercial interaction of Pakistan with these regional economic organisations to ascertain a real role for Pakistan in these organisations.

#### *ASEAN*

Pakistan's largest trading partner in East Asia had been Japan during the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. With the rise of regional economic organisations, this trading partnership, however, began to change by the 1980s as Pakistan's trade expanded and diversified with this region and also as new economic entities emerged in the region. Therefore, significance of Pakistan's trade with East Asian regional organisations gained resilience. Over the past five years, Pakistan's trade with ASEAN is on the rise, which accounts for 16 percent of Pakistan's imports in 2005. However, exports of Pakistan to ASEAN is highly meagre i.e., 1 percent of Pakistan's total exports for the same period.

### Pakistan's Trade with ASEAN Countries during 2001-2005

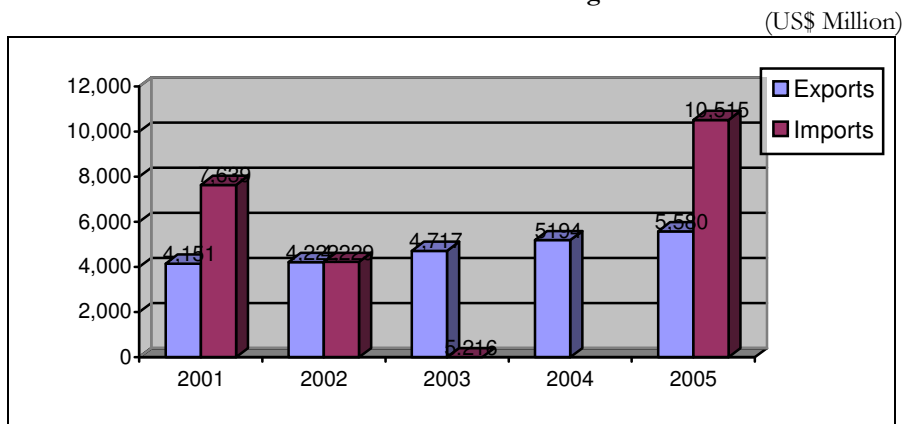


Source: IMF *Director of Trade Statistics* (June 2006).

### APEC

Pakistan's trade with the transcontinental APEC in on the constant rise for the past five years and reached over US\$ 5.5 billion in 2005. This made APEC share of Pakistan's exports as well as imports as high as 40 percent for the above period. It should also be kept in mind that APEC is a large body comprising 21 countries that includes Pakistan's largest trading partners such as the United States, Japan, China, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, and Hong Kong.

### Pakistan's Trade with APEC during 2001-2005



Source: Ibid.

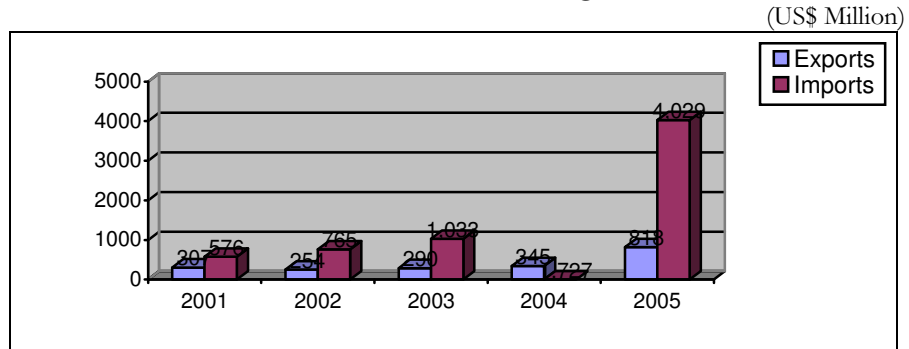
### SCO

In regional sense, SCO is not an East Asian regional organisation *per se*. China is the only that represents East Asia in SCO. As for Pakistan's trade with SCO is concerned, its share of Pakistan's exports stands around 6 percent of which China's share stood around 5.3 percent alone. The success of SCO for Pakistan trade depends on the development of such links with Central Asian Republics mainly in the area of energy i.e., oil and gas. Moreover, this trading



link would be largely vital for Pakistan's imports requirements and the prospects of exports would still be far away.

**Pakistan's Trade with SCO during 2001-2005**

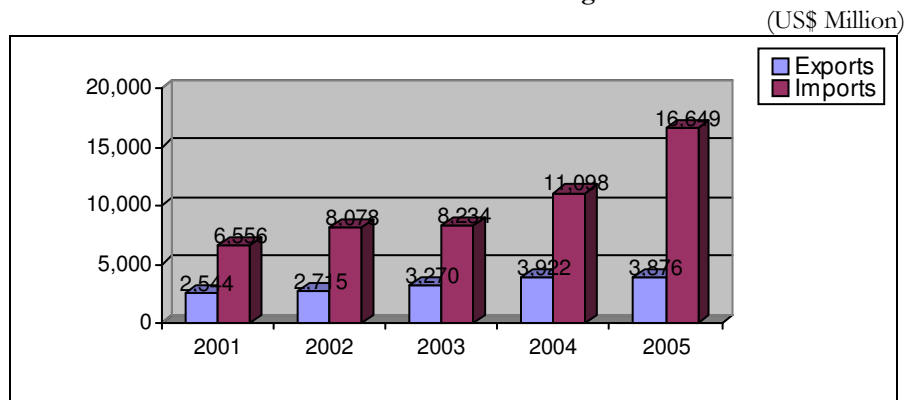


Source: Ibid.

### *ACD*

ACD is much larger than APEC. Its membership has reached over 30 countries across North East Asia, South East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Russia, and the Middle East. Pakistan's exports to ACD have reached over 28 percent in 2005. Whereas Pakistan's imports from ACD stood as high as 62 percent for the same period. Once again, similar to APEC, ACD includes members who are also Pakistan's largest trading partners such Japan, China, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, and UAE.

**Pakistan's Trade with ACD during 2001-2005**



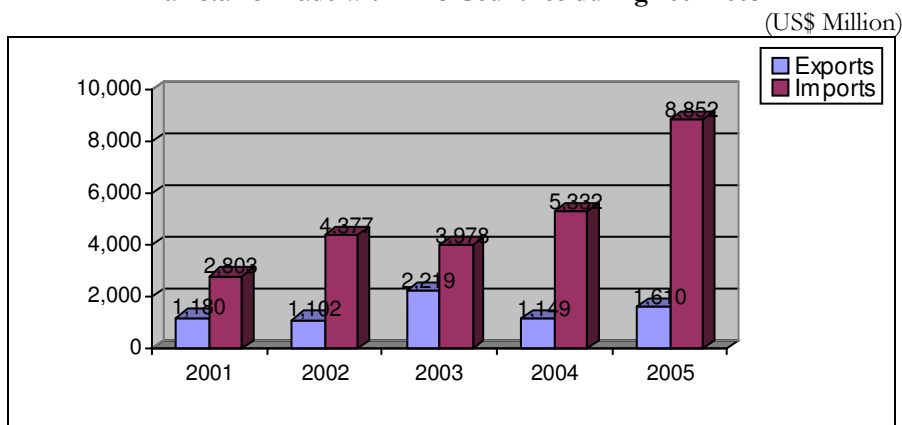
Source: Ibid.

### *EAS*

EAS is still in an infant stage. Pakistan's share of EAS trade is over 11 percent in 2005. As for Pakistan's imports were concerned, share of EAS reached 33

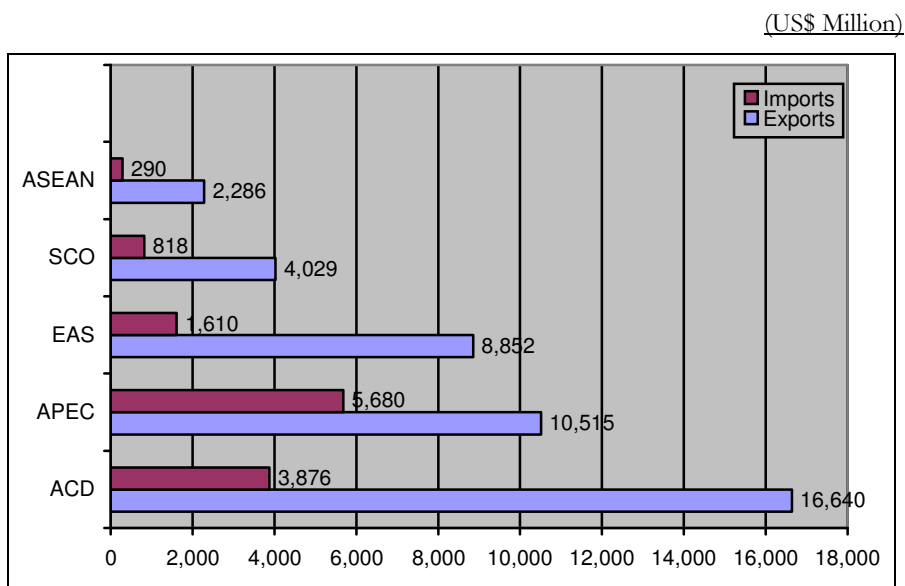
percent for the above period. China, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, and Singapore are important trading partners of Pakistan in EAS.

#### **Pakistan's Trade with EAS Countries during 2001-2005**



Source: Ibid.

#### **Pakistan's Trade with ASEAN, SCO, EAS, APEC, & ACD in 2005**



Source: Ibid.

### **Recommendations**

A number of major trading partners of Pakistan such as Japan, China, South Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore come from East Asia. It is also anticipated that Pakistan's economic and trading interests would keep expanding with East Asia over the next decade or so. Therefore, the following

four-point recommendations may help Pakistan to enhance its trading and commercial stakes with the East Asia region in the future:

- I. Pakistan has to continuously follow a pro-active diplomacy toward the region of East Asia. For this purpose, Pakistan has to make all-out efforts to become a Full Dialogue Member of ASEAN in 2006 as its development partner. Although ASEAN supplies over 16 percent of Pakistan's import requirements, their share of country's exports does not go beyond 1 percent. Pakistan should diversify its export level with ASEAN countries because ASEAN is the main locomotive factor in South East Asian economic integration.
- II. Membership moratorium of APEC would expire in 2007. As Pakistan has been participating at various meetings and fora of APEC since 2003, this might help Pakistan to obtain APEC membership.
- III. If China was excluded, Pakistan's trading links with SCO are almost non-existent. Moreover, SCO should be considered as an extra-regional organisation of East Asia because China is the only country that represents East Asia from this region. Pakistan should see all pros and cons before obtaining SCO membership status in 2007 so as Pakistan's vital role in SCO should not exclude it from its role in other regional organisations in East Asia particularly where Japan and South Korea play important role.
- IV. EAS is an emerging regional body. It might overrun all other East Asian regional organisations in the coming years. Pakistan's major trading partners such as Japan, South Korea, China, Malaysia, and Singapore are members of EAS. Therefore, Pakistan can enhance its trading and commercial stakes with EAS. Moreover, in addition to countering India's growing influence as Full Dialogue Partner of ASEAN, Pakistan has not only to get the same status, it also needs to become a member of EAS at the forthcoming meeting of EAS to be held at Cebu (Philippines) in December 2006.

### **Conclusion**

Pakistan had an active involvement in East Asian economic integration right after country's independence. Under fast changing regional scenarios in East Asia and surrounding regions particularly after 9/11, Pakistan badly needs a comprehensive and an all-round economic engagement with East Asia to advance not only its economic interests but also to strengthen its security. Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, and China

would be the locomotive of East Asian economic regionalism in the years to come. The rising economic strength of East Asia has implications for Pakistan's choices and interests in the larger Asian context. The rise of Japan after 1945, economic growth of ASEAN by 1970s, and the emergence of China by the 1980s, have profound impacts on Pakistan's external behaviour and economic compulsions. In this sense, the region of East Asia cannot be ignored. Whether China is going to be 'contained', or Japan is going to lose its pre-eminent economic and commercial grip over East Asia, or ASEAN is going to face economic stagnation, implications for Pakistan in any case would be serious in the years to come. ■

## MISPERCEPTION ABOUT VIOLENCE IN ISLAM: CAUSES AND REMEDIES

Dr Noor ul Haq \*

### Introduction

Islam is perceived, from its inception, as a militant, indeed as a military religion, and its followers as fanatical warriors, engaged in spreading their faith and their law by armed might.<sup>1</sup> There is a perception in the West that Islam is an ideology that breeds terrorism, and imposes itself through violence. Recently, the Head of world's Catholic community, Pope Benedict XVI, quoted the words of the 14 Century Byzantine emperor Manuel II: 'Show me just what Muhammad [peace be upon him] brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached'.<sup>2</sup> An extremist goes to the extent of visualising that Prophet Muhammad was a 'terrorist'.<sup>3</sup> The 9/11 terrorists, who violated essential Islamic principles, have reinforced the deep-rooted Western misperception about Islam. The terrorists are seen as 'typical Muslims instead of the deviants they really were'.<sup>4</sup>

Such perceptions have been shaping the Western image of Islam and resultantly, they have been causing anti-Muslim feelings, which have been leading to what can be described as civilisational conflict. The roots of the erroneous perceptions lie in history, ignorance about Islam, and the insinuating media projections. The imperialism and the discriminatory policies of the West, also lead to reinforcing misperception about Islam and consequent rise of radical and militant Islam reinforce the misperception. The remedial measures lie in highlighting the true message of Islam, eliminating the discriminatory and unjust policies of the West, and in mental, material and moral development of Muslims.

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p.71.

<sup>2</sup> Editorial, *Dawn* (Islamabad), 17 September 2006.

<sup>3</sup> See interview of Jerry Falwell, an Evangelist Christian Zionist, 30 September 2002, in which he said 'I think Muhammad was a terrorist. I read enough by both Muslims and non-Muslims, that he was a violent man, a man of war.'

<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerry\\_Falwell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerry_Falwell)>

<sup>4</sup> Karen Armstrong, "West cannot afford to maintain age-old bias against Islam", *Dawn* (Islamabad), 20 September 2006.

## The Baggage of History

The historical factor can be traced to the Crusades (1099-1291 AD), fought between the Christian Europe and the Muslim Middle East. Throughout this period, Popes continued to preach crusades against Muslims.<sup>5</sup> They created so much hatred that when the Crusaders conquered Jerusalem in 1099 AD, they slaughtered almost all Muslim men, women and children, so much so that blood was 'knee-deep' under the portico of Al-Aqsa Mosque. Similarly, the Jews met with the worst fate including the destruction of their synagogues during this attack.<sup>6</sup> In fact, 'some of the first Crusaders began their journey to the Holy Land, by massacring the Jewish communities along the Rhine valley' and ending their campaign by 'slaughtering some 30,000 Muslims and Jews in Jerusalem.'<sup>7</sup> These armed encounters 'kept a permanent scar on the souls, or collective unconscious, of both sides.'<sup>8</sup> But, this behaviour was in contrast to the earlier Muslim conquest of Jerusalem in 638 AD and its later re-conquest in 1193 AD, when all inhabitants were allowed 'full enjoyment of their civil life'.<sup>9</sup> However, Europeans' psyche, as it developed and matured during Crusades, determines their wrong perceptions about Islam till today. Crusades occurred in 'Europe's childhood' and 'the violent impressions' of childhood are preserved throughout the later life.

Modern Europe was born out of the spirit of the Crusades. ... The evil, which the Crusades caused, was not restricted to the clang of weapons: it was, first and foremost, an intellectual evil. It consisted in poisoning the European mind against Islam, in the misrepresentation of its teachings and ideals to the ignorant masses of the West.<sup>10</sup>

Even, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the Christian churches and their missionary wings consider it 'most galling' that Palestine, the birthplace of Christ, should be overwhelmingly a Muslim land because it is 'impervious to the Christian appeal and conversion.'<sup>11</sup>

Apart from religion, it was the geographical contiguity, economic, and political reasons that Europe and Muslim Middle East had fought against each other. The Muslim penetration deep into Western Europe up to Poitiers in France and in the Eastern Europe up to Vienna in Austria resulted in

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<sup>5</sup> "Crusades", *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 6 (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1967) pp. 828-35.

<sup>6</sup> Amir Ali, *A Short History of the Saracens* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1955), pp. 327-28.

<sup>7</sup> Karen Armstrong, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> G. H. Jansen, *Militant Islam*, (London: The Chaucer Press Ltd.), 1979, p.66.

<sup>9</sup> Amir Ali, op. cit., pp. 39-40 and 356.

<sup>10</sup> Leopold Weiss, *Islam at the Crossroads*, cited by Muhammad Ali Siddiqi, "Attacks on religion: a one-sided affair", *Dawn* (Islamabad), 3 October 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Jansen, op. cit., p. 56.

hostilities between the two peoples. The Muslim rule over Christian lands in the mediaeval era and subsequently Christian hegemony over Muslim lands, almost throughout the world in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, has resulted in antagonism against each other.

## Ignorance about Islam

### *The Concept of Jihad in Islam*

Apart from hostility, there is a general ignorance about Islam. Among several fundamentals of Islam, for instance, the word *Jihad* is largely misunderstood. There are two distinctive terms in Al-Quran, i.e., *qital* and *jihad*. The former term means 'fighting' and the latter means 'struggle', or striving in the path of God.<sup>12</sup> A large number of Western scholars have misrepresented *Jihad*, as warfare only. A Muslim scholar, Chiragh Ali is of opinion that *Jihad* cannot be translated as warfare.<sup>13</sup> According to A. K. Brohi, a renowned jurist, 'the most glorious word in the vocabulary of Islam is *Jihad*, a word which is untranslatable in English but, broadly speaking, means 'striving', 'struggling', 'trying to advance the Divine causes or purposes'.<sup>14</sup> In the Quran, there are several verses, where the concept of *Jihad* is highlighted. For instance, the Quran says 'And those who strive unto us (*Jabidu-fina*), We will certainly guide them to Our Paths'.<sup>15</sup> This implies that *Jihad* is meant for discovering the truth. In fact, the search for knowledge and self-improvement to follow the right path is *Jihad-e-Akbar* (i.e. a great struggle), as against *Jihad-bil-Saif*, (i.e. striving with sword) which is *Jihad-e-Asghar* (i.e., a minor struggle).<sup>16</sup>

There are a number of works on *Jihad* alone, both by Muslim and non-Muslim writers.<sup>17</sup> In a deliberate campaign against Islam, only those verses of Quran were cited which were revealed during the course of a battle, when, in the days of nascent Islam, the Muslims were waging a struggle for their own survival. If such verses were read out of context, they would present gross misunderstanding about the teachings and the message of Islam.

<sup>12</sup> James Turner Johnson and John Kelsay, *Cross, Crescent, and Sword* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), p. 37.

<sup>13</sup> Chiragh Ali, *A Critical Exposition of the Popular Jihad*, Reprint (Lahore: Misal Publishing, n.d.), p. 280.

<sup>14</sup> S. K. Malik, *The Quranic Concept of War* (Lahore: Wajidalis, 1979), p.p. i-ii.

<sup>15</sup> Quran, 29:69.

<sup>16</sup> S. K. Malik, op, cit., p. iii.

<sup>17</sup> Chiragh Ali, Rashid Rida and Sayyid Qutb, Ayatullah Ahmad Jannati, S.K. Malik, Abu al-Alaa-Mawdudi, Abdel Haleem, Majid Khadduri, Mahmud Shaltut and Muhammad Haykal, and others amongst Muslims; Suhas Majumdar, Alfred Morabia and Reuven Firestone, Bernard Lewis, Andrew G. Boston, James Turner Johnson, Johan Kelsay, & others amongst non-Muslim.

War is only permitted in Islam in self-defence and against oppression and injustice.<sup>18</sup> For instance, the war was first permitted when Muslims in Madina were in the midst of life and death struggle, because they were facing a much powerful collusion of an enemy comprising of Quraish of Makkah, Jews and *Munafikeen* (Hypocrites) of Madina who were bent upon destroying the new faith and its adherents much tiny in number and resources. The Quranic injunctions and the sayings of the Prophet lay emphasis on humanization of the ethos of the combatants in war during the mediaeval period when the rulers and kings used to call for massacre of all able-bodied enemies.<sup>19</sup> In fact, Islam stresses compassion for all beings.<sup>20</sup> (A few relevant citations from the Quran, given in annexure 'A', will clarify the concept of war in Islam.) Briefly, Islam lays emphasis on justice. It regards the unjust killing of a person as the killing of the humanity and saving the life of a person like saving the life of the humanity.<sup>21</sup> It advocates justice even to those who hate you or to whom you have an aversion, as the higher moral law requires it.<sup>22</sup> It directs that even during the course of a war: 'If the enemy inclines towards peace, you (also) incline towards peace and trust in Allah.'<sup>23</sup>

#### *Preaching of Islam by Sword or by Word?*

There is an age-old erroneous perception in the West that Islam spread by sword. The modern scholars argue that some had wished to promote Islam with the sword, while others were willing to do so only through the word.<sup>24</sup> As regards the allegation that Islam spread by sword, a reference can be made to the research work of a Christian Clergy and a Professor of Philosophy, T. W. Arnold.<sup>25</sup> The foremost reason responsible for the spread of Islam, according to him, is the simplicity of the Muslim creed.<sup>26</sup> Secondly, 'Islam is a religion that is essentially rationalistic in the widest sense of this term considered etymologically and historically. The definition of rationalism as a system that

<sup>18</sup> See Abu al-Alaa Mawdudi, *Al Jihad Fil Islam*, (Lahore: Idara-I-Tarjuman-al-Quran, n.d.), and S. K. Malik, *The Quranic Concept of War* (Lahore: Wajidalis, 1979), Chiragh Ali, op. cit., p. 120. .

<sup>19</sup> A. K. Brohi, preface, S. K. Malik, op. cit., p. v.

<sup>20</sup> Maheen A. Rashidi, Islam Stresses Compassion for all beings: Armstrong, *Dawn* (Islamabad), 2 November 2006.

<sup>21</sup> Quran, 5:32.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 5:8.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 8:61.

<sup>24</sup> Reuven Firestone, *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press), 1999, p.ii.

<sup>25</sup> T.W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam – A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith* (Aligarh, 1896), (reprint, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1979). Arnold gives details of spread of Islam in West Asia, Spain, Europe, Persia, Central Asia, among the Tartars, Mongols and in India, China, Africa, and Malay Archipelago.

<sup>26</sup> Arnold, op. cit., p.420.



bases religious beliefs on principles furnished by the reason, applies to it exactly.<sup>27</sup> Thirdly, Islam spread mainly due to defection of Christians and others owing to the missionary activity of Islam.<sup>28</sup> Although there are no missionary organisations like those of the Christian missions, Islam was preached by certain religious orders and traders. 'Muslim women have also taken part in this pious work ... Even the Muslim prisoner will on occasion embrace the opportunity of preaching his faith to his captors or to his fellow-prisoners.'<sup>29</sup> Finally,

Strange as it may appear to a generation accustomed to look upon Islam as a cloak for all kinds of vice, it is nevertheless true that in earlier times many Christians who have come into contact with a living Muslim society have been profoundly impressed by the virtues exhibited therein; if these could so strike the traveller and the stranger, they would no doubt have some influence of attractions on the unbeliever who came in daily contact with them.<sup>30</sup>

Even 'the literature of Crusades is rich in such appreciations of Muslim virtues', and the Ottoman Turks in the early days of their rule in Europe received tributes of 'praise from Christian lips.'<sup>31</sup>

As for Prophet Muhammad's teaching are concerned, he never compelled any one to embrace Islam. The people were drawn to him through his preaching and exemplary behaviour. The Quran strictly forbids any coercion in religion. It regards all rightly guided religions as coming from God. Contrary to Western belief, 'Muslims did not impose their faith by the sword.'<sup>32</sup> Their conquests of Persia and Byzantium, after the Prophet's death, were inspired by 'political rather than religious aspirations'.<sup>33</sup>

Suffice to say that initially Islam was spread due to its simplicity, rationalism, and the moral character of its adherents. The acceptance of a faith is voluntary and no force is to be applied in matters of religion. The Quran lays down 'Let there be no compulsion in religion'.<sup>34</sup> The Quranic commandments are, 'Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p.418.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.46.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 413-416.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 429.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 413-32.

<sup>32</sup> Armstrong, op. cit.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Quran, 2:256. Compulsion is incompatible with religion: because (1) religion depends upon faith and will, and these would be meaningless if induced by force: (2) Truth and Error have been so clearly shown up by the mercy of Allah that there should be no doubt in the minds of any person of goodwill as to the fundamentals of faith; (3) Allah's protection is continuous, and His Plan is always to lead human beings from the depths of darkness into the clearest light.

beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious.<sup>35</sup> It is, therefore, completely without any historical evidence or justification to say that Islam spread by sword alone.

Even now, when Muslims are not in a position to conquer or dominate non-Muslim lands, politically or economically, Islam happens to be the fastest growing religion in several places, including several Western countries. Perhaps, the unfortunate incident of 9/11 has obstructed its rapid expansion, but that appears to be a temporary phase.

#### *Rationalism in Islam*

In addition, it should be understood that unlike some other religions, there is no theocracy in Islam. Islam is a *din-e-fitrat*, i.e. it believes in natural laws. Islam was a revolution against superstition, ignorance, illiteracy, rigidity, injustice, inequality, exploitation, etc. It revitalized the decadent social order of Arabia. The Quran repeatedly asks for reflection and thinking in its revealed verses. The Bedouin Arabs, under the influence of Islam rose to unprecedented heights during the early period of Islam. After a few centuries, intellectually, Islam came to be divided between Mutazzalites, i.e., rationalists and Asharites, i.e., traditionalists. The rationalists reigned supreme till the rule of Caliph Mamoon Ar-Rashid (813-833 AD). Thereafter, under Caliph Mutawakkil (847-861 AD), the tables were turned in favour of orthodoxy as against the supremacy of 'human reason' being preached earlier.<sup>36</sup> Under him, commenced the decline of the Muslim empire.<sup>37</sup> The last Muslim intellectual during the mediaeval era was, Abd-al-Rahman Ibn-e-Khaldun (1332-1406 AD), and, thereafter, the original thinking was almost absent.<sup>38</sup> The intellectual decline led to decline in other spheres of life. When the creative minority in a civilization ceases to exist, the breakdown and disintegration commences. However, 'breakdowns are not inevitable and not irretrievable'.<sup>39</sup>

During the mediaeval ages, Europe was on the receiving end. They picked up rational thought from Muslim institutions that is responsible for the ascendancy of the Western Powers during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Presently, the Muslim world is undergoing a cumulative process of renaissance, reformation and enlightenment, experienced by Europe between 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries. There is a confrontation between the rationalists and liberals on the one hand, and the traditionalists and the fundamentalists, on the other. In the mediaeval ages, the traditionalists were able to suppress the

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 16:125.

<sup>36</sup> Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1967), p. 430.

<sup>37</sup> Ameer Ali, *A Short History of the Saracens* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1955), 288.

<sup>38</sup> Syed Abul Hassan Ali Nadvi, *Insani dunya per Mussalmanon ke uruj-o-zawal ka asar* (5<sup>th</sup> print, Karachi, 1966), p. 205.

<sup>39</sup> Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972, reprint 1997), p. 211.

rationalists but in the scientific age, the traditionalists are likely to lose. Similar confrontation was also there in mediaeval Europe in Judeo-Christian culture, but eventually the rationalists succeeded. Since Islam is a rational religion, it has the inherent capacity to meet the challenges of modern world. It can absorb new ideas and accommodate all those Western norms, which have no conflict with Islamic values. It is in this context that President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, has advocated the theory of enlightened moderation.<sup>40</sup>

#### *Peace and Tolerance in Islam*

It should be understood that all major religions of the world teach us peace and compassion and Islam is no exception. The word Islam means peace and submission to God. It is wrong to blame Islam for the sins of violence by certain people who claim to be Muslims. Prophet Muhammad and his followers endured untold hardships and miseries, during the early thirteen years (610-623 AD) of preaching in Makkah, but he never retaliated.<sup>41</sup> When, in 623 AD, the people of Makkah finally decided to assassinate the Prophet, he migrated to the northern city of Madina, where he lived till his demise in 633 AD. When the Prophet reached Madina, he was entrusted with the responsibility as head of the city-state. He successfully worked to end the tribal wars, which had been rampant for more than a century. In Madina, there were Jews and other tribes. He drew up the Constitution of the city state of Madina, known as *Meesaq-e-Madina* (Agreement of Madina), which envisaged a common defence and security, against adversaries by all residents of the city irrespective of their religion, caste and colour. Initially, therefore, the principle of pluralism and democracy was practiced. In Madina, Muslims had to fight in self-defence, but the Prophet preached clemency. The unique example is of the conquest of Makkah in 629 AD, where even his bitterest enemies, who had warred against him, and reviled him, were pardoned. No revenge was taken even from those, who were murderers of his true and loyal disciples.

The Prophet had shown special favours to Christians. When the Christian tribe of Najran and the adjoining areas visited Madina, they were allowed to stay in the Mosque, the second holiest place of Muslims. The visitors were provided full security and were allowed to worship in their own way and were not to be suppressed or harassed by any one, in any way. In 628 AD, the Prophet granted to the monks of the monastery of St. Catherine, near

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<sup>40</sup> Pervez Musharraf, 'Enlightened Moderation', published in Pakistani press and Washington Post, 2 June 2004.

<<http://www.presidentofpakistan.gov.pk/EnlightenedModeration.aspx>>

<sup>41</sup> Muhammad's followers 'were thrown into prison, starved and then beaten with sticks. The hill of Ramdhā and the place called Batha became thus the scenes of cruel tortures.' Ibn ul Athir, Vol. ii. p. 50, & Ibn-Hisham, pp. 209, cited in *The Spirit of Islam*, op. cit., p. 27.

Mount Sinai, and to all Christians, a Charter, which is ‘the noblest monuments of enlightened tolerance that the history of the world can produce.’<sup>42</sup>

Islam believes and considers itself as a continuation of the religion, preached by Patriarch Prophet Abraham and all other Prophets, who followed him, including Moses and Jesus. The Quran considers the People of the Books (i.e. Muslims having Quran, Christians having Bible, and Jews having Torah) as one community, because they believe and worship the same God. In fact, the Quran assigns a distinctive place to Christians and Jews and says:

And dispute ye not with the People of the Scripture, except in the best way, unless it be with those of them who, but say: We believe in the Revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; our God and your God is One; and it is to Him we submit (in Islam).<sup>43</sup>

It is because of this reason that Pope John Paul II had desired that the Jews, Christians, and Muslims should pray collectively, as they believe in Prophet Abraham’s Almighty God. Talking to a delegation of the Jewish Anti-Defamation League at the Vatican on 12 October 2006, the pontiff preached against ‘misuse of religion for spreading hatred and violence’ and instead pleaded for building on the many common convictions which the people of the three faiths share.<sup>44</sup> Pope Benedict XVI’s call for a dialogue between Muslims, Christians and Jews is timely and should be seriously considered.<sup>45</sup> These monolithic religions have numerous shared convictions such as the concept of individual responsibility, the nature of good and evil, property rights, rights of neighbours, love, the spirit of brotherhood, and in the day of judgement. An American scholar has suggested there should be cooperative

<sup>42</sup> *The Spirit of Islam*, op. cit., p. 84. The Charter reads, “This is a message from Mohammad Ibn Abdullah, as a covenant to those who adopt Christianity, near and far, we are with them. Verily, I, the servants, the helpers, and my followers defend them, because Christians are my citizens; and by Allah! I hold out against anything that displeases them. No compulsion is to be on them. Neither are their judges to be removed from their jobs nor their monks from their monasteries. No one is to destroy a house of their religion, to damage it, or to carry anything from it to the Muslims’ houses. Should anyone take any of these, he would spoil God’s covenant and disobey his Prophet. Verily, they are my allies and have my secure charter against all that they hate. No one is to force them to travel or to oblige them to fight. The Muslims are to fight for them. If a female Christian is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray. Their churches are to be respected. They are neither to be prevented from repairing them nor the sacredness of their covenants. No one of the nation (of Muslims) is to disobey the covenant till the Last Day (end of the world).” Akram Zahoor, *Muslim History: 570-1950 CE*, cited by Dr. Arif Alvi, ‘A Charter for Christian Muslim Harmony’, *Dawn* (Islamabad), 24 October 2006

<sup>43</sup> Quran, 29:46.

<sup>44</sup> Editorial, *Dawn* (Islamabad), 14 October 2006

<sup>45</sup> Editorial, ‘Inter-faith dialogue’, *Dawn* (Islamabad), 14 October 2006.

relations with Muslim and Muslim-Evangelical dialogue, because they believe in common values. This would be one of the ways to forestall the threat of a civilisational war,<sup>46</sup> already visualized by Samuel P. Huntington.<sup>47</sup>

### *Insinuating Media Projection*

Apart from the historical baggage and ignorance about Islam, the insinuating media projection has an important role in creating misperceptions. A section of the media, politicians, responsible persons and academia come out with statements and expressions, such as launching of ‘crusades’, ‘Islamic fascism’ or ‘Islamic terrorism’, which not only hurt the religious sentiments of Muslims, but go a long way in creating misperceptions. Professor John Esposito<sup>48</sup> has pointed out that in the West, particularly in the United States, the perception is that majority of Muslims are not moderate and they hate America. He pointed out that most Americans became aware of Islam and Muslims after the Islamic revolution of Iran, when the media brought the images of American hostages to every household in the United States and those images continue to ‘taint American public view of Islam and Muslims even today’. The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, added fuel to the fire and the situation got worse, the opinion makers and the Western media divided the world between ‘civilized and uncivilized’ and the Muslims falling in the later category.<sup>49</sup> According to Washington Post-ABC News poll conducted in March 2006, 46 percent of the Americans have unfavourable views of Islam and think that Muslims are ‘disproportionately prone to violence’.<sup>50</sup> However, there were dissenting opinions also. For instance, Juan Cole, a professor of modern Middle Eastern and South Asian history said, ‘You’re getting a constant drumbeat of negative information about Islam’.<sup>51</sup>

### **The Rise of Militant Islam**

The recent rise of militant Islam is further strengthening the misperceptions. One should ask: why there is extremism, radicalism and terrorism amongst certain groups of Muslims? Why extreme measures, such as suicide bombing took place? There may be several factors responsible for all this.

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<sup>46</sup> Walter Russell Mead, ‘God’s Country’, *Foreign Affairs*, September-October 2006, Vol. 85, Number 5, p.42.

<sup>47</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Shuter, 1996).

<sup>48</sup> John Esposito, Professor, Georgetown University, Washington, teaches Islam and Muslim Studies. He has received Pakistan’s highest civil award, Hilal-i-Quaid-i-Azam on 25 April 2005.

<sup>49</sup> ‘Religion not a cause of violence: scholar’, *Dawn* (Islamabad), 29 April 2005.

<sup>50</sup> Claudia Deane and Darryl Fears, “Negative Perception of Islam Increasing”, *Washington Post Online*, 9 March 2006.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

Until the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Islam was a far more tolerant and peaceful faith than Christianity.<sup>52</sup> During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, there were repeated defeats inflicted upon Muslims from the outside world. There was the absorption of the whole Muslim World in the various European empires. Even now, there is political and economic domination and exploitation of Muslims by the West. The upsurge of Muslims and the rise of extremism and intolerance that have surfaced in the Muslim World are basically a response to intractable political and economic problems. There are several Muslim majority areas being ruled by non-Muslims and are facing state oppression, such as in Palestine and Kashmir. The Zionists are occupying Palestinian land, not included in their territory, when the state had received recognition from the United Nations in 1948. There is 'the Indian army's brutality' let loose against Muslims in Kashmir and the destruction of historic mosque in Ayodhya (India) in 1992 and the massacre of about 2000 Muslims in the Indian state of Gujarat in 2002.

The powerful West had remained mostly indifferent to the sufferings of Muslims in Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq or Afghanistan and Kashmir. When they struggle and fight for their right of self-determination and independence, they are branded as terrorists. The US-led invasion of Iraq, without any specific UN authorization, made Muslims more concerned about the intentions of the US-led war against terror.<sup>53</sup> Already, there were Muslim grievances against the United States for supporting Israel against the Palestinians and the United States' policies against certain Muslim countries in the Middle East. This leads Muslims to think that the West is against them and the US-led war on terror is targeting the Muslims. Hence, there is a reaction and xenophobia amongst certain section of Muslims against the West.<sup>54</sup> A former Sudanese Prime Minister, Sadeh al Mahdi had said, 'Today backward and deprived, we face an enemy and a military giant with the moral and spiritual scruples of a flea. It is not a pleasant encounter.'<sup>55</sup>

In fact, the icon of terrorism is Osama bin Laden. Why did he turn to be the leader of *Al-Qaida* terrorists? He, along with thousands of Muslims from Arabia and other places including Afghanistan, was trained and financed under the leadership of the United States to fight against the Soviet Union. After the job was done, the US left all of them high and dry. Osama wanted the Afghan War trained Arab soldiers (*Mujahideen*), instead of American troops, to serve and protect his native country Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Government declared him *persona non grata*. He, therefore, decided to turn against the United

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<sup>52</sup> Armstrong, op. cit.

<sup>53</sup> Professor Esposito cited in 'Religion not a cause of violence: scholar', *Dawn* (Islamabad), 29 April 2005.

<sup>54</sup> 'Survey: Islam and the West', *The Economist* (print edition), 4 August 1994.

<sup>55</sup> A. Gauhar (ed.) *The Challenge of Islam* (London: Islamic Conference of Europe, 1978), p.119, cited in *Militant Islam*, p. 14.

States, which, he perceived, was the main protector of the ruling family of Saudi Arabia and perpetrators of oppression elsewhere. His perception has influenced a small section of Muslims throughout the world and they 'seem to have no remorse for killing innocent men, women and children'.<sup>56</sup>

Certain young men are attracted to join *Al Qaida* because of a desire to assert in the modern world and fight against deprivation, oppression and injustice. Since, there is asymmetry between the East and the West in military, the terrorists resort to tactical suicide bombing. The tactics of suicide attacks is not a new concept. It was already there. There was a demonstration of suicide bombing by Japanese during World War II and, presently, by the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka and in India, when a suicide bomber killed the Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi in 1991.

Economically, the Muslim nations are relatively weaker. The combined GDP of all 57 Muslim countries is lower than that of the US. They feel that the energy resources of the Middle East are being exploited by key Western nations. Muslim nations with energy resources are under assault and in a state of helplessness. Their main grievance relate to economic and energy resources, the occupation of Muslim lands, such as Palestine and Kashmir, the prevalence of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, with the support of the West, who otherwise champion democracy. This is viewed as the West's double standard. The militant Islam, therefore, is a response to hegemonic, discriminatory and unjust policies. Otherwise, the Muslims do envy and admire the West.

### **Remedial Measures**

The present situation and misperceptions can be overcome if, both the West and the Muslims, review their policies and reform themselves. The Muslims need to resort to rationalism as is repeatedly commanded in the Quran. They should benefit from *Ijtihad* (i.e. exercise of independent thinking and judgement in the interpretation of Islamic Law in new situations), as permitted in Islam, which they have neglected so long. *Ijtihad* will enable them to adjust to the requirement of the contemporary and ever-changing environment in the modern world. Rationalism will inspire Muslims to excel in education, science and technology, so as to reclaim their past 'knowledge producing heritage'. This will enable them to develop knowledge-based industry, energy, and other material resources. Irshad Manji, a Canadian Muslim, in her book *The Trouble with Islam Today* advocates *Ijtihad* and writes: 'Islam once had a pluralistic tradition of critical debate and dissent, and that we Muslims need to rediscover

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<sup>56</sup> Editorial, *Dawn* (Islamabad), 13 November 2006.

this tradition to update Islam for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. That is not being radical. That is being faithful.<sup>57</sup>

If the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) is effectively organized and well-oriented, it could adopt both strategic and tactical steps to spread the true message and spirit of Islam. The Muslims should be united to work for the moral, social, educational, and economic uplift of the *Ummah* (Muslim Community), the world over. A strong stand against sectarianism within the *Ummah* is also needed. Socially, the Muslim community has to overcome illiteracy in their ranks, break feudal structure and tribalism in their respective countries, and adopt multiculturalism. Social reforms to ensure human and gender equality and full participation of women in education and development activities are to be ensured. Political reforms to meet contemporary demands should be introduced. Democratic changes in authoritarian culture cannot come overnight, but there is a need for a sustained effort to promote democracy. Lastly, the Muslims should adopt the moral and human standards, which were displayed by Prophet Muhammad and his followers.

On the other hand, the West should discard double standards and should not dominate and exploit energy and other natural resources of Muslim countries. The West should not impose their policies and values on them by force and deal with global problems without discrimination and with justice. Secondly, the West should assist Muslim countries in their overall development, including the knowledge of science and technology, where they are lagging behind. This requires economic resources, which could be partly supplemented by G-8 countries without imposing subservience. Politically, they should genuinely help in resolving disputes where Muslims feel 'victims of historical injustice'.

In addition, there is a need for dialogue between civilizations to remove misperceptions and replace confrontation with conciliation.<sup>58</sup> In the present nuclear age, it is necessary for all nations that they should resort to moderation and discard extremism, which is not appreciable in any form. Both the West and the Muslim World should make a conscious effort to promote mutual trust. This will be in the interest of both to promote 'global

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<sup>57</sup> Irshad Manji, *The Trouble with Islam Today* (Cambridge University Press), cited in *The Indian Express* online, 4 March 2005

<sup>58</sup> Already Mosaica Association's Centre for Inter Religious Cooperation has sponsored a project. The premise of the project is that peace between nations and peoples cannot be achieved without reconciliation between religions and cultures. Accordingly, the power of religion must be transformed from a source of hostility to a source of tolerance and understanding. They respect holy places and support peace and nonviolence. (Albright, p. 145)



stability, peace and prosperity.<sup>59</sup> It is encouraging that there are voices in the Western nations, expressing their wish to be a 'partner of the Muslim community in bringing peace and prosperity to the world.'<sup>60</sup> Finally, there is a need that the international media should behave responsibly to remove misperceptions and to promote peace and harmony.

### **Conclusion**

The misperception that there is inherent violence in Islam, has come into focus after the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre. The entire Muslim community has faced the onslaught of the Western world. Aspersions have been cast on Islam. To enable Muslims to move confidently and as an equal and honourable member of the international community in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they should adapt themselves in the changing global environment. They have to eliminate illiteracy and poverty and acquire modern knowledge in science and technology. The West should discard double standards and sincerely help in resolving political disputes and in eradicating economic disparity.■

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<sup>59</sup> Mohammad Ahsan, *The Ummah and Global Challenges: Reorganising the OIC* (Islamabad" Islamabad Policy Research Institute, 2006), p.149.

<sup>60</sup> Karen Hughes, US Undersecretary of State, message to Eid gathering of Muslims in Washington on 23 October 2006, (Islamabad), 24 October 2006.

## Annexure A

## VERSES IN AL-QURAN ON WAR♦

**On Sanctity of Human Life**

1. We ordained for the Children of Israel that if any one slew a person – unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land – it would be as if he slew the whole people. And if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people. (Al-Quran, 5:32)
2. Nor take life – which Allah has made sacred – except for just cause. And if any one is slain wrongfully, We have given his heir authority (to demand Qisas or to forgive); but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life; for he is helped (by the Law). (Al-Quran, 17:33)

**Fighting is permitted in Self Defence, against Oppression, Denial of Freedom of Religion, and Violation of Covenant**

3. Fighting is prescribed upon you, and ye dislike it.<sup>61</sup> But it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you, and that you love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knoweth, and ye know not. (Al-Quran, 2:216)
4. They ask thee concerning fighting in the Prohibited Month. Say: 'Fighting therein is a grave (offence); but graver is it in the sight of Allah to prevent access to the path of Allah to deny Him, to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque, and drive out its members.'<sup>62</sup> Tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter. Nor will they cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith. (Al-Quran, 2:217)
5. To those against whom<sup>63</sup> War is made, permission is given (to fight) because they are wronged; - and verily Allah is Most Powerful for their aid; - (They are) those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right, -

♦ *The Holy Quran: English translation of the meanings and Commentary* (Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah: King Fahd Holy Quran Complex, 1410 H.)

<sup>61</sup> To fight in the cause of Truth is one of the highest forms of charity. What can you offer that is more precious than your own life? But here again the limitations come in. If you are a mere brawler, or a selfish aggressive person, or a vainglorious bully, you deserve the highest censure. Allah knows the value of things better than you do.

<sup>62</sup> The intolerance and persecution of the Pagan clique at Makkah caused untold hardships to the holy Messenger of Islam and his early disciples. They bore all with meekness and long-suffering patience until Allah permitted them to take up arms in self-defence. Then they were twitted with breach of the custom about Prohibited Month, though they were driven to fight during that period against their own feeling in self-defence. But their enemies not only forced them to engage in actual warfare, but interfered with their conscience, persecuted them and their families, openly insulted and denied Allah, kept out the Muslim Arabs from the Sacred Mosque, and exiled them. Such violence and intolerance are deservedly called worse than slaughter.

<sup>63</sup> ... Verse 40 connects on with 'they are wronged'. The wrong is indicated: 'driven by persecution from their home, for no other reason than that they worshipped the One True God'. This was the first occasion on which fighting - in self-defence - was permitted. This passage therefore undoubtedly dates from Madinah.

(for no cause) except that they say, 'Our Lord is Allah'. Did not Allah check one set of people by means of another,<sup>64</sup> there would surely have been pulled down monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, in which the name of Allah is commemorated in abundant measure. Allah will certainly aid those who aid His (cause);- for verily Allah is Full of Strength, Exalted in Might, (i.e. Able to enforce His Will) (Al-Quran, 22:39-40)

6. But if they violate their oaths after their covenant, and attack your Faith,<sup>65</sup> - fight ye the chiefs of Unfaith: for their oaths are nothing to them: that thus they may be restrained. Will ye not fight the people who violated their oaths, plotted to expel the Messenger,<sup>66</sup> and attacked you first? Do ye fear them? Nay, it is Allah whom ye should more justly fear if ye believe! Fight them and Allah will finish he by your hands, and disgrace them, help you to victory over them, heal the breasts of the Believers.<sup>67</sup> (Al-Quran, 9:12-14)
7. They are those with whom thou didst make a covenant,<sup>68</sup> but they break their covenant every time, and they have not the fear (of Allah). If ye gain the mastery over them in war, disperse, with them, those who follow them, that they may remember.<sup>69</sup> (Al-Quran, 8: 56-57)

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<sup>64</sup> To allow a righteous people to fight against a ferocious and mischief-loving people was fully justified. But the justification was far greater here, when the little Muslim community was not only fighting for its own existence against the Makkian Quraish, but for the very existence of the Faith in the One True God. They had as much right to be in Makkah and worship in the Ka'ba as the other Quraish; yet they were exiled for their Faith. It affected not the faith of one peculiar people. The principle involved was that of all worship, Jewish or Christian as well as Muslim and of all foundations built for pious uses.

<sup>65</sup> Not only did the enemies break their oaths themselves, but they even taunted the Muslims on their Faith and the 'simple-minded' way in which they continued to respect their part of the treaty, as if they were afraid to fight.

<sup>66</sup> The argument now takes a new turn. An appeal is made to the Muslims on various grounds. (1) the shameless disregard of treaties by the enemy, (2) the under-hand plots to discredit the Holy Prophet, and turn him out of Makkah, (3) the aggressive actions taken by the Quraish and their confederates in Madinah after the treaty of Hudaibiya (A.H. 6, Zul-qa'dah, Feb. 628), (4) the manly attitude that fears Allah rather than men, and (5) the need to prove our sincere faith by test and trial and struggle and sacrifice (see Al-Quran, 9:16)

<sup>67</sup> Heal the breast of believers, i.e., of wounds that they may have sustained from the assaults, taunts, and cruelty of the enemy.

<sup>68</sup> The immediate occasion was the repeated treachery of the Banu Quraiza after their treaties with the Muslims. But the general lesson remains, as noted in the two following verses. Treachery in war is doubly wrong, for it endangers so many lives. Such treachery should be punished in such a way that it gets no chance again. Not only the actual perpetrators but those who follow their standard should be rendered powerless. And the broken treaty should be denounced so that the innocent party can at least fight on equal term. From actual physical warfare we can carry the same lesson to spiritual warfare. A truce or understanding is possible with those who respect definite principles, not with those who have no principles and are merely out for oppression and wickedness.

<sup>69</sup> The purpose of this verse is to urge Muslims to act against their enemies described above with a severity and resoluteness which would serve as a deterrent to other

8. And why should ye not fight in the cause of Allah and of those who, being weak, are ill-treated (and oppressed) – men, women, and children, whose cry is: ‘Our Lord! Rescue us from this town, whose people are oppressors; and raise for us from Thee One who will protect; and raise for us from Thee One who will help!’<sup>70</sup> (Al-Quran, 4:75)

**If War is Inevitable, Fight with Vigour**

9. But when the forbidden months<sup>71</sup> are past, then fight and slay<sup>72</sup> the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war). But if they repent,<sup>73</sup> and establish regular prayers, and pay Zakat, then open the way for them; for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. Al-Quran, 9:5)
10. Therefore, when you meet the unbelievers (in fight), smite at their necks; at length, when you have thoroughly subdued them, bind (the captives)<sup>74</sup> firmly; therefore (is the time for) either generosity or ransom.<sup>75</sup> (Al-Quran, 47:4)
11. And fight them on until there is no more persecution, and religion becomes Allah’s in its entirety,<sup>76</sup> but if they cease, verily Allah does see all that they do.<sup>77</sup> (Al-Quran, 8:39)

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enemies of Islam who might be inclined to follow their example and act treacherously towards Muslims.

<sup>70</sup> Even from the human point of view the cause of Allah is the cause of justice, the cause of the oppressed. In the great persecution, before Makkah was won again, what sorrows, threats, tortures, and oppressions, were suffered by those whose faith was unshaken? Muhammad’s life and that of his adherents was threatened: they were mocked, assaulted, insulted and beaten; those within the power of the enemy were put into chains and cast into prison; others were boycotted, and shut out of trade, business, and social intercourse; they could not even buy the food they wanted, or perform their religious duties. The persecution was redoubled for the believing slaves, women, and children after the Hijrat. Their cry for a protector, and helper from Allah was answered when Muhammad the Chosen One brought freedom and peace to Makkah again..

<sup>71</sup> The emphasis is on the first clause: it is only when the four months of grace are past, and the other party show no signs of desisting from their treacherous designs by right conduct, that the state of war supervenes – between Faith and Unfaith.

<sup>72</sup> When war becomes inevitable, it must be prosecuted with vigour. According to the English phrase, you cannot fight with kid gloves. The fighting may take the form of killing, capture, or siege, or ambush and other stratagems. But even then there is room for repentance and amendment on the part of the guilty party and if that takes place, our duty is forgiveness and the establishment of peace.

<sup>73</sup> The repentance must be sincere, and that is shown by conduct – a religious spirit of true prayer and charity. In that case we are not to bar the gate against the repentant. On the contrary we must do all we can to make their way easy, remembering that Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

<sup>74</sup> In the first onset there must necessarily be great loss of life; ‘after the enemy’s numbers are fairly thinned down, prisoners may be taken’.

<sup>75</sup> When once the enemy is brought under control, generosity (i.e. the release of prisoners without ransom) or ransom is recommended.

<sup>76</sup> Same as Al-Quran, 2:193.

<sup>77</sup> If they cease from fighting and from the persecution of truth, Allah judges them by their actions and their motives, and would not wish that they should be harassed

12. O ye who believe! Fight the Unbelievers who are near to you<sup>78</sup> and let them find harshness in you: and know that Allah is with those who fear Him. (Al-Quran, 9:123)

#### **Do not Transgress in War**

13. Repel evil with that<sup>79</sup> which is best; We are well acquainted with the things they say. (Al-Quran, 23:96)
14. Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you,<sup>80</sup> but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors. And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for persecution is worse than slaughter; but fight them not<sup>81</sup> at the sacred mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you, slay them. Such is the reward of those who reject faith.<sup>82</sup> But if they cease, Allah is Oft-

with further hostility. But if they refuse all terms, the righteous have nothing to fear: Allah will help and protect them.

<sup>78</sup> When conflict becomes inevitable, the first thing is to clear our surroundings of all evils, for it is only evil that we can rightly fight. To evil we must put up a stout and stiff resistance. Mealy-mouthed compromises are not right for soldiers of truth and righteousness. They are often a compound of cowardice, weariness, greed, and corruptibility.

<sup>79</sup> Whether people speak evil of Muhammad, in his presence or behind his back, or they do evil to him in either of those ways, all is known to Allah. It is not for him to punish. His best course is not to do evil in his turn, but to do what will best repel the evil. Two evils do not make a good.

<sup>80</sup> War is permissible in self-defence, and under well-defined limits. When undertaken, it must be pushed with vigour, but not relentlessly but only to restore peace and freedom for the worship of Allah. In any case strict limits must not be transgressed; women, children, old and infirm men should not be molested, nor trees and crops cut down, nor peace withheld when the enemy comes to terms.

<sup>81</sup> The passage is illustrated by the events that happened at Hudaibiya in the sixth year of the Hijra, ... The Muslims were by this time a strong and influential community. Many of them were exiles from Makkah, where the Pagans had established an intolerant autocracy, persecuting Muslims, preventing them from visiting their homes, and even keeping them out by force from performing the Pilgrimage during the universally recognized period of truce. This was intolerance, oppression, and autocracy to the last degree, and the mere readiness of the Muslims to enforce their rights as Arab citizens resulted without bloodshed in an agreement, which the Muslims faithfully observe. The Pagans, however, had no scruples in breaking faith, and it is unnecessary here to go into subsequent events. In general, it may be said that Islam is the religion of peace, goodwill, mutual understanding, and good faith. But it will not acquiesce in wrongdoing, and its men will hold their lives cheap in defence of honour, justice, and the religion, which they hold sacred. Their idea is that of heroic virtue combined with unselfish gentleness and tenderness, such as is exemplified in the life of the Prophet. They believe in courage, obedience, discipline, duty and a constant striving by all the means in their power, physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual, for the establishment of truth and righteousness.

<sup>82</sup> *Suppress faith*: in the narrower as well as the larger sense! If they want forcibly to prevent you from exercising your sacred rites, they have declared war on your religion, and it would be cowardice to ignore the challenge or to fail in rooting out the tyranny.

Forgiving, Most Merciful. And fight them on until there is no more persecution and the religion becomes Allah's.<sup>83</sup> But if they cease, let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression. (Al-Quran, 2: 190-193)

### **Towards Peace and Justice**

15. But if the enemy inclines towards peace, do thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in Allah: for He is the One that heareth and knoweth (all things).<sup>84</sup> (Al-Quran, 8:61).
16. O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve<sup>85</sup> to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: this is next to Piety: and fear Allah for Allah is well acquainted with all that ye do. (Al-Quran, 5:8).

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<sup>83</sup> The Arabic word is *Din*, which is comprehensive. It implies the ideas of indebtedness, duty, obedience, judgment, justice, faith, religion, customary rites, etc. The clause means: 'until there is *Din, for Allah.*'

<sup>84</sup> While we must always be ready for the good fight lest it be forced on us, even in the midst of the fight we must always be ready for peace if there is any inclination towards peace on the other side. There is no merit merely in a fight by itself. It should be a joyful duty not for itself, but to establish the reign of peace and righteousness and Allah's Law.

<sup>85</sup> To do justice and act righteously in a favourable or neutral atmosphere is meritorious enough, but the real test comes when you have to do justice to people who hate you or to whom you have an aversion. But no less is required of you by the higher moral law.

## SYRIA-US RELATIONS IN AN HISTORICAL CONTEXT: PROSPECT OF REALISM IN SYRIA'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS THE UNITED STATES

Dr Ahmad Soltani Nejad\*

### Introduction

American relations with Syria have been strained by various factors. During recent decades, the two countries occasionally had good relations, but the relations usually deteriorated. The United States has generally supported Israel and this policy adversely affected its relations with Syria. Moreover, Syria has been on the US list of state-sponsoring international terrorism since this list was slashed in 1979. This was mostly because Syria supported and provided safe-haven for some Palestinian and Lebanese groups and other organisations that US administrations considered terrorist groups.

During recent decades at least the following factors, from the US point of view, led to deterioration of US policy towards Syria. These factors have been among the main reasons for which the United States has not yet improved its bilateral relations with Syria: I) Syria's alleged role in international terrorism, II) Syria's intervening policy in Lebanon and III) Syria's suspicious role in Iraq in the aftermath of the US invasion of Iraq. The US Congress, therefore, imposed several sanctions upon Syria, aiming to make this country ineligible to receive US aid or purchase US military equipment and high tech products. These sanctions have made improvement of relations between the two countries very difficult and contingent upon fundamental changes in Syrian foreign and domestic policy.

From another point of view, there are a variety of main issues that could support the idea that Syria's foreign policy, during Hafiz al-Asad era, was formed through the prism of the realist approach of international politics. The aim of this research is to see how Hafiz al-Asad understood the importance of power politics in the region and the structure of international political system in order to maximize his gains through playing an important regional role. Whatever political, economic and social or other forces shaped Syria's foreign policy towards the United States, the main hypothesis of this paper is that Syria made its decision, based upon a prudent and rational calculation of its objectives and capabilities. This paper will first discuss the roots of realism in Syria's foreign policy during the Hafez al-Asad era, and then explain the US-

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Syrian relations in the historical context to see how changes in international and regional area influenced the shaping of Syria's foreign policy towards the United States. The paper would include a brief discussion on contemporary issues in Syrian-US relations, particularly important issues in the aftermath of the US occupation of Iraq.

### **Roots of Realism in Syria's Foreign Policy during the Asad Era**

The Socialist Ba'th Party, to which Hafiz al-Asad belonged took power in Syria in 1963. At the time, Syria's foreign policy was preoccupied by both the political instability and the enormous threat from Israel. The Ba'th Party was dominated by the radicals and formulated by anti-Zionism, anti-imperialism and pan-Arab attitudes. Accordingly, the main goals of Syria's foreign policy were the liberation of Palestine and destruction of Israel. The defeat of 1967 War, and the fact that Arabs could not do anything from their position of weakness, provided an opportunity for a moderate and pragmatic member of the Ba'th Party to take control of government of Syria in the early 1970s.

When Hafiz al-Asad came to power in 1970, he tried to balance between Syria's objectives and capabilities. His main goal was to downgrade the objectives of Syria's foreign policy from the liberation of whole Palestine to the recovery of the Arab lands that were occupied by Israel in the aftermath of the 1967 War, and finally, to the recovery of only Syria's Golan Heights, which he had lost when he was the Defence Minister in 1967. Hafiz al-Asad also, at the same time, tried to upgrade Syria's capabilities through strengthening Syria's military power and most importantly, through playing an important, crucial, formidable role in regional crises. The interesting point was Asad's fascinating ability to use power-politic in the region, particularly in Lebanon, as an important mechanism for the manipulation of power and for making Syria an indispensable regional player that both the United States and the other regional powers, could not ignore or bypass Syria's important role in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Given Syria's tangible and intangible elements of power, and the fact that Syria was a poor country that had neither the wealth of rich Arab countries, nor the population and military strength of others, Hafiz al-Asad adopted a policy upon which pragmatism and a realist view of regional and international power politics were essential elements in the formation of Syria's foreign policy. The study of Syria's foreign policy during Hafiz al-Asad's presidency, demonstrated a variety of pragmatic and realist indications of the making of foreign policy. In discussing Hafiz al-Asad's role in the making of Syrian foreign policy, Raymond Hinnebusch well explained characteristics and the implications of Asad's personality on Syria's political landscape. He stated



President Hafiz Al-Asad, a man of strong personality, unique authority within the elite, and possessed of wide powers of office, is clearly the dominant decision-maker. Asad is, first of all, an intense nationalist, strongly committed to the Arab cause, and unprepared to concede major principles...Asad is also a realist rather than an ideologue...Asad tends to think in the objective strategic terms of the military professional...He is cautious, never moving without thorough analysis of the balance of forces, and less ready to expend than to accumulate power used to influence; He is flexible and will bargain if it can be done from a position of enough strength to win some advantage...Asad also has a cool nerve, can recover from setback, and is uneasily panicked... Determined, intelligent, energetic, able to learn from mistakes...Asad is a shrewd practitioner of power politics, able to manipulate power balances, proxies, threats, and subversion, ruthless toward opponents, and a true Machiavellian prepared to use any means, from the bombardment of civilians to assassinations.<sup>1</sup>

According to Hinnebusch, the implication of Hafiz al-Asad's personality for Syria was the reality that he 'constructed his realism with the theory of the Ba'th radicals who allowed ideology to dictate policy to the neglect of the calculus of power...[and] with a keen grasp of international affairs, he has developed into a statesman of more than local stature. It is he who almost single-handedly has turned Syria from a pawn of stronger states into a credible actor in the regional power game'.<sup>2</sup>

There are many other examples that Syria, during Hafiz al-Asad's presidency, approached a realist policy rather than being predominated by the ideology of Ba'thism (Pan-Arabic sentiments). These policies could be summarised as: 1- Syria's intervention in Lebanese Civil War during 1975-1990, in which it first intervened in 1975 to the fight against the National Movement that has originally linked to Syria. It, however, adopted its foreign policy to its previous position after they succeeded in making a balance of power among the Lebanese and the Palestinian factions. 2- Syria's policy towards Egypt after President Anwar Sadat concluded a peace treaty with the Israelis in the late 1970s. 3- Syria's support of Iran during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88). In spite of the fact that certain quarters termed this policy as unrealistic, Syria was going to strengthen its position after Egypt had made peace with Israel and at the same time, was playing a crucial role by developing strategic relations with Iran. 4- Syria's decision to resume its relations with

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<sup>1</sup>. Raymond Hinnebusch, "Revisionist Dreams, Realistic Strategies: The Foreign Policy of Syria," in Bahgat Korany and Ali al-Din, *The Foreign policy of Arab States: The Challenge of Change* (Boulder: Westview, 1991), pp. 387-388.

<sup>2</sup>. Ibid.

Egypt in the late 1980, in order to end its isolation and resuscitate Syria's position in the Arab politics is another example of Asad's pragmatism. 5- Syria's strategic decision to join the American-led coalition to fight against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was a realistic approach to build confidence-building measures with the Americans and to provide an opportunity to improve its relations with the Americans at the time when they were the only hegemonic superpower in the region. 6- Syria's participation in the Arab-Israeli negotiations, despite the fact that they were aware of the American strategic relations with Israel, and the fact that it was unlikely that the Americans would pressure Israel to concede to the Arab's demands.

According to neo-realism, the structure of international system determines the making of foreign policy and the interaction between the actors at state and non-state level. As we see, in regard to Syria, the changes with the international system from bipolarity to a hegemonic role of the United States in the early 1990s, had an important effect on Syria's decision, both to join the US-led coalition and to participate in the peace process. Although, we should not simplify a complex process in which nation-states make their policy, a good combination of theory and practical analysis, would be useful to provide a better understanding of the making of foreign policy.

### **US-Syrian Relations in an Historical Context**

Until 1947, when the United States announced its support for a Jewish State, the United States had a very positive image in Syria. The image was created mostly by the activities of American educators, missionaries, and administrators who had helped to establish and promote educational institutions in some parts of Greater Syria, most prominent among them, the American University of Beirut<sup>3</sup>. By the mid-19 Century, Syria began to experience a national movement. According to the Palestinian author, George Antonius, 'the American missionaries' contribution was all the more productive as it was governed by ideas as well as by enthusiasm<sup>4</sup>.

The impact of the educational activities of the Americans in Syria was important not only because they established some educational institutions, but even more, because of the contributions of their graduates to the Arab awakening. Antonius believes 'when account is taken of its contribution to the diffusion of knowledge, of the impetus it gave to literature and science, and of the achievement of its graduates, it may justly be said that its influence on the

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<sup>3</sup>. By the mid-19 Century, American had established thirty-three schools in Syria.

Approximately one thousand students attended these schools. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (London: Hamilton, 1955), p. 42.)

<sup>4</sup>. Ibid., p. 41.

Arab revival, at any rate in its earlier stage, was greater than that of any other institution'.<sup>5</sup>

### *The Impact of Zionism*

The creation of the State of Israel in Palestine had strong negative ramifications for the popular image of the United States in the Middle East. The United States endorsed the United Nations' plan to partition Palestine and thereafter supported the new Jewish State of Israel. The United States became Israel's chief benefactor and backed Israel in its conflict with the Arabs. Consequently, this policy marked a period in which the positive image of the United States began to change. Syria was concerned because it perceived Israel as an immediate threat to its national security. Syria also viewed the creation of Israel in Palestine, historically a part of Greater Syria, as an 'imperialist-created colonial settler state unjustly implanted in the heart of the Arab World, as well as a security threat and an obstacle to Arab unity'.<sup>6</sup>

After World War II, the US viewed Middle East issues through the prism of the East-West conflict,<sup>7</sup> and, therefore, focussed on the Arab States to contain Soviet Union influence in the region. The US policy in the region was designed to support pro-Western Arab countries and to prevent any radical group from taking power in this region. According to a report by the National Security Council Staff, 'American friendship for Israel and Israeli dependence on American aid had thoroughly alienated the Arab people and their leaders, likely precluding Arab agreement to join an anti-Soviet defense arrangement in cooperation with the United States or Britain'.<sup>8</sup>

### *US Attempt to Overthrow Syria's Government, 1955-1957*

In the mid 1950s, the United States was concerned about the possibility that radical Pan-Arab nationalism might take control of power in Syria. There was major concern that such a radical national government might act as a Soviet surrogate and provide an outpost for Soviet influence in the region. Syria's geographic position in relation to the NATO allies, Turkey, as well as its borders with Israel was important to containment of the Soviet Union and communism in the Middle East.<sup>9</sup> Believing that Syria would provide the ground for Soviet expansionism in the Middle East, the US, under the

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<sup>5</sup>. Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>6</sup>. Alasdair Drysdale and Raymond Hinnebusch, *Syria and the Middle East Peace Process* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1991), p. 98.

<sup>7</sup>. John Dumbrell, *The Making of US Policy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), Second Edition, pp. 3-11.

<sup>8</sup>. Bonnie F. Saunders, *The United States and Arab Nationalism: the Syrian Case 1953-1960* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996), p. 26.

<sup>9</sup>. Burton I. Kaufman, *The Arab Middle East and the United States* (New York: Twayne Publisher, 1996), pp. 17-30.

Eisenhower Doctrine,<sup>10</sup> attempted to alter Syria's government. According to an analysis, when US official[s] believed that Communism was making significant inroads into Syrian politics and society, they tried harsher methods. In 1955, 1956, and 1957, the Central Intelligence Agency attempted several times to overthrow the government of Syria.<sup>11</sup> Under the Eisenhower Doctrine, the President offered military aid, for possible use against Syria to pro-Western countries in the region, most notably Jordan and Turkey.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, Syria viewed the United States policy in conflict with its national interests. According to Saunders, 'each action that Eisenhower administration took to minimize Soviet influence in Syria seemed to have the opposite effect.... The sharp anti-Syria and anti-Arab nationalist rhetoric uttered by American officials throughout the period and CIA covert operations drove Syria ever closer to the Soviets, who welcomed the opportunity to gain influence in the Middle East'<sup>13</sup>

#### *The United Arab Republic 1958-61*

Fearing that Syrian Communists might take control of the government and army, the members of the Arab Socialist Revolutionary Party (ASRP) then in power, decided to disband the government of Syria to form a unified government with Egypt. The United Arab Republic (UAR) was formed on 1 February 1958. In addition to the perceived threat of Communist activities in Syria, the desire for Arab unity was another reason that ASRP leaders voluntarily surrendered Syria's sovereignty only 12 years after achieving independence from France in 1946.<sup>14</sup> The US reaction toward the union of Syria and Egypt was mixed. Despite recognizing the UAR immediately, US officials were concerned that Nasser, Egypt's president and then president of the UAR, had increased power. According to Ambassador Seelye, 'while the unity scheme was acknowledged by Washington as an effort by Syrian

<sup>10</sup>. David W. Lesch, *Syria and the United States: Eisenhower's Cold War in the Middle East* (Westview Press, 1992), pp. 5-13 and 29-39. See also George Lenczowski, *American Presidents and the Middle East* (Duke University Press, 1990), pp. 52-54.

<sup>11</sup>. Lenczowski, *op.cit.*, pp. 54-57.

<sup>12</sup>. Bonnie, *op.cit.*, p. VIII.

<sup>13</sup>. *Ibid.*,

<sup>14</sup>. According to Bonnie F. Saunders who analysed the withdrawal of Syria from the United Arab Republic, the following reasons caused Syrian dissatisfaction and finally led to the reestablishment of Syria's sovereignty; 'Bureaucrats from Egypt had known little about the internal affairs of Syria and had shown extreme indifference to Syrian sensibilities. Egyptian, not Syrian, officers and soldiers had manned most military base in Syria. Former ASRP politicians had not participated in Nasser's National Union Party. At no time during the union did Syrians make up more than 30 percent of the UAR cabinet or parliament. Most Syrians believed that Egypt had reaped all of the benefits from the union'. *Ibid.*, p. 85.) For more information see Anthony Nutting, *Nasser* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1972), pp. 246-264.

nationalist[s] to reduce the growing influence of Syrian Marxists, it also appeared to offer expansionist opportunities in the Arab world to Nasser, a figure the Eisenhower Administration distrusted, despite its intervention on Egypt's behalf during the 1956 Suez Canal crisis'.<sup>15</sup>

### **US-Syrian Relations during the Presidency of Hafiz al-Asad**

A moderate member of the Ba'th Party, Hafiz al-Asad came to power in November 1970, and was elected President of Syria in March 1971. The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party took over the government of Syria in 1963. The Ba'th Party opposed US policies in the region and, therefore, its takeover of the Syrian government did not improve the already strained relations between the two countries. At this time, Syrian foreign policy had been shaped by Arab nationalism and was preoccupied with threats of Israeli expansionism. When the Ba'th Party seized power in Syria, it called for the total liberation of Palestine.<sup>16</sup> Under the original, radical Ba'th Party (1963-1970) 'it was Syria that challenged Israel, giving support to the Palestinian *Fedayeen* and trying to push the Arab States into preparation for a war of Palestinian liberation.<sup>17</sup> This policy led to the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, in which Israel captured vast areas of all its Arab neighbours, including the Golan Heights.

#### *The Impact of the 1967 & 1973 War*

As the US supported Israel in the 1967 War, most of the Arab countries, including Syria, severed their relations with the United States. At the same time, the Arab defeat in the war brought a new era of revisionism in Syrian foreign policy and Syria's relations with the other Arab countries. Hinnebusch argues, 'This defeat generated intense new security fears in Syria, gave new roots to revisionism, and further locked Syria into the conflict with Israel and its backers... and provoked the rise to power of Hafiz Al-Asad'.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, when Hafiz al-Asad came to power, US relations with Syria were already at the lowest point ever. When Hafiz al-Asad seized power in November 1970, a new era of realism in Syrian foreign policy began, in which he carefully moderated Syria's foreign policy goals. 'The role of ideology was relegated, and the new determinants of foreign policy have been shaped primarily by the international political system'.<sup>19</sup> Hafiz al-Asad, 'scaled down Syria's objectives, focussing them on recovery of the occupied territories, defence of the Syrian

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<sup>15</sup>. Talcott W. Seelye, *US-Arab Relations: The Syrian Dimension* (Portland: Oregon: Portland State University, 1985), p. 4.

<sup>16</sup>. Neil Quilliam, *Syria and the New World Order* (Lebanon: Ithaca Press, 1999), p. 2.

<sup>17</sup>. Raymond Hinnebusch, "Revisionist Dreams, Realistic Strategies: The Foreign Policy of Syria," in Bahgat Korany and Ali al-Din, *The Foreign policy of Arab States: The Challenge of Change* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), p. 375.

<sup>18</sup>. Hinnebusch, *op.cit.*, p. 374.

<sup>19</sup>. Quilliam, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

state, and enhancement of its stature in the Arab world; he also greatly upgraded Syrian capabilities'.<sup>20</sup> In an obvious move towards reconciliation of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Hafiz al-Asad announced in March 1972 that Syria would accept UN Security Council Resolution 242.<sup>21</sup> Syria had refused to accept this resolution when it was adopted originally after the June War of 1967. This acceptance was coincident with the expulsion of thousands of Soviet advisors from Egypt and Egypt's readiness to pursue a diplomatic strategy to restore Arab rights. According to Mark Tessler, '... from the Arab point of view, at least, the United States did little in response to these overtures and made no attempt to encourage meaningful Israeli movement in the direction of territorial compromise....'<sup>22</sup>

The United States and Syria resumed their relationship in June 1974, following the October 1973 War. Then US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, arranged a ceasefire between Israel and Syria. Thus, through an active American mediation role the peace negotiations led to the Syrian-Israeli Disengagement Agreement. Upon this agreement, Syria regained territories it had during the 1973 War as well as parts of the land; it had lost during the previous 1967 War. Although US-Syrian relations were restored in 1974, the relations between the two countries did not improve. Syria refused to continue its cooperation with the United States for negotiating a Second Disengagement Agreement on the grounds that US policy in the region favoured Israel. According to Talcott W. Seelye, 'to Asad, the United States seems determined to deny Syria what it considers its legitimate regional interests or to reduce its importance in the area...Syria also fundamentally distrusts the United States. This is important to keep in mind in discussing Syria's peace perspective, inasmuch as the United States has a central role to play in any peace initiative'.<sup>23</sup>

#### *The Impact of the Camp David Accord*

Egypt's initiatives to make a separate peace with Israel had a significant impact on deteriorating US-Syrian relations. Following the first disengagement agreement between Egypt and Israel in 1974, Sadat, moved toward reconciliation of the Arab-Israeli conflict through diplomatic means. He tried to reach an agreement with the Israelis to recover the lands that Egypt had lost during the previous war with Israel. Sadat's policies for a second disengagement was viewed by the other Arab countries as 'a desire for an

<sup>20</sup> Hinnebusch, op.cit., p. 375.

<sup>21</sup> Mark Tessler, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 479. For more information see: Fred J. Khori, *The Arab-Israeli Dilemma* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985), pp. 367-368.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 479.

<sup>23</sup> Seelye, op.cit., p.57.

accommodation with Israel.<sup>24</sup> Syria and other Arab countries criticised Sadat's policies, fearing that his unilateral post-war diplomacy would weaken the position of all other Arab states in their negotiations with Israel. Hafiz al-Asad viewed the Sinai II Agreement between Egypt and Israel 'as plot by the Americans to neutralize Egypt, thus maintaining the existing balance of power in the area, which to the Syrians was heavily in favor of Israel'.<sup>25</sup> The Camp David Peace Treaty,<sup>26</sup> divided the Arab countries and further weakened their already feeble positions in regard to the conflict with the Israelis. Syria objected to the treaty and simultaneously tried to isolate Egypt from the Arab world and to unify the Arab position against any unilateral agreement.<sup>27</sup> 'Realising that a separate peace had weakened the Arab position after Egypt had accepted the terms of Camp David in 1979, Syria sought to coordinate the policies of the Arab parties'.<sup>28</sup> Syria's opposition to Egypt's unilateral peace policy, and specifically its disagreement with US peace initiatives in the Middle East, made more difficult the restoration of US-Syrian relations from the late 1970s onwards. The United States viewed Syria as a rejectionist State, whose policy was to undermine the peace process in the Middle East. To make matters worse, Syria's strategic relations with the Soviet Union at that time led the United States to view Syria as a Soviet surrogate.

Therefore, inasmuch as US policymakers tried to exclude the Soviets from Middle Eastern affairs and, from the peace process in particular,<sup>29</sup> they pursued a policy of containment in regard to the Syrian role in the peace process, or at least to involve Syria as little as possible in the process. Consequently, this US policy provoked Syria to disrupt the process on the grounds that this US policy ignored Syria's primary national interests in the region. In response, Syria adopted a policy that was designed to prevent any unilateral agreement with Israel that would lead to the expansion of Israeli hegemony in the region.

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<sup>24</sup> Mark Tessler, *op.cit.*, p. 507.

<sup>25</sup> Seelye, *op.cit.*, p.5. Quoted from Adeed Dawisha, "The Motives of Syria's Involvement in Lebanon," *Middle East Journal*, (Spring 1984), p. 232.

<sup>26</sup> Laura Zittrain Eisenberg & Neil Caplan, *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: Pattern, Problems, Possibilities* (Indiana: Indian University Press, 1998), pp. 28-40.

<sup>27</sup> Martha Neff Kessler, "Syria, Israel and the Middle East peace process: Past success and Final Challenges," *Middle East Policy* Vol. VII, No. 2, (February 2000), pp. 75-76.

<sup>28</sup> Quilliam, *op.cit.*, p. 177. See also G. Butt, "Asad the Coordinator," *Middle East International*, No. 411, (October 25, 1991), p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> Maria do Ceu Pinto, *Political Islam and the United States: A Study of Us Policy Towards Islamist Movements in the Middle East* (Ithaca Press, 1998) p. 51.

*The Impact of the Lebanese Civil War 1975-1990*

Syria's role in the Lebanese Civil War<sup>30</sup>, which lasted from 1975 to 1990, was an important element in shaping US relations with the Syrians.<sup>31</sup> During this period, the US and Syria periodically confronted each other in Lebanon.<sup>32</sup> However, at other times, Syria's role as a hegemonic power was approved or, at least, ignored, by the US administrations. The ambiguity was due to Syria's geo-strategic position and its changing relations with the Lebanese factions. In order to prevent escalation of the civil war in Lebanon, and to establish stability in this country, there was a need for an influential power to maintain a balance of power in the Lebanese conflict. Syria was the only country that could play such a role. Seelye argues, 'Despite mutual suspicions and disagreement regarding basic Middle East policy, Syria and the United States have cooperated and consulted on Lebanon. Both Syria and the United States have a common goal of re-establishing order there and of maintaining a balance between disputing factions'.<sup>33</sup>

Although American-Syrian relations were frequently strained because of disagreement over various regional and international issues, the events in Lebanon in the mid 1970s somewhat improved relations between the two countries. Following the Civil War in Lebanon between the National Movement (including Palestinian groups, Leftist, Muslim, and Druze factions) and the Maronite Christian forces (the Phalangists), Syria, with the support of the Arab League, deployed thousands of its troops into Lebanon in order to stabilize the situation. Syria's main goal was to maintain a deliberately precarious balance of power between the Lebanese factions. To that end, Syria intervened militarily on behalf of the Maronites and against the National Movement factions, although these factions had once been supported by Syria and were originally linked to the Syrians.<sup>34</sup>

According to an analysis, 'Syria moved its troops into Lebanon in 1976 with US approval. Several times during Syria's occupation of Lebanon, the United States has gone on public record to characterize Syria's role in Lebanon as constructive....'<sup>35</sup> Therefore, Syria's action created an opportunity to improve its relations with the United States. Both the US and Syria had a

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<sup>30</sup>. Martha Wenger and Julie Denney, "Lebanon's Fifteen-Year war 1975-1990," *Middle East Report*, No. 162, (Jan. Feb., 1990), pp. 23-25. See also Drysdale & Hinnebusch, *op.cit.*, pp.119-129.

<sup>31</sup>. Talcott W. Seelye, "Syria and the Peace Process," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 2, No. 2. (Spring 1993), pp.104-109.

<sup>32</sup> Like the events in the aftermath of the May 1983 Israeli-Lebanese accord.

<sup>33</sup>. Seelye, *op.cit.*, p. 106.

<sup>34</sup>. For more information about Syrian relations with the Maronites since 1975, see Robert G. Rabil, "The Maronites and Syrian withdrawal: from "Isolations" to "Traitors?" *Middle East Policy*, Vol. VIII, No, 3, (September 2001), pp. 23-43.

<sup>35</sup>. Seelye, *op.cit.*, pp.106-107.



stake in preventing the Lebanese government from being defeated by the National Movement factions. Cooperation between the two countries led to a better understanding of their mutual interests. Syria played an important role in maintaining the balance of power in Lebanon although it sought to manipulate the Lebanese crisis for its domestic and regional interests.<sup>36</sup>

However, in response to outside influences, Syria once again returned to its previous position in the early 1977, in which it supported the Palestinian and other National Movement factions. The Maronite Christian forces, therefore, turned to the Israelis and increased their connections with them. Also in 1977, Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and his unilateral, separate peace initiatives exacerbated Syria's relations with the United States. Syria traditionally maintained that the Arab countries should be unified to strengthen their position in dealing with the Israelis.

By the end of 1970s, there were some dramatic changes in the aftermath of the Iranian revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. These events jeopardized US interests in the region and led to a new US policy in the Middle East. When Ronald Reagan came to office, he viewed the Arab-Israeli conflict through the prism of the Cold War in the context of rivalry with the Soviet Union. As a result of Syria's strategic relations with the Soviet Union, the Reagan administration viewed Syria as 'an outpost of the Soviets' and, therefore, adopted a policy of confrontation with the Syrians.

#### *The 1982 Israeli Invasion of Lebanon and its Aftermath*

The 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, in which Syrian forces suffered major losses and the Lebanese also suffered massive civilian casualties and lost much of their infrastructure, further strained US-Syrian relations. At the time of the invasion, US military and economic aid for Israel was approved by the US Congress. This action demonstrated to the Syrians that the Americans were behind the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Relations between Syria and the United States became extremely difficult when the Israelis, with American support, negotiated the normalisation of relations with the Lebanese government in the early 1983. The negotiations led to the May 17, 1983 Agreement, according to which Israel would withdraw from Lebanon within six months and both countries would establish normal relations.<sup>37</sup> Syria strongly objected to the accord and persuaded its allies in Lebanon to reject and to sabotage the agreement. Syria had already warned the Reagan administration that "no agreement could be carried out without its consent, and that Israel must not be allowed to achieve

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<sup>36</sup>. Itamar Rabinovich, "The Changing Prism: Syrian Policy in Lebanon as a Mirror, an Issue and an Instrument," in Moshe Ma'oz and Avner Yaniv, (ed). *Syria under Assad* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), pp. 179-190.

<sup>37</sup>. Eisenberg & Caplan, op.cit., pp. 43-56.

political or military gains in return for ending its occupation in Lebanon.”<sup>38</sup> But the US administration ignored Syria's warning and maintained that they could impose a peace treaty on Lebanon on Israeli terms.

As Syria rejected the May Accord, the Reagan administration viewed Syria as a spoiler in Lebanon. To demonstrate its dissatisfaction with American policy in Lebanon, Syria discontinued its cooperation with President Reagan's Middle East envoy ambassador, Philip Habib and finally declared him *persona non grata*. As a result of these events in Lebanon, Syrian-US relations became more tense and hostile.<sup>39</sup> The relations came to a critical point when large US casualties were incurred as a result of a terrorist car bombing at the US Marine barracks in Beirut, which was probably carried out by the Syrian allies. The explosion caused huge damages to American troops. Accordingly, following the bombing, ‘the National Security Council met and agreed on a tough policy of confronting Syria with a combination of US and Israeli military power’.<sup>40</sup>

Thereafter, American forces intervened militarily against Syrian positions in Lebanon. Finally, as a result of enormous US casualties, the US administration decided to withdraw its troops from Lebanon in February 1984, while the Syrian allies were gaining more power in Lebanon. Consequently, ‘Syria could then declare itself the victor in its confrontation with the US over Lebanon. While the US suffered a considerable loss of prestige and credibility in its clash with Syria over Lebanon, it saved itself from even greater disasters that would likely have occurred had American troops remained.’<sup>41</sup>

Finally, understanding that Syria could play a more important role in stabilising the Lebanese crisis, the United States reached the conclusion that they could not ignore Syria's interests in Lebanon. This understanding was based upon events including the failure of US military intervention in Lebanon 1982-83, Syria's good will was shown by facilitating the release of American hostages in Lebanon, and Syria's influence in stabilising the tension in Lebanon and establishing balance of power between the Lebanese factions. Consequently, ‘while not always happy with Syrian tactics, the United States has recognised that the Lebanon's current chaotic situation [1975-1990] necessitates the presence of the firm hand of an outside power-- and that only Syria has the appropriate credentials and the will to act in this capacity’.<sup>42</sup> As a result, all these circumstances ‘seemed to make Asad's point that Syria cannot be ignored...and with its co-operation, things can be achieved in the Middle East’.<sup>43</sup> The United States, therefore, shifted its focus and began to help

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<sup>38</sup> Seelye, *op.cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> Eyal Zisser, “Syria and the United States: Bad Habits Die Hard,” *Middle East Quarterly* (Summer 2003), pp. 30-32.

<sup>40</sup> Seelye, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>42</sup> Seelye, *op.cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>43</sup> Hinnebusch, *op.cit.*, p. 385.

dampen tension between Syria and Israel in Lebanon. Syria, thereafter, implemented a policy to relax the tension in its relations with the United States.

*US-Syrian Relations in the Late 1980s and the Early 1990s*

In spite of Syria's attempt to normalize the uneasy situation in its relations with the United States, Syrian-US relations became tense once again in 1986, as a result of a report in which it was alleged Syria had a role in an attempt to blow up an Israeli airplane. The US and other European countries withdrew their ambassadors from Damascus. However, the US ambassador returned to Syria in 1987, when Syria showed its willingness to restrain the radical Palestinian group Abu Nidal. This group, according to the Americans, was obviously engaged in terrorist activities. Syria later on expelled this group. The expulsion of this group and Syria's continuing help in securing the release of several hostages in Lebanon were important in easing the tension between the two countries. Syria also cooperated with the United States and other Arab countries in negotiating the Ta'if Accord<sup>44</sup> in September 1989. The Accord, brokered by the Arab League, outlined a comprehensive reform plan for ending the Lebanese civil war. The Accord also endorsed Syrian military presence in Lebanon.

Finally, Syria's historic decision to join the American-led coalition against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 improved their relationship. US-Syrian relations further advanced as a result of Syria's strategic decision to participate in the American peace initiatives, which convened in Madrid in November 1991. Syria agreed for the first time to negotiate its disputes within the context of bilateral negotiations with Israel.

In conclusion, there were several factors that made the improvement of Syria's relations with the United States very difficult, even though both countries had significant mutual interests in Lebanon and in the Middle East peace process.<sup>45</sup> These factors included the legislative sanctions that were imposed on Syria by the US Congress as a result of Syria's alleged role in international terrorism. Syria has been on the US list of States sponsoring international terrorism since the list was created in 1979. The US sanctions imposed upon Syria had long been among the main obstacles to improving the relations between the United States and Syria. The US imposed several economic and military sanctions on Syria in the late 1970s and the mid-1980s. They also banned Syria from receiving American economic aid. The sanctions

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<sup>44</sup> Graham Usher, "Hizballah, Syria, and the Lebanese Elections", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Winter 1997), pp. 60-61.

<sup>45</sup> For a detail explanation of the roots of hostility between Syria and the United States see Drysdale & Hinnebusch, op.cit., pp. 174-199.

minimized US-Syrian trade and limited the two country's relations in various fields of cooperation.

### Recent Developments

After the catastrophic events of September 11, 2001, the Bush administration used this tragedy as a pretext to expand the war against terrorism, not only to Afghanistan but also to so-called rogue States: Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Particularly after the fall of Baghdad, it appeared that the United States was going to extend its fight against terrorism to Syria. The Bush administration significantly increased its anti-Syrian rhetoric as they did their anti-Iraqi rhetoric prior to the outbreak of war in March 2003. Many Middle Eastern observers, therefore, and the Syrians themselves, believed that Syria was the next American target in the US fight against terrorism in the aftermath of September 11.

Although vehemently opposed to the US war against Iraq, Syria adopted a prudent policy towards the upheavals in Iraq in order to avoid the escalation of tension in its uneasy relation with the United States. The Iraq aftermath, particularly Iraq's instability and America's future plan<sup>46</sup> for stabilizing Iraq, could have enormous effects on Syria.<sup>47</sup> The war brought increasing pressure on Syria, both politically and economically. From a military point of view, the United States continued to severely criticize Syria's so-called spoiler role in Iraq. The expansion of the US war to Syria was likely, at least for a while after the collapse of Saddam's regime.

In the wake of the war and the subsequent chaos in Iraq, the United States applied increasing pressure on Syria in order to make sure that Syria would not worsen the already tense situation in Iraq. Syria, therefore, adopted a pragmatic approach towards the new circumstances in Iraq. Realizing that it had no option but to minimise the increasing American threats, Syria adopted a prudent and moderate policy in order to secure its national interests. Syria's main goal was to avoid an escalation of conflict with the United States through strengthening confidence-building measures. Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon

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<sup>46</sup> For more information about the future of Iraq See: Byman, Daniel L. and Kenneth M. Pollack, "Democracy in Iraq?" *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No.3 (Summer 2003), pp. 119–136, Byman, Daniel, "Iraq after Saddam," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No.4, (Autumn 2001), pp. 151–162, Brancati, Dawn, "Can Federalism Stabilize Iraq?", *The Washington Quarterly*, (Spring 2004), Vol. 27, No.2, pp. 7–21.

<sup>47</sup> For more information about the consequences of War in Iraq, see Kaufmann Chaim, "Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War," *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Summer 2004), pp. 5–48, & Freedman, Lawrence, "War in Iraq: Selling The Threat," *Survival*, Vol. 46, No. 2, (Summer 2004), pp. 7–50.

in 2005, after nearly three decades could be best analysed within this context. In addition, Syria's cooperation with American forces in Iraq in sealing off its border or providing information regarding *al-Qaeda* terrorist groups viewed as an avenue to reconcile Syria's tense relation with the United States.

### **Conclusion**

The fact that Syrian-US relations have been always been strained, made Syria more vulnerable to hegemonic US power in the region. Syria's realist understanding of international power politics led Syrian official to significantly maintain Syria's important position in the Middle East politics. Because of Syria's geo-strategic position in the region, on the one hand, and Syria's interesting ability to manipulate power balances through proxy threats, on the other, the successive US administrations during the recent decades could not ignore Syria's regional role.

Meanwhile, on several occasions, Syria could balance its feeble position by taking a realist approach in dealing with international and regional issues. For example, Syria's decision to adjust its foreign policy and to accommodate to the new changes in the Middle East, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, even though Syria had no better option but to moderate its foreign policy was based upon a rational and realist approach. Syria, therefore, joined the US-led coalition to fight against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and also participated in the Madrid peace conference, hoping these actions would end Syria's isolation and lead to resituate Syria as an important regional actor. Even after the death of Hafiz al-Asad, Syria approached a realist orientation in its foreign policy toward the United States, although his successor, Bashar al-Asad, was not as strong as his father in terms of accumulating political power, nor has his father's experiences in dealing with enormous challenges that Syria has faced after this taking over in June 2000. Therefore, we could conclude that if Syrian officials continue to adopt a policy of realist orientation, as they did during the Hafiz al-Asad era, Syria would survive and tide over enormous outside pressures. If not, Syria would face increasing regional and international challenges that might jeopardise its national security. ■

## US COUNTER-TERRORIST STRATEGY AND IRAQ: DUBIOUS INTENTIONS, UNSOUND STRATEGY

Hayat U. Khan \*

In the aftermath of 9/11, the Bush Administration published a series of *national strategies* to address the international and domestic security threats facing the United States. All these strategies are together meant to high light the continuing War against Terrorism and guide the work of terrorism prevention and interdiction. *The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (2003)*,<sup>1</sup> specifically deals with the external terrorist threats, faced by the US, and is the focus of our examination. Against this threat, the US embarked on an international ‘crusade’ to ‘eliminate’ transnational terrorism. With an impressive set of capabilities (plus an expansion of US military interests from East Africa to the Philippines, Uzbekistan to Ukraine), the US signalled that it would go alone in this ‘crusade’, if it felt necessary. The unilateral approach is reaffirmed in the National Defence Strategy 2005, and the National Security Strategy of the United States of America 2006.<sup>2</sup> Also, in this crusade, Bush proclaimed in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 that ‘every nation has a choice to make. In this conflict, there is no neutral ground’<sup>3</sup>.

This paper will argue that the US National Strategy to counter terrorism has fundamental deficiencies and is not clear in its vision, or the means to achieve its ends. The strategy fails to appreciate the nature of terrorism or the dangers of placing *all* ‘terrorist’ organisations as one undifferentiated mass (i.e. a fight against all terror), and the political requirement of this so called war, a war that continues to defy a precise definition<sup>4</sup>. It will be argued that because of the nature of this war and the

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<sup>1</sup> US White House, *The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (Washington, DC: September 2003). Henceforth to be referred to as the NSCT or the Strategy

<sup>2</sup> US White House, *National Defence Strategy of the US* (Washington, DC: March 2005) and US White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: March 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Address by President George W. Bush to the Nation, 7 October 2001. Transcripts, *New York Times*, 8 October 2001. Although the word ‘crusade’ was subsequently dropped from Bush’s vocabulary, the first impressions created in the Muslim World remains till this day.

<sup>4</sup> To its credit, the 9/11 Commission Report starts its recommendation for a global strategy by highlighting the importance of clearly identifying the threat in this so

difficulty of defining a victory, Iraq becomes a likely target and a show-piece for the Bush Administration as an example of the success of the strategy. The doctrine of pre-emption is deliberately stripped from the arguments here because it confuses and adds a façade around the use of force that cannot be sustained<sup>5</sup>. The declared aim of the ‘war on terrorism’ is alien to sound strategic thought and raises a host of questions.

### Unsound Strategy

The *Al Qaeda* attacks on September 11 on the US, gave a new lease of life to the study of the use of force and the return of civilians to its study. The threat of Terrorism in the 21 Century was to be preponderantly confronted by the use of force, an instrument of dubious utility. Inevitably, international legal norms have increasingly become overshadowed, and in some cases totally disregarded, in the use and threat of force by the US and some of its allies. The West Europeans (especially the ‘old Europe’) have made weak and futile attempts, using moral and legal arguments, to counter the US’s Clausewitzian prescriptions to tackle contemporary security threats. The military element, including pre-emption, permeates the US NSCT. An examination of the strategy reveals weaknesses and deficiencies, especially in the means and ends, condemning American terrorist strategy in particular to failure and even perhaps achieving the opposite of its desired effects. Unsound strategy, or for that matter any strategy, becomes apparent when we see its *strategic effects*. The creation of Afghanistan within Iraq speaks for itself: the terrorist nests within Afghanistan during the Taliban period have now been supplanted in Iraq. As Vincent Cannistraro has pointed out ‘Now we have created conditions that have made Iraq the place to come to attack Americans’.<sup>6</sup>

September 11 was largely about surprises and the impact of those surprises. The total number of dead was initially estimated to be in the range of 6,000 (twice the actual number) and the immediate consequence was to

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called ‘war’. *The 9/11 Commission Report, Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist attacks Upon the United States* (New York: WW Norton & Co., 2004), pp. 361-363.

<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that a State Department official called the doctrine of pre-emption as a ‘mistake’ and ‘deception’[sic] and hence the reason less and less that has been heard of it for the past two years. Perhaps the debacle in Iraq has more to do with demise of the doctrine than is readily admitted. Discussions of the author, Washington DC, 15 December 2005.

<sup>6</sup> John Walcott, “Some in Administration Uneasy Over Bush Speech”, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, (Philadelphia), 19 September 2003. It is also worth reminding ourselves what President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt stated on 31 March 2003: ‘When it is over; if it is over, this war will have horrible consequences ... Instead of having one Bin Laden, we will have a hundred Bin Ladens.’ Quoted in Paul Rogers, “Destructive Force” *The World Today*, (London) (May 2003), p. 5.

spread panic in America precisely what terrorism aims to achieve. For a national strategy to be useful, it must be both crystal clear in its driving idea and adaptable to accommodate the full range of future surprises. What matters is a lack of ambiguity about the central notion. Terrorism, after all, is about surprises and the strategic effects of those surprises. It cannot - does not have the capability to deal a serious blow to a State<sup>7</sup>. The American counter terrorist strategy of concentrating on 'Islamic terrorists' or 'jihadists', with a mind-set familiar during the cold war period, focusing narrowly on the Communist threat, may yet surprise Americans by something 'new' in the coming 5-10 years. In that event, America would be in danger not only of being surprised but also of being gravely hurt by the effects of some surprises that were not anticipated. In this respect, historically, one has to look at, say, Pearl Harbour in 1941, the Tet Offensive of 1968 and now 9/11. The attacks in the three cases cited, were anticipated but they were expected to occur overseas, and the capability of the enemy to mount them was grossly underestimated<sup>8</sup>.

The US was partly surprised in all the above incidents because of the attitude to hold any and all enemies in contempt, especially those that not fit in with the stereotyped Anglo-Saxon model. An effective counter-terrorist strategy, therefore, is weakened by failure to consider foreign models and ignorance of the languages, religion, and culture of the Islamic World. The desecration of the Holy Quran in Quantanomo Bay, depiction of a US ally as a dog and usage of terms such as 'Islamic fascists' are examples of supreme reflection of US diplomatic immaturity and ignorance.

The legitimacy of, and indeed the moral foundation, of the necessity to counter potential terrorist attacks and strive towards the removing of the terrorist threat (the ends of policy) on the US mainland or on its ever increasing overseas interests or on its allies can not be denied nor should it raise resentment. This issue is not in dispute. Like every state, the US enjoys the same right to defend itself with all the means at its disposal against terrorist organisations, which usually neither have a constituency nor identifiable territorial delineations. However, the US has not been the sole privileged nation to suffer terrorist atrocities. Most nations have suffered and continue to suffer from terrorism while some more than others. Thus, all nations should have a common denominator in the perceived threat from terrorism and should find congruence in a commonality of the 'enemy'. But bitter differences remain as to the fundamentals, such as who are the

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<sup>7</sup> It has been pointed to the author that with WMD, in the hands of terrorists the equation changes and a serious blow can be delivered. However, this capability is still limited and is relatively far from that what one state can mobilize against another State.

<sup>8</sup> As the 9/11 Report makes clear the terrorist attacks were foreseeable and preventable.



'terrorists' or what is it that constitutes a *common defined* perceived threat or the cause of terrorism? Thereby, the proper utilization of strategy towards a clear end, has given rise to disagreements and lukewarm international support for US policies against terror. This, with the combined lofty aim of 'elimination' of terrorism in general, gives the Strategy a shallow goal of dubious attainability.

Also, there are very serious questions as to the means and methods in the fight against terrorism. The National Strategy of the US is deficient and seriously flawed in this respect and has, and it continues to cause friction in the global coalition in the 'War against Terror' - a war with no defined limits but nevertheless expected to last decades at least, if not longer. The threat, implicit in the statement of 'you're either with us or against us in the threat against terrorism,' does not augur well either for a wholehearted international support or a desire, by some national governments, answerable to hostile domestic public opinion, to be identified so closely with US imperial or hegemonic translation of policy. Truly, cooperative endeavours are certainly not generated by threats or coercion. As far back as 1997, *Der Spiegel* noted not uncharitably that 'never before in modern history has a country dominated the earth so totally as the United States does today ...showing off muscles, obtrusive, intimidating ...'<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, as illustrated by Iraq in 2003, and as Fareed Zakaria has noted, never had the US gone to war [with the exception of Vietnam] with so few allies actually prepared to back it enthusiastically<sup>10</sup> and with such global opposition to the war creating deep divisions within and among US allies.

The strategy seems to have forgotten that threat and use of force must have a political dimension and muscles and that intimidation wins only few coalition partners. The emphasis in that the strategy is on the use of force to the detriment of international cooperation, intelligence and police work which are the key to the defeat of any terrorist organization. The very characteristics of terrorism make them alien to conventional defeat<sup>11</sup>.

Post Vietnam, Clausewitz became the guiding force for the Americans. Yet the central tenets of his teachings have been ruefully neglected in the strategy to the detriment of US security policy and its possible consequences on world stability. The national Strategy has been monopolised, in its guiding spirit, by neo-conservatism ideology, hatched and nurtured in some of the think tanks of Washington DC, during the period coinciding with the retreat of strategic thought in the aftermath of the Cold War. As a consequence the strategy of the Bush administration has, for

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted in William Blum, *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 2002).

<sup>10</sup> Fareed Zakaria, "Arrogant Empire", *Newsweek*, (March 2003).

<sup>11</sup> See below as to why terrorism is difficult to eliminate.

all intents and purposes, failed to project a focus on an even unlikely attainable end, and instead, have gone astray on a 'wild goose chase' in the form of Iraq. The world's sheriff, as some prefer to call the US's role in the 21 Century in contrast to imperial<sup>12</sup>, however, may have designs other than simply fuzzy strategy and influences of the neo-conservative and pro-Zionist lobbies, within the administration.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the American proclaimed military 'victories' in the fight against 'terrorism' and the third rate foes, has imparted not only a sense of invincibility but would appear to have blinded policy makers in Washington to the inadequacy of their Strategy as well as the body bags arriving in the US from Iraq and Afghanistan. The course must be maintained, President Bush insists. American public, by and large, in awe of the nation's military prowess, appears to be holding steady and public support and casualty-shyness for the 'war against terror' does not appear to be reaching levels of Vietnam or to set alarm bells ringing in Washington. There are various reasons for this. The primary one being that the War in Iraq, in the image of the American public, has been deliberately identified with 9/11, *Al-Qaeda*, terrorism generally and WMD's. The consequence has been that strategic, moral and ethical questions have been suppressed.. For the policymakers in Washington, Iraq is as if almost a desperate need has been created for a success in the 'Global War against Terrorism', forgetting, and then rediscovering in Iraq, that war is a dual and that the enemy may prove to be tactically, operationally, and even strategically adaptive<sup>13</sup>.

### Defining the Threat

Clausewitz noted some years ago that 'all wars are things of the same nature', basically postulating that the nature of war has remained the same, over the time of human life span, whatever the social or political context but also implying at the same time that the character of war may change. He further noted that the 'the supreme, most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and the commander have to make is to establish the kind of war on which they are embarking, neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its true nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive'<sup>14</sup>. Yet, the US strategy talks of 'global war on terror', 'war on terrorism', *etc.* Neither war nor terrorism

<sup>12</sup> See Colin Gray, *The Sheriff: American's Defence of the New World Order* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004) and Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: the Cost and consequences of the American empire* (London: Times Warner Paperbacks, 2002) (Post September 11, Reissue). See also Martin Walker, 'America's virtual empire', *World Policy Journal*. Vol. XIX, No. 2, (Summer 2002)

<sup>13</sup> Note what Carl von Clausewitz says on the nature of war i.e. a dual on a larger scale

<sup>14</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, (trans). Peter Paret & Michael Howard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 134

has been satisfactorily explained or the meaning of these terms agreed upon (different US departments define terrorism in a different way, leaving aside the international differences). But sound strategy requires a clear definition of the enemy. Leaving aside some fundamentals stated from Clausewitz for the present, there is implicit in this quoted statement the 'know thy enemy' before embarking on overcoming him i.e. the fundamentals of strategic thought of concentration and discrimination. Sun Tzu, in the *Art of War*, summarized the consequences of 'not knowing the other [i.e. the enemy] and knowing one self' leads to 'one victory for one loss'. The answer to the question, as to with whom or what is the US at war, may seem to be obvious but this, in reality, is not and this has serious implication for strategy.

The strategy sees success in terms of 'defeat of terror'. The objectives of the war appear to be murkier than the definition of the enemy. The NSCT does not discriminate between terrorist organizations world wide, regardless whether they actually pose a threat to the US interests or not. A less ambitious aim would have been appropriate. Eradication of *Al Qaeda* as a strategic aim would have been more appropriate but even this, for the only superpower, to achieve, would appear to be an over ambitious objective- terrorism, however inappropriately defined has been with us since time immemorial. Choosing to fight 'world terror' is a strategy doomed to fail. Hitler's war machinery was brilliant, both operationally and tactically, but it was the German strategy that let the military down. It has been rightly commented that the Germans were good at fighting but bad at strategy. The same could equally be said of the Americans.

The very nature of terrorism and as to what counts victory in this war, if there is to be a victory at all, will shed light on the Iraq issue. Can the future hold a day when the president of the US stand on an aircraft carrier, or land, and raise the victor's flag in this war? The answer must be an emphatic no, and then only the questions over Iraq will have any meaningful answer.

Since 9/11, there has been mind set change about the nature of terrorism and the threats it can pose. In the past, terrorism was viewed as a glorified criminal activity and in Britain today, the legislation in place against terrorism would indicate that this is still the case in that country. There was in the past, even if a blurred one, distinction between national liberation movements and terrorism, despite the fact that the former would, at times, employ the tactics of the terrorists. There had always in the near past existed a grudging acceptance of insurgents, especially those waging a liberation struggle. The often-quoted saying that 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter,' illustrates this well. But to the detriment of international cooperation and indignation of US allies, all forms of movements for change of the status quo have been transformed by the Strategy into terrorism. The US seems to have completely swept aside any legitimate political aspiration,

the so-called terrorist may harbour. Terrorists (including liberation movements) are stripped of that element of their natural equation, which is, in the Clausewitzian formula, the continuation of waging violence for political purposes even though the warfare is of a form of demassified war. True, there are no front lines, nor do terrorists engage in continuous or linear combat or sequential attacks. Surprise, in most cases, is the object of a terrorist attack and, above all, the greater the degree of surprise and overreaction by the victim, the greater the success of the attack. In this war, there is no distinction between combatants or non-combatants. A phenomenon, described as the emptying of the battlefields, is said to have occurred and the durability of this warfare has become permanent<sup>15</sup>. Thus, the character of warfare has changed but not its nature.

The principles of terrorist strategy are timeless. Tactics, operations and weapons to wage violence may change but strategy has remained the same since times immemorial. ‘Terrorists’ have always been able to make use of technology (stingers by the *Mujabideen* or box cutters by Atta and his comrades), when the need has arisen. Whether it is *Al Qaeda*, Hezbollah, or even the *Mujabideen* during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the strategy of the irregular fighter is the same that were used by, say, the Jewish zealot’s against the Roman Empire. The nature of this type of warfare has been constant from times immemorial.

Terrorism as a technique has been with us from times immemorial and the tactics of the terrorists are not something that has appeared suddenly. History is replete with examples of this activity. Therefore, how do you implement a strategy to *eliminate* (the declared aim of the NSCT) a technique? Or declare a war on a technique? Kaplan’s comment is extremely pertinent here when he says ‘the greater the disregard of history, the greater the delusions regarding the future’.<sup>16</sup> The US military, in conventional military terms, is second to none in the 21 Century. But, as history has taught us, the very nature of terrorism makes it alien to conventional military destruction even by the world’s only superpower. Did the British eliminate the Irish Republican Army? Similarly, have the Israeli’s, employing the most brutal form of counter-insurgency warfare, managed to dent Hezbollah or Hamas? Was it not the Viet Cong, an irregular force, who inflicted a serious blow, first against the French and then against the US?

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<sup>15</sup> See Brian Jenkins, “Redefining the enemy”, *RAND Review*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Spring 2004), pp. 16-23

<sup>16</sup> Robert Kaplan, *Warrior Politics: why leadership demands a Pagan Ethos* (New York: Random House, 2002) p. 19

### **From Asymmetrical to Regular Warfare: Iraq**

What has the Bush Administration achieved in the fight against terrorism over the past four years or so in the war on terror? This brings us to the answer as to why there is the diversion and blurring of strategy and the quagmire in Iraq. It would be difficult to argue that terrorism worldwide has been reduced or even, as some have argued, dented. If the number of terrorist incidents can be used as the index of terrorist activity, then certainly terrorist violence has shot upwards. There are, of course, difficulties with accurately evaluating the success of this 'war'. Terror is slippery and undetected- it only becomes apparent, when it hits us and takes us off balance by surprise. Statements and policies such as 'the global war on terror', 'war on terrorism', *etc.* in this context, become more puzzling, when it is dissected in detail. So, in this war, will it be possible to hold a victory parade? In a traditional war, victory is assured by occupying enemy's territory or crushing its armed forces, but when do we know that the last terrorist is eliminated or the last would be terrorist born? The answers are not easy. By this criterion, victory would appear neither easy nor within reach.

The conventional military use of force in Iraq, therefore, becomes the battleground for the 'The global war on terror' and success in this war, so much associated in the images of Americans with terrorism, is predetermined. The National Strategy of the US, thus, has a major success in the fight against 'terrorism', even though, if the so called terrorists were a depleted conventional enemy and the initial battle, and occupation, was a classic conventional military clash<sup>17</sup>. It is conceded that the character of the actual clash left even the hardened military analyst puzzled by the lack of resistance by the Iraqi army and the neglect of elementary defensive precautions by them, but, nevertheless, it was a classic conventional clash.

It could be argued that even before the 9/11 attacks, Iraq was already a target for the Bush Administration before it came to power and the invasion would have occurred in any event<sup>18</sup>. The weakness with this

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<sup>17</sup> Public opinion in America, and its continued sustenance for the war in Iraq, amply illustrates that a large proportion of the population (up to 67%) saw Iraq as the success story of the fight against terrorism. Precisely because Iraq had been associated with Terrorism, *Al Qaeda* and WMD, none of which was the case. While despite the current difficulties in Iraq, the Bush administration has only 64% disapproval. See *CNN Poll* conducted by Opinion Research Corporation. 13-15 October 2006. See *PollingReport.Com* at <http://www.pollingreport.com/iraq.htm> (20 November 2006).

<sup>18</sup> See for example Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, (London: Simon & Schuster, 2004) and also Kenneth Pollack, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for invading Iraq* (New York: Random House, 2002). It should be noted that Woodward's analysis, and interviews with all the major players in the Bush Administration including George Bush, have not been rebutted.

argument is that in a democracy, aspiring office holders and interest groups, do not necessarily implement all the policies advocated in while opposition and least of all, policies advocating the use of force. The 9/11 *Al Qaeda* attacks won the argument and President Bush, for those advocating the use of force against Iraq. The decision made was also, in the contest of 9/11, more palatable for the American public to accept. At a bare minimum, the agenda of war against Iraq was crystallised into a reality by 9/11 and at worst a deliberate threat conflation of terrorism and rogue states and ‘pulling out of the hat’ success story for the ‘the global war against terror’ in the light of the inflated, and unattainable goals enshrined in the National Strategy. The fact that there was a coincidence between the ideas of those in the Washington think tanks, and who now found themselves in Government, and between the possible need to create the success for the strategy in the aftermath of the 9/11 *Al Qaeda* attacks, can be considered the greatest chance (in Clauswitzian analogy). The Democratic but Bush supporter, historian John Gaddis, pointed in this direction after the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan ‘how, though, to maintain the momentum [after Afghanistan], given that the Taliban is no more and that Al Qaeda isn’t likely to present itself as a conspicuous target? This, I think, is where Saddam Hussein comes in. Iraq is the most feasible place where we can strike the next blow<sup>19</sup> (emphasis added). The perceptive point made is not that Iraq would be the next target but why Iraq would be a target; terrorist, or guerrillas, do not hold or occupy territory and once they had been ejected from their unnatural habitation (Afghanistan), the terrorists were in their natural environment and their targeting, let alone defeat becomes a delusion. So, instead, Iraq becomes the war of choice and a guaranteed ‘victory’ against ‘terrorism’.

The strategic effect of the Iraqi policy has thus been the further inflammation of Anti-Western sentiments and distraction of attention from the real counter-terrorist effort. The Iraq war and occupation has without doubt increased the inclination of some Muslims to turn towards radical Islam and they increase *Al Qaeda*’s power of recruitment and morale. The failure to find Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq has exacerbated these effects. The premium placed on inter-governmental cooperation in the fight against international terrorism, because of *Al-Qaed*’s transnational ubiquity and opportunism has been severely dented making it difficult for friendly

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<sup>19</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, “A Grand Strategy of Transformation”, *Foreign Policy*, (November/December 2002), p. 53. The gist of the ‘Downing Street Memo’, leaked during the recent British elections reinforces this. The memo, minutes of a meeting between of Tony Blair and his Ministers on 23 July 2002, reveals how intelligence and facts on Iraq were being fixed around policy. See *The Times*, (3 May 2005).

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governments to actively pursue their own counter-terrorist policy. The strategy, thus, has failed America's allies as well as the American people. Strategy fails when the chosen means prove insufficient to the ends. As Richards Betts has reminded us, generally about the art of strategy, 'this can happen because the wrong means are chosen or because the ends are too ambitious or slippery'.<sup>20</sup> The US NSCT unfortunately fails on both counts. ■

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<sup>20</sup> Richard Betts, "Is strategy an Illusion?", *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 2, (2004), p. 50.