# Contents

**Volume VI**                    **Summer 2006**                    **Number 2**

## Articles

# HAS A CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS BEGUN?: FROM THE COLD WAR OF IDEOLOGY TO A HOT WAR OF RELIGION

**Dr Ali A. Mazrui ***

## Introduction

*W*hen Harvard Professor Samuel P. Huntington first published his article "A Clash of Civilisations" in the American journal *Foreign Affairs* in 1993, the idea sounded remote to many people. Muslims especially did not like Huntington's thesis that a confrontation was on the horizon between the West and Islam. Nevertheless, after September 11, 2001, it is no longer inconceivable that we are heading for escalating tensions between the United States and its allies, on the one hand, and much of the Muslim world, on the other. The Cold War between the Soviet Bloc and NATO was a contest of ideology within the same European civilisation and its offshoots. Both American liberal capitalism and Russian Communism were born out of European culture.

There is now a danger of a hot war of religion to succeed the old Cold War of Ideology. People of good will should try and prevent the new trend between America and its allies, on the one hand, and Muslim countries such as Iraq, Iran, Libya, Sudan, and Somalia, on the other. The Western world as a whole has previously clashed with other civilisations long before the Cold War of Ideology. There was genocide against the native ancient civilisations of the Americas. There was later enslavement of millions of Africans for use in the so-called New World.[1] Thirdly, there was the phase of European imperialism and colonization of most of the world.

The question, which arises, is whether the fourth phase is that of the United States as an imperial superpower. Is America now a new form of empire, controlling millions of people through a variety of inducements and intimidations? For Kuwait, the United States extends the carrot of security

---

* Dr Ali A. Mazrui is Director at the Institute of Global Cultural Studies & Albert Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities, State University of New York at Binghamton, New York, USA. This article is a part of writer's forthcoming book entitled *Islam Between Globalization and Counterterrorism* (New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2006), Chapter 5, pp. 69-80.

[1] According to Sanford J. Ungar: 'Over the centuries, somewhere between ten and thirty million African people were sold into slavery. One estimate is that more than two million of them were imported into the British colonies in the West Indies and North America between 1680 and 1786," Sanford J. Ungar, *Africa: The People and Politics of an Emerging Continent*. Third Revised Edition. (New York: Simon & Schuster Inc. 3rd Revised Edition, 1989), p.38.

against Saddam Hussein's aggression. For Egypt, the United States extends a billion dollars a year to keep Egypt out of any military coalition against Israel.[2] For Saddam Hussein the United States wields the stick of military power. For most of the world, the United States declares a doctrine of perpetual American supremacy. Never in history has any nation been so far ahead of its nearest rival in economic, military, technological and political power. For better or worse, the United States is truly without a peer – the first among unequals.[3] Let us now take a closer look at these four stages of clash of civilisations and their finale.

## From Genocide to Globalisation

Has Huntington been vindicated by the events of September 11, 2001, and the ensuing George W. Bush's war on terrorism? Are we witnessing a clash of civilisations unfolding – especially between the world of Islam and the Western world?

Huntington argues that now that the Cold War had ended, future conflicts in world politics would be less and less between States or ideological blocs and more and more between civilizations or coalitions of cultures. The article caused an intellectual explosion at the time. It was debated from New York to Kuala Lumpur and from Cape Town to Stockholm. Since Huntington argued that the most likely civilisational conflict was between the West and Islam, his article was even debated close to Mecca and Medina, with Huntington in attendance.

Two years later Huntington completed a whole book on the subject and published it. Most Muslim and Third World critics of Huntington argued that he got it all wrong. We were not headed for a clash of civilisations. Some

---

[2]  For fiscal year 2001, the United States Government provided Egypt with $1.3 billion of foreign military financing and $695 million of economic support fund. See Operations Appropriations for FY 2001', *Arms Sales Monitor*. No. 44 (November 2000).

[3] Of the $43.6 trillion Gross World Product (GWP) in 2000, the US accounted for 23%, 20% for the EU, 10% for China, and 7% for Japan. See *CIA World Fact book 2001*. 'The US has the largest and most technologically powerful economy in the world, with a per capita GDP of $36,300. … leading industrial power in the world, highly diversified and technologically advanced; petroleum, steel, motor vehicles, aerospace, telecommunications, chemicals, electronics, food processing, consumer goods, lumber, mining'. For fiscal year 1999, the United States Government's military expenditures were estimated at $276.7 billion, representing 3.2% of the nation's gross domestic product during that year. See *CIA World Fact book 2002*. Moreover, in a Summer 1999 article, comparing the militaries of United States and China, Bates Gill and Michael O'Hanlon write that: "The United States owns "capital stock" of modern military equipment valued at close to $1 trillion; China's corresponding figure is well under $100 billion'. See Bates Gill and Michael O' Hanlon, 'China's Hollow Military', *The National Interest*, No. 56 (Summer 1999).

insisted that the primacy of the State as the final international actor was not in doubt.

The question arises whether the significance of September 11, 2001, the attacks on the United States, the devastation of Afghanistan, the Israeli onslaught on the Palestinian homeland, the plans to invade Iraq and Somalia, and American troops fighting Muslim militants in the Philippines and former Soviet Georgia, all add up to an unfolding conflict between the United States and its closest allies (Israel and Britain especially) on the one hand, and more and more Muslim countries, on the other.

The worst mistake, which Huntington made, was not conceptual [such as the meaning of "civilisation"] or "factual" [whether the role of "the State" would decline]. The central error he made was temporal, the assumption that clashes of civilisations were part of the future, rather than inseparable from the past and the present of the human condition.

There have been clashes of civilisations between the West and other societies and cultures for at least four hundred years. The stages of these conflicts include the following:

*The Genocidal Phase of Clash of Civilisation*

These were the early years of the European migration and settlement of the Americas. Europeans clashed with civilisations like those of the Incas and Mayas and effectively destroyed or weakened them. Was there a 'world opinion' in that era? Clashes of civilisations are partly about influencing perceptions and constructing stereotypes. In those days, the mass media consisted of the pulpit and church congregations. Distances were long and the time-span of travel immense. The genocides received little criticism from the media of the day.

*The Enslaving phase of Clash of Civilisations*

Millions of Africans were exported to North, South and Central America and to the Caribbean. Again, there was no such thing as 'world opinion'. The print media was not relevant during the height of enslavement, but it became important during the abolitionist movement. The victims had next to no access to international opinion-formation.

*The Imperial Phase of Clash of Civilisations*

The West colonized or semi-colonized more than three quarters of the globe. Westerners settled in some parts of the world, governed in others, and controlled wherever they could.

*The Hegemonic Globalisation Phase*

This is the new phase of America as Empire with worldwide power, the Gulliver of the Globe:

(a) Economic Globalization under American dominion.[4]
(b) Information globalization under American influence: The Internet, the computer, and the information superhighway.[5]
(c) Comprehensive globalization as the villagisation of the world.
(d) One superpower as a security system for the globe.
(e) The first among unequals: The United States is so far ahead of its nearest military rival, Russia; it's nearest economic rival, Japan; it's nearest technological rival, Germany; it's nearest linguistic rival, France.

## The Sins of the Press in this Era of Hegemonic Globalisation

But clashes of civilisations are also wars of images and the control of opinion. In this hegemonic phase, the media are subject to sins.

### Contrasting Images of Islam

| NEGATIVE | POSITIVE |
|---|---|
| • Oppressed women <br> • High Political violence <br> • International terrorism | • Female Heads of State <br> • Low street crime <br> • National terrorism in Sri Lanka, Colombia, Basque Spain, Northern Ireland |

*I. Sins of Commission*

a) Distortions of stories – such as the American smart weapons during the Gulf War of 1990s.
b) Damaging selectively – such as underplaying 'collateral damage' by US dominated news coverage.
c) Headlines like 'Three Israelis Killed' are common in the American media but never a headline which says 'Hundreds of Palestinians feared killed by Israelis'
a) Islam is associated especially with terrorism when in fact the only reason why terrorism by Muslims is widely publicized is because it is international and anti-Western. National terrorism in Sri Lanka,

---

[4] The United States conducts the largest trade in the world. The total exports (f.o.b) of goods and services by the United States in 2001 were estimated at $723 billion. Its total imports (f.o.b.) of goods and services during that same year were estimated at $1.148 trillion. See *CIA Op.Cit.*

[5] In 2000, the total estimated number of Internet Service Providers (ISP) was 7,800. No other nation is even close to having 1,000 Internet Service Providers. Also, as of 2001, the United States has 166 million internet users. Ibid.

Colombia, and the Basque region of Spain, Sierra Leone, and Northern Ireland got far less global publicity.

### II. *Sins of Omission*

The Taliban story generated comparisons with treatment of women in Saudi Arabia. That was fair enough. However, the gender issue in the Taliban story did not generate contrasts of positive Islamic images – such as the fact that Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Turkey have each had a woman Head of Government long before the United States, France, and Russia have had a woman President or Germany had a woman Chancellor. While Muslim countries are more prone to political disturbances than Western, the streets of Muslim cities like Tehran, Cairo and Riyadh are far safer from muggers and rapists than the streets of New York, Detroit and Washington, D.C.

### III. *Sins of Submission*

This sin is submission not to the dictates of the truth but to the warnings of politicians or the demands of advertisers in newspapers or censorship imposed by subscribers to National Public Radio. In my own television series: *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*, PBS in the United States, censored my metaphor of Karl Marx as the last of the great Jewish Prophets. PBS was afraid of offending Jewish subscribers and other donors. However, viewers in Britain, continental Europe, Latin America and even Israel heard me describe Marx as "the last of the great Jewish prophets". Another illustration of a sin of submission is when the Bush White House summoned CNN and other network editors to warn them not to replay the *Al-Qaeda* and Bin Laden videos from the Arab television network *Al-Jazeera*. What happened to editorial independence? The American Press has also been covering the horrendous story of sexual abuse by some Catholic clergy – priestly pedophilia.

In Ariel Sharon's armed forces, there is a tendency, which is equally horrendous – a de-facto pedophobia against Palestinian youth. This is behaviour, which causes a lot of damage to children and young people on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Among Israeli soldiers is a profound dislike of Palestinian youth because it is from among them that suicide bombers are recruited.[6] But Palestinian youth are tempted by the martyrdom mystique of the suicide bombers because they are already driven to desperation by

---

[6]  In a January 15, 2003 article, *New York Times* columnist, Thomas L. Friedman, claims that since the current conflict between Israel and Palestine over two and a half years ago, 700 Israelis and 2,000 Palestinians have died as a result of the conflict. Thomas L. Friedman, 'The New Math', *New York Times*, 15 January 2003.

humiliation, joblessness, alienation, and brutalization by Israelis and by neglect by fellow Arabs and fellow Muslims.

## The Cultural Context of Violence

We need to distinguish between cultures in which the paramount political value is liberty from cultures in which the paramount political value is dignity. Such cultural differences need not lead to a clash of civilisations, but they can do so if either liberty is collectively denied to those who glorify it or dignity is collectively denied to those who worship it.

Beduin culture in the history of the Arabs had a highly developed mythology and nexus of dignity and honour. These dignitarian concepts penetrated the wider culture of the Arabs, and had enormous consequences on the gender question and issues of war and peace. Arab culture, in turn, had considerable influence on the religion of Islam worldwide.

Huntington has argued that there are more violent situations involving Muslims in the world than situations involving members of any other civilisation. Huntington does not distinguish between situations where Muslims are primarily victims (as in Chechnya, Kashmir and Palestine) and situations in which Muslims are primarily perpetrators (as in Sudan). In those cases where Muslims are in rebellion against the status quo, a substantial cultural reason for the rebellion is perceived collective indignity. This is true of rebellions of Muslims in Chechnya, Palestine, Macedonia, Kashmir, Kosovo, and even Nigeria

A clash of cultures did occur when President Bush used to the *Taliban,* the macho language of ultimatum and no negotiation over surrendering Usama bin Laden. "Just hand over Usama bin Laden and his thugs. There is nothing to talk about." It sounded great to the constituency of Bush – a constituency that admires hard fighting talk from a Warrior President. On the other hand, such language was calculated to humiliate the *Taliban*. Bush did not give the Taliban any line of dignified retreat. Bush was trying his best to get the *Taliban* to say "No" to the request for the head of Osama bin Laden, so that Bush could then embark on his long-awaited military action.

If the side of the coalition was using a 'good cop, bad cop' strategy on the *Taliban*, the good cop should have been of the stature of Prime Minister Tony Blair of Great Britain rather than the vulnerable military ruler of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharaff. He was no cop at all. In any case, the "good cop, bad cop" style of negotiation does not go well in the full glare of international publicity. Bush simply was not interested in saving lives by permitting the *Taliban* room for surrendering *Al-Qaeda* militants with some semblance of dignity. The old Chinese concept of "saving face" has its Islamic equivalent of dignified surrender. The threat of weapons of mass destruction from North Korea is as real as the threat from Iraq. But North Korea is

tempted more with carrots than threatened with sticks by the United States. Iraq is threatened with sticks and almost never tempted with carrots.

By the Twentieth Century, women in the Muslim world were accorded more dignity and less liberty than women in the West. And women in the West were correspondingly accorded more liberty than dignity than women in the Muslim world. In the Muslim world there was far less prostitution than in the West, far less use of female sex appeal to sell commercial products, almost no beauty competitions in the Muslim world, and too much protection of women from the rat race of the market place. Sons in the Muslim world respect their mothers more than sons in the West – because Muslim mothers are accorded higher dignity. But husbands in the Muslim world respect their wives less than husbands in the West – because Muslim wives enjoy less liberty.

If the Western world has a nexus of liberty, its centre in the course of the Twentieth Century, become the United States. The Muslim world has always had a nexus of dignity – and the centre of the Muslim world has for centuries been the Middle East.

Throughout much of the first half of the Twentieth Century, the United States stood up for the dignity of the colonized people of the Muslim world elsewhere. Even as late as the 1960s, John F. Kennedy as President was emphasizing that "Africa was for the Africans" – and not for entrenched white settler interests and white minority governments. The Americans saw their anti-colonialism as a defence of liberty everywhere. But the fight against European colonialism and racism was above all a struggle for human dignity.

Meanwhile a Jewish State had been created in a region, which for a thousand years had been overwhelmingly Muslim. What is more, it was created in ways, which violated dignity. There was an ethnic cleansing which displaced thousands of Palestinians to make room for Jews. An ideology was put in place in which someone from the Ukraine who claims to have had a Jewish ancestor two thousand years ago had more right under Israel's Law of Return than a Palestinian who ran away from within the Israeli borders in 1948.[7] No

---

[7] Inigo Gilmore of the *Washington Times*, reports: North American Jews are immigrating to Israel in large numbers for the first time in decades, spurred by a growth in anti-Semitism and a belief that they might as well face terrorism in their ancestral homeland as in the United States. More than 400 Jews from the United States and Canada arrived in Israel last week on board a chartered El Al jet to an emotional welcome from former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and several members of the Israeli parliament. Hundreds of thousands of Jews from the former Soviet Union have poured into Israel in recent years compared with only a trickle from North America. Last year, 1,378 American Jews emigrated to Israel, while already this year almost 1,800 have arrived. By comparison, in 1995 more than 2,500 American Jews emigrated, while in 1971 more than 8,000 made the journey. The new arrivals are mostly young professionals - their average age is 35 - and while most acknowledge their strong religious or secular Zionist identity as motivating

wonder, there had been a raging debate as to whether Zionism is a form of racism. To add insult to injury (and 'insult' is offensive to dignity), the new State of Israel turned out to be militarily brilliant and capable of inflicting one humiliating defeat after another to people sensitive to issues of dignity.

And just when European colonialism and occupation of Arab and Muslim lands was coming to an end, an alien expansionist power was created in the heartland of the Arab nation. What is more, the Jewish State was protected by the West from the odium of being called either 'colonialist' or 'imperialist'. Yet in reality more people have been killed in the fight against Zionism and Israeli occupation than were killed in the fight against British colonialism in Africa in the preceding fifty years.

The Nazis in Germany had once refused to recognize Jews as proper children of Western civilisation. The tragedy for the Jews in Israel today is that they are regarded by Arabs as nothing but children of Western civilisation – in all its aggressive imperfections. The Nazis would not let the Jew wear the badge of Western identity. The Arabs would not let the Israeli take off that Western badge of identity.

We have been so busy trying to understand what is wrong with the terrorists that we hardly ever ask whether there is anything collectively wrong with us in the West as the targets of international terrorism. We shall never understand the causes of international terrorism unless we also ask why they are picking on the West. What is wrong with the targets of terrorism can never be a moral excuse for the terrorism, but it may be part of the objective explanation. The Western world is powerful. "The vices of the powerful acquire some of the prestige of power." The West is not only a target of terrorism from time to time. The West has also been a role model of violence across the generations.[8]

## The Romance of Warrior Presidents

Even before the United States became the sole superpower, the foundations were being laid for the role of the United States as the Sheriff of the world. American infatuation with warrior-Presidents perhaps goes back to George Washington, who was a soldier turned Head of State.  What developed in

factors for moving to Israel, many said the events surrounding September 11 were the trigger. See Inigo Gilmore, 'Jews resume migration to ancestral homeland', *Washington Times*. 14 July 2002.

[8] According to the Congressional Research Service, in 2001, The United States ranked first in arms transfer with developing nations with nearly $7 billion or 43.6% of these agreements.  Russia was second with $5.7 billion or 29.6% of such agreements…. In 2001, the United States ranked first in the value of arms deliveries to developing nations at $6 billion, or 41.7% of all such deliveries. Russia ranked second at $3.4 billion or 23.6% of such deliveries. Richard F. Grimmet,

twentieth century America was the tradition of Head of State turned "soldier". Every presidential Commander-in-Chief wanted the experience of ordering at least one military action by American forces.

Certainly every American president since Franklin D. Roosevelt has engaged in some act of war or another.[9] Roosevelt was inevitably embroiled in World War II; Harry Truman helped to initiate the Korean War; Dwight Eisenhower ended the Korean War but started planning for the Bay of Pigs operation on Cuba; John F. Kennedy unleashed the Bay of Pigs operation and helped to initiate the Vietnam War; Lyndon Johnson escalated the Vietnam war; Richard Nixon bombed Cambodia; Gerald Ford sent the Marines in a disagreement with Cambodia over a U.S. cargo-ship, the Mayaguez; Jimmy Carter attempted to thwart the Iranian revolution and paid heavily for it; Ronald Reagan perpetrated acts of war in Lebanon, the Caribbean, Libya and in shooting down a civilian airline in the Persian (Arabian) Gulf; George Bush Senior invaded Panama and is most famous for Desert Storm in the Persian (Arabian) Gulf; Bill Clinton led military action against Yugoslavia over Kosovo and bombed Sudan and Afghanistan; Bush inherited a decade of bombing Baghdad and subsidizing half a century of Israeli militarism against Palestinians. Now this younger Bush is about to embark on what he calls a long "crusade against terrorism", as well as a war on Baghdad.

Every American president since Franklin Roosevelt has regarded an act of war as the equivalent of a rite of passage. The Commander-in-Chief has to "act presidential". The political constituency celebrates warrior-Presidents. Heads of State shoot up in popularity with an act of war. And yet the United States hardly ever calls these engagements "acts of war". Even the war in Vietnam, which cost nearly sixty thousand American lives and millions of Vietnamese lives, was never an officially declared war by the United States.[10] America needs to find more humane rites of passage for its leaders. The warrior President does not call his own military actions 'Jihad', but the rhetoric of patriotism used is not really different from the rhetoric of piety.

Terrorism is getting globalized, but the definition of an 'act of war' is not. Such a definition is still highly selective, depending upon the power of the perpetrator or the status of the victim. For the immediate future, it may also depend upon making sure that Osamaphobia does not degenerate into Islamophobia. The blood of the innocent cries out not just for a coalition against terrorism but for a coalition in search of genuine peace. The West has

---

'Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, 1994-2001', *Congressional Research Service*, August 6, 2002.).

[9] <http://www.yellowtimes.org/article.php?sid=834> Accessed on 6 November at 00:14:30 EST., USA.

[10] For example, R. J. Rummel (1994) estimates that the total Vietnam war-dead and democide from 1945 to 1987 were 3,768,000. See R. J. Rummel, *Death by Government*. (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1994).

saved millions of lives through medical science and technology. Let us not destroy those lives through a new clash of civilisations.

## Counter-penetrating the American Citadel

If the fourth phase of clash of civilisations is the hegemony of a world with one Superpower, how is the might of the United States to be moderated? Firstly, through greater self-reliance by other societies abroad, asserting their autonomy of the United States. Secondly, by making Americans pay a price for any abuse of power abroad.  The price could be by making Americans feel disliked by others, or even making Americans feel unsafe.  The extreme and least legitimate form of this strategy is anti-American political violence.  And thirdly, through counter-penetrating the citadels of U.S. power.  The United States may be an empire abroad, but it is still a democracy at home.  Different nationalities within the United States should learn from Cuban Americans and Jewish Americans – minorities who have shaped American policies.

In an article in the Saudi Arabian English language online newspaper, *arabnews.com,* Mark Weber, Director of the Institute for Historical Review, examines the achievements and political influence of Jewish Americans in the United States, and points out the following:

'As Jewish author and political science Professor Benjamin Ginsberg has pointed out:…

> Since the 1960s, Jews have come to wield considerable influence in American economic, cultural, intellectual and political life. Jews played a central role in American finance during the 1980s, and they were among the chief beneficiaries of that decade's corporate mergers and reorganizations.

Today, though barely two percent of the nation's population is Jewish, close to half its billionaires are Jews. The chief executive officers of the three major television networks and the four largest film studios are Jews, as are the owners of the nation's largest newspaper chain and the most influential single newspaper, T*he New York Times* ... The role and influence of Jews in American politics is equally marked ...

> Jews are less than three percent of the nation's population and comprise eleven percent of what this study defines as the nation's elite. However, Jews constitute more than 25 percent of the elite journalists and publishers, more than 17 percent of the leaders of important voluntary and public interest organizations, and more than 15 percent of the top ranking civil servants.

Two well-known Jewish writers, Seymour Lipset and Earl Raab, pointed out in their 1995 book, *Jews and the New American Scene*:…

> During the last three decades Jews [in the United States] have made up 50 percent of the top two hundred intellectuals ... 20 percent of professors at the leading universities... 40 percent of partners in the leading law firms in New York and Washington ... 59 percent of the directors, writers, and producers of the 50 top-grossing motion pictures from 1965 to 1982, and 58 percent of directors, writers, and producers in two or more primetime television series.

The influence of American Jewry in Washington, notes the Israeli daily *Jerusalem Post*, is 'far disproportionate to the size of the community, Jewish leaders and U.S. officials acknowledge. But so is the amount of money they contribute to [election] campaigns.' One member of the influential Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations 'estimated Jews alone had contributed 50 percent of the funds for [President Bill] Clinton's 1996 re-election campaign....'[11] The most important reason for Jewish power in the United States is the successful counter-penetration by Jews into the citadels of American power African-Americans are twice the population of world Jewry but African-Americans have not counter-penetrated the citadels of power.[12]

Americans from South Asia and the Orient are counter-penetrating the Silicone Valley of Technology. Muslim-Americans are outstripping Jews in numbers, but cannot hold a candle to Jewish power. The United States as an Empire can only be checked by the United States as a democracy. African-Americans, Latinos and Muslim Americans have a lot to learn from Jews about how to be empowered Americans. So indeed do women of America of all races. American women are substantially liberated, but they have yet to counter-penetrate the citadels of power.[13]

---

[11] Mark Weber, 'A Look at The Powerful Jewish Lobby', <www.arabnews.com>, 14 July, 2002).

[12] The number of residents in the United States who reported as African American alone or in combination with one of more other races in the 2000 Census was 36.4 million. See *US Census Bureau*, 'African American History Month: February 2002', 17 January 2002). According to Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, there are currently 13 million Jews in the whole world. Mahathir bin Mohamad, "The Muslim world is hopelessly weak". *International Herald Tribune, 30 July* 2002.

[13] American women are gradually moving into positions of power. According to the National Federation of Republican Women (NFRW): 'Women hold 73, or 13.6%, of the 535 seats in the 108th U.S. Congress -- 14, or 14.0%, of the 100 seats in the Senate and 59, or 13.6%, of the 435 seats in the House of Representatives [This includes minority leader of the Democratic Party, Nancy Pelosi.]. In addition, three women serve as delegates to the House from Guam, the Virgin Islands and Washington, D.C.... In 2003, 80 women held statewide elective executive offices across the country; women hold 25.3% of the 316 available positions. Among these women, 41 are Republicans, 36 are Democrats and 3 were elected in nonpartisan races (NP). This is less than the number of women -- 88, or 27.4% -- serving last

## Conclusion

Huntington may be in the process of being partially vindicated for his controversial 1993 prediction.[14] A new clash of civilisations may be unfolding between the United States and some of its allies, on one side, and, on the other side, a substantial body of Muslim opinion across the world. Under the U.S. administration of Bush, this clash of civilisations may even be drifting towards increasing militarization. But Huntington was wrong in suggesting that a clash of civilisations involving the West was something new. On the contrary, the West has been declaring war on other civilisations for the last four hundred years. In the Americas and (Australasia) there was the First-Phase of Genocidal Clash of Civilisations when new European conquerors and settlers annihilated native civilisations and destroyed millions of indigenous lives.

There followed the Second Phase of Enslaving Clash of Civilisations when millions of Africans were captured and exported as slaves to the plantations of the Americas and the Caribbean. This period overlapped with the Third Phase of the Imperial Clash of Civilisations when the West conquered and colonized much of the rest of the world, flying European flags of conquest from Jakarta to Jamaica, from Lahore to Lusaka and from Malta to Mozambique. The Fourth Phase of Clash of Civilisations is the age of the United States as an Empire, especially since the country became the sole superpower. The United States is an informal empire, controlling millions of people abroad through economic inducements and economic threats, diplomatic pressure and State manipulation, the power of trade and the lure of aid, promises of military security and threats of destabilization, the pervasive use of the technology of espionage and control, and the domination of such global institutions as the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. As an Empire, the United States also exempts itself from global rules which it does not like – such as the Kyoto Protocols on the environment and the new International Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The first genocidal phase of civilisational conflict (mainly against ancient native civilisations of the Americas) was not formally ended. It just petered out. In some parts of the Americas, it may still be continuing in the form of the brutalization of rural Indians. The second slavery phase of civilisational conflict (mainly at the expense of enslaved Africans) was gradually ended as a result of abolitionist movements in Europe and the Americas, and following a civil war in the United States. The third imperial and

---

year'. The NFRW also notes that there are six female governors in the country as of January 2003. See 'Women in Elective Office 2003 Statistics', *National Federation of Republican Women*. <http://www.nfrw.org/republicans/women/16.htm>

[14] See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

colonial phase of civilisational conflict (at the expense of much of Latin America, Africa, Asia and many islands of the sea) took centuries to bring to a close.  The last of the great European empires came to an end in the twentieth century except for such small pockets as the Falklands, Gibraltar, some British West Indian dependencies, and Portuguese Macao on the China Coast.

How do we end the fourth hegemonic phase of clash of civilisations – the phase of the United States as an informal Empire, especially since it became the sole Superpower?  Here, there are three vital strategies.  One is the promotion of greater autonomy from the United States and greater self-reliance in those countries which have come to lean too heavily on America as a market, or as a source of foreign aid, or as an umbrella of military security, or as a customer for their goods.  For example, Egypt needs to be weaned away from too much reliance on annual foreign aid from the United States; and Saudi Arabia and Kuwait should learn to lean less heavily on Washington for military security.[15] Another strategy against excessive American imperialism is to make the United States pay a price for its abuse of power.  The extreme case of this is trying to make Americans feel unsafe anywhere in the world.  The third solution to the imperial role of the United States as the sole superpower may have to lie within the United States itself.  Although the country has indeed become an Empire, it is still a democracy.  The ultimate check upon America as an empire is America as a democracy.  It is to be hoped that the internal demographic changes will eventually be reflected on the political process and in policy choices.  The population of the United States is on its way towards becoming more clearly multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-ethnic and to a limited extent multi-lingual.  Other parts of the world have – through patterns of immigration – been counter-penetrating America as a society, but many have not yet counter-penetrated America as a citadel power.

The supreme examples of minorities successful in shaping the policies of the United States are Cuban-Americans, on one side, and Jewish-Americans, on the other.  Cuban Americans have tended to be a lobby for a single-issue – American policy towards Cuba.  The Cuban immigrants have held that policy hostage for more than forty years. The achievement of Jewish-Americans is more wide-ranging and more pervasive. Although Jewish Americans have indeed been crucial in determining the United States' policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, American Jews have been major participants in other sectors of American life as well.  As we have indicated, Jews have been staggeringly successful not only politically in America, but also economically, educationally and culturally.  Jews are the supreme example and

---

[15] According to the *Arms Sales Monitor*, for fiscal year 2001, The United States provided $1.3 billion of foreign military assistance and an economic support of $695 million to Egypt. *Arms Sales Monitor*, Op.Cit.

ideal model of an American minority that has successfully used the American system to its full advantage. If African-Americans, Muslim Americans, Arab Americans, Latinos and women of all races became half as successful as the Jews in influencing directions of American policy, their effect would probably be towards liberalizing the foreign policy of the United States. At the moment, America is torn between a domestic philosophy based on rights and a foreign policy based on might.  Demographic changes in the United States may tilt the balance towards a better and more humane equilibrium.

Yes, a fourth clash of civilisations has indeed begun, with the United States at the centre of it.  But the seeds of redemption may also lie in America. Those seeds are carried by emerging populations potentially more responsive to other cultures and civilisations than the contemporary US power-elites seem to be.  The imperial tunnel is still dark – but the light of a more inclusive Americana democracy can be seen at the end of this tunnel.■

# NUCLEAR IRAN: REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS

## Dr Maqsudul Hasan Nuri[*]

## Introduction

*O*n 12 April 2006 Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made an important announcement, declaring that Iran had mastered the nuclear fuel cycle for uranium enrichment. He reiterated that Iran's nuclear energy was for peaceful purposes and not for manufacturing nuclear weapons. This assurance, however, is somehow not accepted by the US and EU countries, who remain deeply suspicious of Iran's nuclear programme.

This paper is speculative in nature and involves crystal gazing as it is based on the supposition, that given compulsions and dynamics, Iran will become a nuclear state in due course of time. The speculation is, however dependent upon various assessments.

At this point of time we have to see that as and when Iran crosses the Rubicon, how is its nuclearised status going to be viewed by its immediate neighbours.? Would it turn out to be a factor of stability or instability due to the new nuclear balance of power created in the Middle East.? What are the variables that could intervene? The study ends with some projections — short and long term — and envisages likely scenarios of nuclearised Iran in the Middle East.

### *Background*

Needless to say that Iranian civilization is one of the greatest civilizations that ruled in the past wide swathes of territory in eastern Africa, Middle East (ME) and parts of Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Western India. Imperial Iran's influence, especially under Darius and Cyrus the Great, is well recorded in history.[1]

In recent history, Iran's decision to acquire a dominating role in the Gulf was taken before the announcement of Britain's withdrawal from the Persian Gulf in January 1968. The fact that Iran was already contemplating these moves before the British withdrawal, gave it great advantage in seeking to shape future events in the region. In November 1970, strike power of its armed forces was demonstrated in a military exercise, near the island of Beni Ferur, an Iranian possession in the Gulf. These maneuvers brought home the

---

[*] Dr Maqsudul Hasan Nuri is Senior Research Fellow at IPRI.
1  For some details on Persian empires see
   <http://www. crystalinks.com/persia.html>

point that Iran would acquire undisputed leadership in the Gulf after the British exit. Before this, in a statement on 1 April 1968, Tehran said that "it would reserve all its rights in the Persian Gulf," adding that "these islands belonged to them, before they fell into the hands of present owners in the 19th century, it reserved the right to use force to reclaim them."

When the British withdrew from the Persian Gulf in November 1971, Iran militarily occupied the three barren islands of Abu Musa and Greater and Lesser Tombs, near the 21-mile wide entrance to the Straits of Hormuz. Later on, it had a prolonged military involvement in Oman, while fighting against the Dafur rebellion. (1972-77).

Shah's hegemonic control over the Gulf served three main aims of the US: one, to safeguard the regime against internal subversion, sponsored directly or indirectly by hostile Arab states or Soviet proxies; two, to ensure free transit through the Straits of Hormuz, the Gulf and Shatt el Arab; and three, to protect oil resources and facilities, both on and offshore against deliberate accidental threats.[2] The Shah's call for establishing Indian Ocean Community was one such attempt to oust foreign powers from the region.

The reinvention of Iran as an Islamic republic after the ouster of Shah did not change Iran's perception as a regional power. The first Gulf War against Iraq in Kuwait (1991-92) was seen as attempt by the US to establish its position in the region. Throughout the 1990s, Iran repeatedly called for withdrawal of US troops from the region and was reminiscent of the same tone used earlier that the security of the Gulf region should be left to regional powers alone.

When US invited herself to the region, Iran was initially relieved to see the ouster of two neighbouring forces that were at variance with her ideological moorings. These were the two regimes: the *Taliban* of Afghanistan and Saddam Hussain of Iraq. However it was not until the last three years or so when the US forces got entrenched there for seemingly long haul, that Iran's eyebrows were raised from the US forces that could be seen as a bid for hegemony for *Pax Americana*.

Should Iran become a nuclear weapon state in a couple of years from now it will change the security landscape of the Southwest Asia, ME, Central Asia and South Asia. Although it calls itself as 'Near East' rather than ME country the impact felt in the region and abroad will be strong and reverberating.

Presently, there is an ongoing war of words between US and Iran on the charge that Iran has contravened the provisions of Internationa Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); that it has not reported its activities for the last 18 years till detected and that it is secretly developing all wherewithal required for

---

2  Maqsud U. Nuri, "Iran's regional power syndrome," *The News, International,*
   (Islamabad), 24 January 2006.

building of nuclear weapons. Alleged nuclear weapon ambitions, in tandem with some of the inflammatory statements by the newly elected hardliner President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, have fuelled fears of Iran's so-called belligerent designs. Not only the US, but of late, the EU countries are feeling uneasy about Iran's intentions and think, that in case it manufactures N-weapons, it will destabilize the entire region.

Iranian calculus and rationale is based on the following lines: given its hostile relations with US for the last 28 years or so, and the recent 'encirclement' by US troops, it must build its defences, of which nuclear weapons could be pivotal as a means of deterrence. Besides, it needs to diversify its abundant resources for development. It claims that it is not making nuclear weapons but wants peaceful use of nuclear energy for development. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), after all, provides the right to all countries to gain access to all forms of N- energy, including uranium enrichment or plutonium reprocessing under adequate "safeguards."

Iran feels that it is unjustly targeted for political reasons. The Iranians contend that if North Korea has acquired N- weapons together with Pakistan and India without signing the NPT, ostensibly there should be no justification to deny it the option of peaceful generation of N-energy.

While the common Iranian does not talk of nuclear weapons, the unstated assumption with many is: In the event of acquisition of N- weapons by North Korea, the US attitude had markedly changed from confrontation to tacit acceptance. Similarly, in the case of Pakistan, accused of 'buying' nuclear technology from open market, the US stance has since changed as it has become a major non-NATO ally. Also, for decision makers in Iran, the case of Iraq starkly stands out: perhaps it could not have been invaded and occupied if it had possessed N -weapons. Besides, for most Iranians acquiring nuclear fuel cycle has become a trademark of nationalistic pride and sovereignty.

How is it that the US is allergic to Iran's becoming a nuclear state? The fact is that Iran does not have any expansionist designs but it is the Islamic character and its recent provocative statements that act as bugbear for the Americans. Besides, the history of the 1979 US embassy hostage crisis, blowing up of US marine barracks in 1983 in Beirut and of Khobar towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996 haunt the US memories. US suspects Al-Qaeda cadres on Iranian soil and smells Iranian involvement in the troubled Iraq.

In the US estimations, both Iran and North Korea stand as 'rogue states.' North Korea opted out of NPT regime and is in possession of N-weapons and is perceived as a threat by neighbours. Iran, on the other hand, is a signatory to NPT, is clubbed as "axis of evil" as it poses major challenge to the US policies in ME. While the former is an impoverished and isolated state, Iran is bigger in size and richer in resources. Hence in order to deal with the two 'difficult' regimes the US is using the six-party talks and EU-3 mechanism.

However, there is one important difference: North Korea is a declared N- power while Iran is not. Also, the stakes for US are greater in the ME due to oil resources and the preservation of the Israeli state to which the latter is committed.

### Implications for the Region

A heated debate is raging on Iran's nuclear crisis and the US-Iran nuclear row, with implications for the future. In other words, the question frequently posed is that if and when Iran acquires a nuclear arsenal how will it impact the region?

Some observers view this in deterministic terms, given Iran's peculiar security dilemma and as a culmination of Persian nationalism; it merits its right to gain nuclear technology under NPT provisions. Others, especially the US and some EU countries, see any acquiring of N-weapons as a real danger to peace in a volatile Gulf region. Needless to say, for the Iranian leadership, the nuclear question has become an issue of national sovereignty, a right for national development and a symbol for national unity.

If Iran chooses to become a nuclear weapon state it would substantially alter the security landscape of the region. The "war of words" was in evidence between US and Iran since early 2006.

There are two schools of thought on weapons of mass destruction.(WMD) On the one hand, it is posited that nuclear weapons induce prudence and restraint. The example of two superpowers in the Cold War era is often cited, though they did undertake many frightening risks like the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. The other view holds that WMDs, including nuclear weapons, may increase propensity for bravado and risk taking. The classic example that comes to mind is of Saddam Hussain's Iraq regional policy of aggression after acquiring chemical and biological weapons (1989-90) when it attacked Kuwait in 1990; similarly, in the Indo-Pak subcontinent the Kashmir border crisis (May-July 1999) took place under the cover of N-umbrella. Though it cannot be predicted about Iran's diplomacy, it showed some aggressive behaviour against Azerbaijan in 2001 (to halt explorations of oil in the disputed Caspian Sea) and repeated rebuffs to IAEA.

Theoretically speaking, if internal reforms in Iran come to a grinding halt and the regime flounder, or come under extreme threat, it could direct aggression against its external enemies and in desperation, even resort to use of N-weapons. Admittedly this is a dire scenario but given the ideological nature of the regime and its visceral animus against the Israeli state and the US this cannot be ruled out. In any case, for the bristling ME, an addition of nuclear weapon state will mean more fingers on nuclear triggers.

Arab Neighbours

Iranian-Arab rivalry is rooted in history and has remained latent despite US designation of Iran and Saudi Arabia as 'twin pillars' of Cold War containment policy. After the Islamic revolution under Ayottolah Khomeini, this fear became more pronounced as Iran's brand of anti-US Shiite Islam was ardently advocated for the overthrow of US-supported corrupt non–Shiite regimes in the Arab World. However, the Iranian model had little resonance because of Shia–Sunni schism and the fact that many affluent oil rich economies of the region had little appeal for Iran's radicalism.

In the 1980s, Iran came under sanctions, followed by the debilitating Iraq-Iran war, thus creating a wedge between the Arabs and Iranians. There was a short period under pro-reformist Khatamai regime in the opening up with Arab world but it has lately been reversed by the posture of the new hardline President leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who assumed office in August 2005.

The Arab countries are uneasy over Iran's becoming nuclear but at the same time they do not share the alarmist perspectives of the US and EU. They want the Middle East to be declared as Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (NWFZ) that would deprive Israel of N-weapons. This is a convenient way of taking a position against Israel without openly criticizing Iran. But knowing that neither is there any possibility that US would disarm Israel nor would Israel voluntarily forswear its N-weapons, the Arabs generally tend to take a fatalistic view.

The Arabs know that Iran will not use these weapons against them, as these are primarily meant for the US and Israel. Moreover, they are already under the nuclear umbrella. However, pressure could be exacted if Iran comes under sanctions or military strikes are directed against it. Most of the Gulf States trade with Iran and, most likely, they would suffer if the Persian Gulf is closed for maritime traffic. They would let the US and EU do the "dirty bidding" of pressurizing Iran to stop its N- weapons and in the process hope that things do not escalate.

Large Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria and others do not claim to voice openly their worries about emergence of Iran as a nuclear weapon state. In fact, some of them viz., Egypt, Syria and Libya, on their volition, have turned their back on nuclear weapon programme, mainly for lack of resources, financial inducements or fear of reprisals from major powers. Following the 1973 Arab boycott, their relations relaxed after the 1989 Egypt-Israel Treaty, followed by the 1993 Oslo Accords. However, Syria and Lebanon have kept strong contacts with Iran out of the 22 Arab League members.

Today, some Arab nations trade with Israel through third countries. However, opposition at the public level remains strong against Israel. Given

the historical nature of Iranian-Arab relations and the 1980-88 Iraq-Iran war latent tension still persists.

*GCC Countries*

GCC countries face a profound dilemma. In the recent crisis, they are not taking any active role. They blame both the US and Iran for "vitiating" regional security and deplore lack of contacts between them.

GCC countries, together with the US, have been creating balance of power in the region from 1971-78, when the US designated Saudi Arabia and Iran as "twin pillars" of security in the Gulf region. During the 1980s, they, in deference to the US, supported Iraq as counterweight to revolutionary Islamic Iran. With a brief interlude in the 1990s, they tilted towards reformist Iran, when it signed a number of agreements on policing, drug traffic and arms smuggling. However since 2003, they fear the loss of Iraq as a "counterweight" to Iran and Iran's rising power status manifested in quest for nuclear weapons. Further, they fear the rise of Shiite crescent in the region, headed by Iranian clerical leadership.

The GCC options are limited: to ignore Iran's rising power, to accept US protection or go nuclear for protection.[3]  Moreover, they fear a war between the US, a superpower, their "security guarantor" and Iran, their largest and most powerful neighbour. They are convinced that Iran is on road to nuclear proliferation and is reaching the point of no return. Besides, they are concerned that if a war breaks out — the fourth major regional conflict in the region since the 1980s— perforce, they might be drawn into the conflict.

For the GCC countries, considerations of "democracy" in Iraq or N-armed Iran are as not as pressing issues of security insofar as they happen to be "consumers" and not "providers" of security.[4] So, while they do not want Iran to become nuclear, they also do not share the alarmist perspectives of the US and EU. They want the Gulf region to become Nuclear Weapon Free Zone) NWFZ. This is a way of taking the issue against Israel, without criticizing Iran openly. While cognizant of the fact that Iran will not use N-weapons against them as the latter's N-programme is primarily against the US and Israel, they are nevertheless concerned about increased pressures, if the US sanctions or attacks Iran.

For the Gulf States's trade and business with Iran will suffer if the Gulf is closed due to outbreak of hostilities. In the event that Iran acquires nuclear capability they may be coerced to toe Iran's line.  In any case, they cannot do much to dissuade either parties, except pleading for dialogue and peace. Hence, their advice to the US is not to push Iran towards

---

3 Ibid., p. 22.

4  Judith S.Yaphe and Charles. D. Lutes, "Reassessing the Implications of a Nuclear-Armed Iran," *McNair Paper*, No. 69, (Washington: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defence University, Washington D.C., 2005, p.19.

confrontation, not marginalize it and rectify the balance in the region between a strong Iran and a weakened Iraq.

In the recent GCC summit held in Riyadh, the GCC countries asked Iran to "do more," to show that it was not trying to obtain an atom bomb and save the region from another war. The GCC nations fear nuclear environmental ill-effects if Busheher nuclear plant is hit thus causing an influx of refugees. In addition, Iran could pose challenge to their "quietist ethos" and alliance with the US.[5]

During the last three years since Iran's nuclear activities have became open; many of the GCC countries have been conspicuously reticent. In the latest NPT Review Conference in May 2005, Egypt supported Iran in its efforts to deflect attention from itself and to focus on Israel. This reticence was not because of lack of concern but of calculations of real politic; first, openly protesting against Iran will antagonize a regional power without being able to do any thing to change its behaviour while lack of protest implied implications of implicit support to Israel policy, a taboo in the West.[6]

At a conference on NATO's role in the Persian Gulf's security, held in Doha in late November 2005, the GCC Secretary General Abdul Rahman al-Attiya portrayed Iran's nuclear ambitions as a direct threat to the security of the Gulf States and NATO. However the Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal Bashr on 5 April 2006 dismissed the April Iranian naval maneuvers in the Gulf as a threat to its neigbours and expressed his desire to visit Tehran. While stating that proliferation of nuclear weapons was a threat, he added that was not enough just to stop others [Iran] in the ME but instead to deal with Israeli nuclear weapon.[7] Moreover it was mentioned that Iran was not likely to use these weapons against its Arab neighbours. In fact, under former President Khatami some rapprochement was effected between Iran and the Arab states.

Many Arab states have either recognized Israel or tacitly accepted Israel's right to existence. These include Egypt and Jordan. Qatar, as a maverick of the Gulf Arab world, is the only Gulf state to have formally recognized Israel. Oman broke off diplomatic relations in 2000 after the Palestinian uprising. The commercial relations are strangled but in the past few years there is some softening up. It has close relations with both the US and Iran. Like Iran, it considers itself as co-guardian of the Persian Gulf. It is trying hard to remain more neural than other Gulf States in the recent Iran-US crisis. When Iran rejected the E-3 proposal Oman thought that there was "still room for diplomatic efforts."

---

[5]  GCC seek assurance from Iran on N-arms," *Dawn,* (Islamabad), 7 May 2006.

[6]  See Emily B. Landau, "Taking A stand on Nuclear Iran: Voices from the Persian Gulf," *Tel Aviv Notes*, Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, No. 157, 16 Jan 2006, p.1.

[7]  "Saudi FM plays down war games," *Daily Times,* (Lahore),No. 6 April 2006.

All GCC countries desire a negotiated settlement that will ward off US military action.[8] Most of them would like to have ties with Israel and the US as it helps them to be more independent of bigger neighbour, Saudi Arabia. Since 2000, following meeting between Crown Prince of Bahrain and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, there have been intermittent contacts between the two.

However if Iran turned nuclear, their fears might increase depending on how the religious regime would conduct foreign relations with N-weapons. This is due to Iran's unresolved territorial problem with some of the GCC countries, especially the UAE's unresolved dispute over the Persian Gulf islands.

The element of distrust might increase with Iranian N-weapons. This may induce Saudi Arabia in acquiring them; also, Egypt may start matching Iran's capabilities by undertaking a N-programme of its own; likewise, Turkey may start reassessing its position *vis a vis* the NPT and Iraq could also, one day, reassert itself.

In the event of Iran's nuclearisation, one has to see if the GCC countries move closer to Tehran or towards the US? Already, these countries have lost in Iraq's military defeat a "counterweight" against Iran. Also, should the pro-Shiite regime in Iraq become stronger, this would engender new anxieties in the Arab world. Besides, the Shiite communities may reassert their rights in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other places, where Shia communities reside in good number.

Thus the Arab states face a Hobson's choice: close identification with US is not a popular exercise due to Israeli factor while the prospect of a nuclear armed Iran is cause of unease and is thus not welcome.

With new democratic urges in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and rise of Hamas, Iran could exploit these populist openings. The US may counter Iranian threats by increasing military aid, supplies and offers of economic aid and admission into WTO of some Arab countries. It seems that for all practical purposes, the US will remain engaged militarily in the region for the foreseeable future.

This is not to suggest that fears of Iran's nuclear proliferation in the region are sometimes inflated but they are not entirely unjustified. Although Iran is a signatory to the NPT and has every legal right to develop civil N-technology yet under the treaty, such a right is conditional on co-operation with the IAEA. Some aspects of its "clandestine" programme for the last 18 years have raised valid suspicions about building nuclear weapons.

---

8    *Daily Times,* 20 May 2006.

*Radical Islamic Groups*

Most of the Arab Gulf States are either monarchies, Sheikhdoms or Emirates that are totally dependent upon the US and Britain for security and survival. Should Iran go nuclear in future, they would be the first to feel the shock waves of nuclearisation.

If Iran decides to become nuclear under the Islamist government, there are fears that it could be emboldened to support radical groups against Israel, viz., Hizbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Shia militants in Iraq. These groups have already been opposing the peace process in ME. Under the garb of the newly acquired N- umbrella, Iran could also launch 'Kargil-like' initiatives to attain advantages. It fears the 'democratic' experiments in Iraq and Afghanistan and the contagion effect that it may have on the cleric-controlled leadership.

However, any fear of such transfer of nuclear technologies to armed groups seems far fetched. The acquisition of N-weapons by states demonstrates that they jealously guard their valuable assets, viz., namely the nuclear weapons and become more responsible. Moreover, any irresponsible transfer could bring international condemnation and severe reprisals. Also, there is no guarantee that compliant militant groups, once armed, will not turn against and pose threats to their benefactors.

*The Islamic World*

Of course, the Islamic World at the grass root level would feel rejoiced by the acquisition of Iran's N-weapons. There could be short-lived euphoria of nuclearised Iran and which will impart feelings of pride and empowerment to an anguished Islamic World. Facing post- 9/11 reverses, there is a primordial wish that Iran should lift the fallen *Ummah* and challenge US hegemony in ME, leading to liberation of the Palestinians, check, if not destroy Israel, and pave the way for a multi-polar world order. In this, Russia and China are seen as valuable partners.

Incidentally the same euphoric feeling was echoed in Islamic world when Pakistan exploded its nuclear device. Many Muslim countries saw this as strengthening their security. However, with Iran's nuclearisation the Islamic world would also mean a Shiite country acquiring a nuclear power status. This would lend sense of empowerment to the Shia minorities in some Sunni-dominated Islamic countries.[9]

*Israel*

---

[9] See "Shi'ism and Iranian Islamic Radicalism," Institute for National Strategic Studies, op. cit.

Israel is at pains to convince the US about Iran's impending N- weapons and its 'expansionist' designs in the region. By presenting satellite images and intelligence reports to the US it is trying hard to prove that Iran poses an 'existential threat' to the 'beleaguered state of Israel.' In this context, it may be mentioned here that Iran is not an immediate neighbour of Israel and does not have any border dispute unlike other neighbouring Arab states with Israel. Yet Iran has an ideological animus towards the Jewish state. E.g., it has not reconciled to Israel's occupation of Palestine and the Holy Places, rejected the US-sponsored Arab-Israeli peace process and is allegedly funding or arming Hizbollah, Islamic Jihad and Hamas organisations.

It was e.g., the US that in 2002 first included Iran amongst the "axis of evil" countries. On the other hand, Iran's criticism of the US stems from its deep nexus with Israel, which Iran terms as a 'fake state' that "cannot logically continue to live." The Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, stated that "if the US ventured into any aggression on Iran, Iran will retaliate by damaging the US interests worldwide." In return, Israel has upped the rhetoric when Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert threatened redrawing borders of the proposed Palestinian state. He stated that Iranian challenge was a "test of our times," as it stands on the verge of acquiring nuclear weapons."[10] He reiterated Israel's determination to "make sure no one has the capability or the power to commit destruction against us."[11]

On the occasion of 100th anniversary of the influential American Jewish Committee (AJC), President Bush termed US-Israel as "natural allies" and reiterated that the US had "unshakeable" commitment to defend Israel". A similar theme was echoed by German Chancellor, Ms. Angela Merkel, while on visit to the US when she stated that the "right of existence of the state of Israel must never be questioned." [12]

Interestingly, Iran under the Shah, had developed close contacts with Israel and the latter had acquiesced to US- sponsored nuclear programme. However, chain of events, such as the overthrow of the Shah, 1979 hostage crisis, impositions of sanctions and Iran's opposing role in the ME peace process — all created cumulative bitterness between the US and Iran. Except for some years of late 1990s, under the reformist President Muhammad Khatami, a fierce 'war of words' has been going on between the two countries.

With the election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran's belligerency has grown much stronger. His fiery statements on Israel viz., 'wiping off the face of earth' and a 'tumour' that should be relocated, have unnerved Israel and the West.

---

[10] "Olmert threatens to redraw border," *Dawn,* (Islamabad), 25 May 2006.
[11]  Ibid.
[12] "Bush, Merkel pledge support to Israel," *Dawn,* (Islamabad), 6 May 2006.

The Iranian President's inflammatory language is intriguing but it can be rationalized. For one thing, he is a committed revolutionary who fervently believes in his cause, as his neo-con counterpart, George Bush in the US. Two, he wants to distance himself from  reformist policies of the two former presidents viz., Hashemi Rafsanjani and Muhammad Khatami who made 'concessions' to the West thereby vitiating the 'spirit of the Islamic revolution'; three, he enjoys the support of the poorer sections of Iran; four, to legitimize and rally around the Iranian  people who face many domestic problems; five, to win the support of the general Muslim masses throughout the world who are smarting under US occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan; fifth, possibly lay a 'bear trap' for a bungling US by provoking it to act rashly and make mistakes; or sixthly, to drive a 'grand bargain' with the West through a policy of sustained, tough  brinkmanship.

Whatever be the motives, it seems that Israel is the not the primal cause of Iran's N- program but the increasing US hostility, fear of its 'encirclement' and threats of 'regime change'. In fact, the US inflammatory rhetoric after 9/11 in branding Iran as 'axis of evil', 'outpost of tyranny,' 'rogue regime,' have worsened the already-estranged relations. Earlier, the US invasions (of Afghanistan and Iraq) and prolonged occupations may have convinced many Iranians about nuclear weapons' possession as a deterrent. Hence, Iran is following a policy in which defiance, national pride and survival are fused together.

Of course, Iran maintains that it is not making nuclear weapons and that its nuclear enrichment is meant for peaceful purposes — a claim that is looked with deep suspicion by Israel, the US and most of the Western countries. The view is rightly or erroneously bolstered by Iran's unreported nuclear activities over many years, its abundant hydrocarbon resources, the nature of the Islamic regime and the recent spate of some fiery statements.

Today, Israel sees Iran as its foremost antagonist in the Islamic World. Many of Israel's Arab neighbours have either recognized Israel or tacitly accepted its existence. Iranian nuclear and missile programmes are seen as direct threat to Israel. On this, the Israeli propaganda machine has been working over time — that Iran is feverishly trying to acquire a nuclear weapon and that the US and it's Western allies must act soon to forestall this 'dire possibility'.

As a Middle Eastern country, Israel feels that if and when Iran gets nuclearised, it will be grudgingly accepted as a 'regional power' by immediate neighbours. Moreover, it is haunted by the fear that the US attitude will abruptly change, as it did towards North Korea after it crossed the nuclear threshold. After Iran has acquired N-weapons, it is argued; the latter will not only be in a position to intimidate its smaller Arab Gulf neighbours but will also energetically fund anti-Israel groups, directly threaten Israel, pose danger to the US forces and installations, including naval fleets and, above all,

threaten to block oil supplies through the Persian Gulf. These acts, Iran could also undertake in pre-nuclear phase, if threatened by the West.

Hence the prospect of nuclear weapon in the hands of Iran is a chilling thought for Israel. It feels that time is running fast. However, it is reluctant to act alone. It needs to piggyback on its benefactor, the US, and preferably desire the US to perform the 'dirty work' of dealing with Iran.

Whether Israel acts alone or in unison in conducting strikes against a pre-nuclear Iran, the reaction in the Islamic world would be strong and severe. The US will be squarely blamed in all likelihood, as it cannot remain an idle spectator if Israel is attacked. As compared to the 1980s, when it unilaterally destroyed the Iraqi nuclear facility at Osirak, Israeli options are limited today.

For one, in the 1980s, the Iraqi N-facility was in initial stages of construction and was unprotected and not well concealed as Iran's N-facilities are today. Besides, Iran is a regional power with the capacity to hurt international economy and has acquired the expertise to replicate its facilities. Any such attempt will surely rally support nationwide and from the fellow Shia communities in neigbouring countries and the world.

Although Arab states may have misgivings about Iran's nuclear weapons programme, there is no mass anti-Iranian sentiment in the Islamic World. Of course, there is cleavage between the perceptions of the rulers and the ruled: that is why, instead of being critical of Iran or supportive of the US, the Gulf States take a neutral position in desiring a "nuclear weapons free zone" in the Gulf region.

Whether Iran becomes nuclearised or not is still an open question. Contradictory reports continue to emanate from different sources. Israelis point out that Iran will soon reach a point of no return within 6-12 months. However, some US think tanks are of the view that Iran may manufacture nuclear weapon not before 2008 and probably not until 2015.[13] It has successfully tested Shahab-3, 4 and 5 series of missiles, which can easily hit Israel, Western Europe and North America respectively.

By harping on and inflating the Iranian threat, Israel and US Administration seem to be setting the stage for a possible military confrontation. Already there have been some leaked reports of possible use of US nuclear bunker busters against Iranian N-facilities.

Iran's display of sophisticated anti-ship missiles in the Gulf and sale of Russian *Tor* M-1 air defence missile systems worth $700 million in April compound matters and intensify Israeli paranoia. It is said that the missile system is expected to be operationalised by September 2006.

---

[13] Richard Falk, "Israel, Iran, and the Future of Middle East," *Press Info*, No. 232, 28 March 2006.
<http://www. transnational.org/pressinf/2006/pi237_Iran_ME_Falk.html>

Ideally, Israel and the US would like to prevent Iran from building of any weapons of mass destruction. The impending clash may be avoidable if all parties tune down their rhetoric, demonstrate restraint and work out a compromise political formula within the framework of the IAEA whereby Iran's genuine security interests are guaranteed, and, Iran, in return, provides iron-clad assurances against building of nuclear weapons. The EU is working on this and the recent speculations of US-Iran direct talks are hopeful signs.

However, the tension may not get defused if both US remains belligerent and Iran defiant. All said and done, one scenario at least seems fairly plausible. In the event of any showdown in the ME, the entire region will get destabilized with cascading effect in the neighbouring zones together with the rise of worldwide international terrorism. This could also mean waning of the US influence in the region and the globe for good.

### *Nuclear Non- Proliferation*

As regards the NPT regime, it will come under greater stress than before. In order to avoid nuclear blackmail, the GCC countries will have to depend more on the US and perhaps on countries like Pakistan. Already, the US-India nuclear deal has given a jolt to the NPT regime. After Iran, other countries may choose to develop indigenous nuclear weapon programmes. So far, nuclear proliferation has not gone as fast as feared, but with new changes, the process may speed up — thus posing new challenges to the region. The staple argument, that if others have nuclearised (Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea), hence, Iran's nuclear weapons should not necessarily constitute any new threat, may not be true. It is now recognized that newly acquired weapons create at least in initial stages some destabilsation in arms balance. Robust and stringent confidence-building mechanisms and well articulated nuclear doctrines are needed in regions where historic disputes remain are still unresolved. In fact, the greater the fingers on nuclear triggers, the greater will be the chances of nuclear conflict in a region where chronic conflicts fester.[14]

### *Pakistan*

Pakistan and Iran are friendly Muslim neighbours with historical and cultural affinities. The ongoing US-Iran nuclear crisis that has lately been ratcheting up is followed with keen interest and deep concern in Pakistan. With Afghanistan and Iraq almost decimated, following the US invasions, Pakistan and the Islamic World desire Iran not to come in any harm and hope for an early end to the crisis. It is hoped that a negotiated settlement is arrived at that will guarantee Iran's rights and privileges as a sovereign state in the region along

---

[14] Razi Azmi, "Nuclear Proliferation is dire business," *Daily Times,* (Lahore), 11 May 2006.

with the concerns of international community allayed over Iran's nuclear weapons programme

In May 2006, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, while attending the D-8 Conference in Bali, Indonesia stated that Iran's "nuclear issue was very complex issue" and while Iran had right to generate N- energy, it should not make nuclear weapons or go for proliferation in the region.[15]

Earlier in April, the visiting Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri told reporters after talks with his Turkish counterpart Abdullah Gul: "Pakistan is against the use of force …Diplomacy must be given a chance," He further stated that Pakistan had already paid "a big price" due to the US-led war in neighbouring Afghanistan and did not want similar instability on its borders with Iran.[16] He added: "We must try to find a way out and have an inspection regime which Iran has indicated it will accept, whereby the concerns of the international community can be met and we have a peaceful and diplomatic resolution to this dispute through diplomatic means".

Pakistan's stand is that Iran-US row should be settled within the framework of IAEA and Iran has legal right to uranium enrichment for peaceful purposes under the provisions of NPT. While Pakistan desires non-use of force in settlement of Iran-US row as a member of international community it will abide by UN resolutions. However in this standoff its role is greatly limited in what it can do to persuade Iran or the US except for making pleas for restraint dialogue and avoidance of use of military force.

According to many analysts, Iran's going nuclear would not create any major problem for Pakistan. Pakistan *per se* does not have any dispute with Iran; their relations have been traditionally friendly especially during the Shah regime; however relations turned sour during the *Taliban* regime (with both countries supporting opposing Afghan groups); in post 9/11, relations became more relaxed after Pakistan switched off its support for the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

Of course, Pakistan, like other N-powers, would feel uncomfortable with nuclear proliferation going on in the region and it will depend if nuclearised Iran is a status quo or an anti-status quo power. Should it follow a radical agenda, become less flexible and emerge as a strong competitor in the Gulf, Afghanistan and Central Asia, relations with Pakistan and others could get frostier, if not unfriendly. Pakistan's alleged nuclear connections with Iran could be resurrected by the US to put fresh pressures, though Pakistani leadership has taken very stringent measures against any leakages.

During President Bush's visit to Pakistan in March 2006, he studiously blamed Iran for its nuclear programme in all the capitals he visited:  Kabul,

---

[15] As cited in "More Co-operation Among D-8 urged," *Dawn,* (Islamabad), 13 May 2006.
[16] As reported in *Daily Times,* (Lahore), 21 April 2006.

New Delhi and Islamabad. Earlier, there were some pressures on Pakistan to lend US support for US moves against Iran and to seriously review any decision on Iran-Pak-India pipeline project.

While Pakistan has been firm that it will not side with US against its Muslim neighbour and take decision on pipeline issue in its enlightened national interest, the US sensitivities, nevertheless, remain unaltered. In the unfortunate event, the US or Israel decide to launch military strikes against Iran's nuclear installations in pre or post-nuclearisaton phase as it is often threatened, the backlash on Pakistani domestic scene will be severe and may prove difficult for the government to handle. Likewise, India and Russia would not like to see a nuclear-armed Iran as this would bring more nuclear weapons in the region and give impetus to further proliferation in the region.

In case of Iran's full-fledged nuclearisation, Pakistan-US and Pakistan-Israel relations may come under strain. Already, there are complaints voiced by some US policy circles about Pakistan not "doing enough" in the war against terrorism in Afghanistan; however, the situation could change if there is a moderate regime in Iran, that is friendly and more acceptable in the region.

Some observers think that emboldened with nuclear arsenals and under a revolutionary regime Iran's support to certain radical groups could significantly increase and contribute to militancy. Pakistan is a multi--sect society where sectarian issues are sensitive and have taken their toll; in fact, Saudi Arabia and Iran have supported different religious groups /sections at various times in the past decades.

Pakistan's main threat perception is still from its eastern neighbour, India. However, in fact, if and when gas and oil pipeline and energy transfer plans start with Iran the relations could improve fast.

Pakistan is traditionally linked with the US as a major non-NATO ally. While it would like to maintain friendly ties with the US, it would not allow any facility to the US for any adventure against its neighbours like Iran with whom it shares religio-cultural affinities and has even offered good offices for dispute resolution between US and Iran.

Pakistan's strategy stands for defusion of the crisis. It, therefore, hopes that Iran would mellow its hard stance and fiery rhetoric and, likewise, the US would respect Iran's sovereignty and just demands for nuclear energy. Moreover, Pakistan is of the view that an overly ideologised and confrontationist policy is neither in the interest of US, nor Iran nor Pakistan: the later is friendly to the US and the West in its own perceived national interests, given the difficult neighbourhood, with a strong and more powerful India.

Since 1999, Pakistan has taken a course of "enlightened moderation." This is after having suffered bouts of fundamentalism in the wake of prolonged Afghan war with adverse effects to its society. Moreover, its Western connections with Britain and with the US cannot be easily severed as

some idealists naively aspire. Presently, it acts as a major non-NATO ally, "strategic partner" and "frontline state" against global terrorism. It has a symbiotic relationship with the West.

While Muslims masses in the Islamic world and most Pakistanis would jubilate over Iran's entry into the elite nuclear club on religious-emotional grounds as Pakistan's entry into the nuclear club was widely hailed. Iran's nuclearisation will bring in its wake some new challenges. However to acquire a nuclear weapon is one thing but to graduate into a responsible, mature nuclear power with proper nuclear doctrine is another. Besides, it takes time to settle into a working relationship with other N-powers. Iran will take time to adjust and to live with Israel and US in the region.

In case of chronic conflicts in the ME and absence of CBMs, the probability of use of nuclear weapons could increase. Iran will have to think of post nuclearisation phase. In the event of hostilities the Persian Gulf, which acts as major artery for passage of oil, the passage could be blocked and hurt the economies of adjoining countries as oil prices rise. This price hike is already taking place as a concomitant of the US-Iran "war of words."

Also, in case of serious escalation in tension, leading to military strikes on N-installations on Isfahan and Bushehr, the environmental ill-effects could easily travel to Pakistan and beyond. There could also be a stream of refugees or terrorists entering border regions into Pakistan and Afghanistan. Besides, Pakistan's Baluchistan, now undergoing mega projects may and virtually become a "no- go" area for foreign investment.

Examples of new weapons states such as North Korea, Pakistan and Israel, show that despite being nuclear, they are facing innumerable domestic problems. Nuclearisation is not a panacea to problems of historical underdevelopment and poverty. While N-weapons have their positive value to act as deterrent against predatory and hegemonic neighbours, the modern state system is redefining its paradigm of security, with greater emphasis attached to human security. Greater threats now seem to emanate from within than from without. Globalization is adding to internal and external pressures. Nuclear weapons can address only a specific nature and type of military threat by preventing nuclear blackmail and pre-emptive strikes.

Apparently, Iran's N-weapons will pose no direct threat to Pakistan. And neither Iran has any intention to use nuclear weapons against any Arab or Persian Gulf neighbours. However, in real life, if there were reprisals against Iran by Israel or the US, neighbouring Pakistan will feel the heat of events.

However, in case nuclear weapons induce caution and responsibility under a moderate regime in Iran, perspectives of outsiders about Iran may change and Iran may be seen as a benign power. This flows from the supposition that after having acquired weapons, it will be more self-assured about security needs and thus engage in balance of power in the region.

Iran is a developing country that faces manifold problems. War and sanctions have taken their toll through the years. Despite oil economy, economic problems (unemployment, income disparities), internal rifts (between reformists and hardliners), human rights and international isolation are problem areas. Further, Iran has to open up to real participatory system in order to unlock the immense human talent and expertise of its people. It has two million Diaspora of qualified people residing whose services could be utilized usefully for national development.

As a resource-rich country, it needs to export its abundant resources to a friendly world and attract major investments for infrastructure and oil and gas sector development. It lies on the axis of Central Asia and the Gulf and has potential to be the hub of an energy grid that could contribute immensely to regional development. Having remained isolated from the West for too long, it needs integration in the world system.

Pakistan, like other neighbours of Iran, hopes for an early resolution of the crisis that would take care of its legitimate security needs and national sovereignty, yet preferring that it does not follow the nuclear weapon route. In this connection, the recent letter from President Ahmedinejad to President Bush is a welcome move attempt to ease tensions. While direct talks between US and Iran are essential, China and Russia and certain important Muslim countries like Indonesia need to join for a pro-active role in the resolution of the crisis.

*Turkey*

Turkey is concerned about Iran's nuclearisation. This is because it will upset the long-established relations between the two countries. Both countries did not have a border dispute since the treaty of Kasr-i-Shirin that was signed in 1638.[17] The parity between the two Southwest Asian countries was based on demographic, military and geographic balance that could be disturbed if Iran goes nuclear. This could also affect Turkey's relations with its neighbour, Syria that has close relations with Iran.

Turkey has signed the NPT and ratified the IAEA Additional Protocol and is a member of Nuclear Supplier Group. Turkey has been vying to get into the EU for many decades. Unless the government or leadership falls into radical hands, it will most likely abstain from nuclear proliferation. However, the Turkish military, academia, politicians and state bureaucracy will have to review their decision for a nuclear option, should the EU and US fail to prevent Iran from ultimately crossing the nuclear Rubicon.

Previously, it was thought that since Iran had signed NPT and was under the IAEA safeguards, it would not choose to go nuclear; also it is

---

[17] See Mustafa Kibaroglu, "Beyond Iran" The Task of A Nuclearising Middle East, Talk delivered at the Washington Institute, Washington DC., February 9, 2005.  p. 4.

believed that Turkish membership of NATO and strong military capability would act as powerful deterrents; moreover, the US and Israel would jointly put pressure on Iran and act as an impediment in its bid for nuclearisation.

However, when it was revealed in 2002 that Iran was pursuing a clandestine N-programme, there has been some rethinking in Turkey. The US could not prevent or was incapable of preventing North Korean from going nuclear. Moreover, undue emphasis of the US on war against terrorism had redirected its energies and sent signals to certain aspiring N-states. The weakening of NPT regime and March 2006 Indo-US N-deal have strengthened a feeling that Turkey could also start building an infrastructure of N-weapons. If Iran evades NPT and walks out of the NPT, then Turkey will be left with no option but to follow suit.

Another reason is the perceived weakness of NATO since the end of Cold War. NATO's credibility against nuclear weapons is called into question. Turkey is unhappy over the US policy towards the Kurds; contrary to public posturing, it seems to be encouraging creation of a separate Kurdish state. The Turkish refusal of basing US troops on its territory against the Iraq war, calls for strong Turkish sentiment against the US.

However, the nuclear weapon option may affect the nuclear NATO umbrella provided to Turkey, stop any civil nuclear technology and may put it under increased pressure. Perhaps if Turkey is given a place in the EU, it may forego its choice of N-weapons. However, that possibility seems far away from now. Already, there are some reports of use of nuclear bunker busters but they have been officially denied. Israel is exerting pressure on the US to use force against N-programme, which is allegedly, years away from production.[18] It is feared that Tehran might be able to finalize enrichment facilities that will render the nuclear weapon production a foregone conclusion.[19]

In order to enlist Turkey's support, the US is reportedly offering the latter a free hand in dealing with its PKK bases and deployments in Iraq and possibly in future Iran. However, Turkish complicity will antagonize the Islamic World.[20] Economically, it will hurt Turkish trade with Central Asia, which goes through Iran.[21]

## US as A Gulf Power

The US policy is to prevent Iran from treading the nuclear path. In case this does not succeed and Iran becomes nuclear, the US strategy could be: to deter

---

[18] "Israeli MPs urge US to use force against Iran," *Dawn*, (Karachi), 2 October 2005.

[19] Max Boot, "Iran's threat, Bush dilemma," *Los Angeles Times*, 25 January 2006.
   <http://www.cfr.org/publications/9569/irans_threats_bushs_dilemma.html>

[20] Richard Falk, op. cit.
   <http://www. transnational.org/pressinf/2006/pi237_Iran_ME_Falk.html>

[21] "Gul: Turkey to be affected by Iran crisis," *Zaman Online*, (Istanbul), 13 March 2006.

its overt nuclear use by threatening preemptory and retaliatory measures, containing adventurism and aggression in the Gulf by arming them, through passive and active defence, preventing transfer of nuclear technology to surrogates and dissuading others against N- proliferation.

Robust measures against Iranian long-range missiles, including, digital network security, ship patrols, and protection of oil rigs and monitoring of shipping lanes[22] are being contemplated by the US. Besides, cruise missile, improvement of passive and active defence measures, missile detection capabilities and border protection measures are planned. In that case, the US may convey more explicitly extension of nuclear umbrella to allies and arm them to prevent any adventurism from Iran.

Initially, like other newly- acquired nuclear weapons, Iran's nuclear doctrine and deterrence could be unstable. While the Persian Gulf states would be dependent more on the US for deterrence, nuclear Iran could start exerting subtle influence in the region. Regarding fear of transfer of nuclear technology to some military Islamic groups such as Hizbollah or others, it is not practicable, though Iran would continue to provide haven, training, ideological or financial support for unconventional operations. Although Iran will not provide any of these to Sunni extremist groups, the Hizbollah may feel emboldened to launch more attacks once Iran is nuclear armed. There is, however, always fear that even if Iran will be restrained in sharing nuclear technology with others, certain radical elements might be tempted to act on their own, thereby creating uncertainty and challenges to the US.[23]

## Future Outlook

The trends set into motion over the last years, unless reversed, could mean a nuclearised Iran in a few years. Observers believe that while Iran without N-weapons is a threat with N-weapons, it might feel emboldened to act more assertively.

Many factors could intervene to prevent Iran from going down the nuclear path. The incentives for acquiring nuclear weapons i.e., the Iraqi experience, dangers of US encirclement, Israeli threats of surgical strikes, diversification of energy resources, and strong Persian nationalism to safeguard its sovereignty, are possible motivational factors. Together with these, are the US difficulties in Iraq and Afghanistan and support from Russia and China in an emerging multi-polar world. Pakistan and North Korean

---

[22] As mentioned by Lt. General Jefferey Kohler, Head Pentagon Defence Security Cooperation Agency, "US plans to encircle Iran," says diplomats, " *Daily Times,* (Lahore), 20 May 2006.

[23] On some policy recommendations see Michael Eisenstadt's testimony before the House Committee on International Relations, Sub-committee on the Middle East and Central Asia, "Implications of a Nuclear Iran," 24 June 2004. <http:/www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateCo7.php?CID=7>

examples of going nuclear are precedents. If Pakistan can undertake an elaborate nuclear programme and acquire weapons without signing NPT and North Korea do the same, while being part of NPT, and, lately, India given a special nuclear deal, by the US without signing the NPT, Iran does not have to be left behind, many Iranians contend.

Use of sanctions is another weapon that has been tried before. Iran is already under sanctions and it is doubtful if it will work effectively as many countries with economic stakes in Iran would let it succeed. Moreover, sanctions affect the common people more than the ruling elite.

Should Iran acquire nuclear weapons, it will surely behave as a regional player. However, if it undertakes an aggressive foreign policy and supports radical groups under nuclear shield, there will be strong reaction by the West. This could possibly bring Iran and the US into a direct military clash in the not -too- distant future.

## Conclusion

Presently, Iran and US are playing hard ball. The US game plan is to keep Iran under sustained international pressure: by making difficult and impossible demands and discrediting it as an "irresponsible country" and a "threat to world peace." A policy of "carrots and sticks" is being adopted. If Iran capitulates, it gets weakened and discredited before its people, paving the way for "regime change"; on the other hand, if it continues to be defiant, it may face UNSC sanctions, which, like Iraq, could debilitate and isolate it. This may turn out to be a prolonged effort of destabilizing it in order to effect a final regime change.[24]

Some writers hold the view that possibilities of military strikes against Iran exist as it is a deliberate US policy [25] to finally punish Iran. It is feared that simmering tension could slip out of control. Any border incident or untoward event in the Persian Gulf, involving US or Iranian ships, could trigger a chain of events resulting in outbreak of hostilities.

Surgical military strikes seem difficult as most of Iranian sites are located close to population centers, are widely dispersed or could be set up as decoys. An attack would easily ignite strong anti-US feelings and rally the correctly targeted, they could also possibly delay, if not completely forestall, population around in a show of defiant nationalism. But, it is reasoned that, if the Iranian N- programme.

Hence, following scenarios are possible: first, Iran's N- programme is pre-emptively nipped in the bud before it becomes operational through

---

[24] Ambassador (Retd) Javed Hasan, "Iran As A N-power", *Dawn,* (Islamabad), 29 March 2006.

[25] Edward S. Herman, "Manufacturing a logic for the attack," *Encounter,* weekly, *Dawn,* 25 March 2006.

pinpointed military strikes or sanctions; secondly, Iran, in a couple of years manages surreptitiously to build nuclear weapons by delaying and driving wedges within the West, or thirdly, a "regime change" comes about after the Islamic revolution has run out of revolutionary élan; fourthly, Iran soon builds nuclear weapons and comes out of the closet with a bang *a la* India and Pakistan. There is a minority opinion that surmises that Iran's reckless defiance shows that it has most likely nuclear weapons, whose presence it would declare at the time of US attack.

In case Iran goes nuclear, the US interest will be directly jeopardized as Israel directly threatened, Arab allies intimidated and the oil- producing region held ransom against the brunt of high oil prices.[26] Alternatively, if there is a moderate regime in Iran, it could turn into a non-threatening neighbour that will be welcomed by all.

But will this eventually come about? It is difficult to say. Iran has undergone a debilitating 8-year war with Iraq, experienced the adverse consequences of Iraqi invasion on Kuwait and the recent military occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Israel remains a major factor in the ME. In the words of an analyst, it is the "original sinner."[27] Its closet nuclear weapons have given it psychological advantages and made it obdurate towards its neighbours. Its policy of flouting openly all legal accords, use of force, intimidation, unchecked building of settlements, ethnic cleansing — all classify it a 'rogue state' in the region.

China and Russia will play a vital role in the resolution or the non-resolution of the crisis. The recent call by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan for direct US-Iran talks, Iranian President's letter to President Bush and the recent EU package plan are positive pointers that show some flexibility on both sides

All in all, prospects of a nuclearised Iran, except for Syria, Hamas and the Shia-dominated Iraq, generally raise uneasy feelings in the region. This is

---

[26] Neil Fergusson, "Fast forward 10 years and there are cold wars everywhere," *Daily Times,* (Lahore), 15 May 2006

[27] David Hirst, "Israel — main sinner in ME nuclearisation," *Dawn,* (Islamabad), 5 April 2006.

because *Pax American*a and *Pax Iranica* cannot co-exist[28] in the region, as, in the words of a Fred Halliday, there exists "a very dangerous leadership"[29] in Tehran and Washington. This may not prove as dire if recent positive trends on     both     sides     continue     on     the     same     trajectory.■

---

[28]  See Ijaz Hussain, "Mainsprings of Iranian defiance," *Daily Times,* (Lahore), 26 April 2006.

[29] Interview with Manal Arafrang in, "We have dangerous leaders in Tehran and Washington . . . anything can happen,' " *Daily Times,* 13 May 2006.

# PAKISTAN'S ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH THE MIDDLE EAST

## Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik[*]

## Introduction

*P*akistan has been enjoying cordial diplomatic and political relations with the Middle East over the past six decades in spite of minor setbacks that mainly resulted out of Pakistan's military alignment with the West in the 1950s. Moreover, Pakistan has always avoided confrontation, if any, and maintained a balanced approach in its Middle East policy with all Arab countries. This policy naturally enhanced Pakistan's stature amongst the Middle Eastern countries over a period of time particularly by the beginning of the 1970s. Further, geographical compulsions and cultural affinities bind Pakistan and the Middle East together. For instance, Gwadar Port of Pakistan, going to be operative by June 2006, is only 300 miles from the Gulf. Pakistan is located on the verge of the Middle East, the Straits of Hormuz, the nearest maritime point to Pakistan that makes the Sultanate of Oman as Pakistan's fifth neighbour as maritime boundaries overlap. The ancient Pakistan was one of encatchment points of traditional trade between the Indian Sub-continent, China, Central Asia, the Arabian Peninsula, and Europe. Pakistan is the only nuclear declared country that is close to the Middle East. Today, economy is an additional force behind Pakistan-Middle East relations with enormous potentials. Considering these vital geographical links, Pakistan can capitalize enormous energy requirements at much faster and lesser cost for its future economic buildup. This paper, therefore, looks at Pakistan-Middle East economic relations and offers suggestions for the policy-makers in order to further consolidate their economic bonds under the prevailing global environment.

*Backdrop to Political Solidarity*
Present day Pakistan's relations with the Middle East, date back to centuries old faith, principles, and values of Islam that provide a basis on which the indestructible foundation of relations was established between Pakistan and the Middle East. The Ottoman Caliph of Turkey was regarded as a symbol of unity for the Muslims (including present day Pakistanis) of the Indian Sub-

continent until the Caliphate was abolished in Turkey in 1924. Earlier, the Muslims of the Indian Sub-continent launched the Caliphate Movement at a massive scale to show solidarity with the Islamic causes by the end of the second decade of the twentieth century. The emergence of Pakistan in 1947, as the single largest Islamic country and the fifth largest country in the world, naturally put it ahead of all Islamic countries for the advocacy of Islamic causes the world over. Pakistan continued its solidarity with the Islamic causes along with its joining of Western military alliances such as the Baghdad Pact (1955), comprising Pakistan, Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Great Britain, and sponsored by the United States, that later converted into the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in 1959 as a result of Iraq's withdrawal. Pakistan formally withdrew from the alliance in March 1979 as the organization was disbanded.

The purpose of the alliance was to defend the Middle East from any perceived Communist threat or insurgency. A similar military alliance namely, the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), was also forged a year earlier in 1954 comprising Pakistan, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, France, Great Britain, and the United States, to provide a defence shield to the South East Asian countries against Communist threat under US leadership. As a result of Pakistan's military alignment with the West, Islamic countries, particularly Egypt and Indonesia and to some extent Saudi Arabia, showed mixed reactions, while relations with other Islamic countries such as Turkey and Iran grew much faster by knitting them together under the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) that was framed in 1964. (In 1984, RCD turned into the Economic Cooperation Organization, comprising Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and six Central Asian republics). Nevertheless, Pakistan's military alignment with the West had never been directed against any Islamic country. Rather, Pakistan's joining of CENTO and RCD was indicative of its political and military alignment with the Middle East in the years to come. Therefore, these pacts provided immense opportunities to Pakistan to strengthen bonds of friendship with the Middle East in all fields including economic ties. Common strategic considerations led the Gulf States to train their military personnel in Pakistan's military academies and to finance Mirage rebuild factory at Kamra, besides other projects in Pakistan, in the 1970s.[1] These defense arrangements not only strengthened defense cooperation between Pakistan and several of Arab countries, they also financially helped Pakistan.

Above all, Pakistan's unflinching support to the cause of the Palestine has always enhanced its stature among the Islamic countries that wished a

---

[1]  See also Ghulam Sarwar, 'Pakistan and the Muslim World', in Mehrunnisa Ali, *Readings in Pakistan Foreign Policy: 1971-1998* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 137-42.

greater role being played by Pakistan in resolving the Palestinian issue.[2] Moreover, Pakistan gave monetary assistance to the Arabs displaced from Palestine.[3] Similarly, in the cause of Arab decolonization, Pakistan unhesitatingly demanded the independence of Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco.[4]

Pakistan also kept away from inter-Arab disputes and successfully adopted non-partisan profile.[5] Pakistan's policy toward the Middle East fostered strong economic ties through expanded trade, workers' remittances, and investment. Keeping in mind this political backdrop, Pakistan's economic relations with the Middle East draw special attention, which is explained as under:

## Economic Significance of the Middle East for Pakistan

From economic point of view, Middle East is important for Pakistan for the following reasons: trade, oil, investment, and remittances from the overseas Pakistanis workers.  Foremost of them are oil requirements, notably from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, besides remittances, and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from the oil-rich Middle East countries into Pakistan. Shared strategic concerns and thrust for development always pushed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Emirate of Kuwait to offer oil concessions in the forms of credit and deferred payments to Pakistan, particularly whenever Pakistan confronted acute shortage of foreign exchange during the 1980s and 1990s. Cordial and personal contacts of Pakistan with the Arab leaders are additional advantage and asset of Pakistan in the region[6] and Arab countries usually offered a helping hand to Pakistan in an hour of need. So Pakistan's leaders and people accord high regards to their relations with the Arab world that are based on common perceptions and shared-cultural values. The Middle East peace process may also enhance Pakistan's economic ties with the region and open up new avenues of economic relationship with the state of Israel[7].

*The Evolution of Economic Cooperation*

Historic trade links existed between present day Pakistan and the Arabian Peninsula. From times immemorial, the Indian Sub-continent and the Arab

---

[2] See a similar view Zubeida Mustafa, 'Recent trends in Pakistan's policy towards the Middle East', *Ibid.*, pp. 91-108.

[3]  *Ibid.*, p. 94.

[4]  *Ibid.*

[5]  *Ibid.*

[6]  See another a similar view in Melisa Iqbal & Teresita Schaffer 'Pakistan, the Middle East, and Central Asia', in *South Asia Monitor*, (Washington) No. 30, I February 2001.

[7]  See an initial analysis on Pakistan-Israel normalization in Bethany Tindall & Pramit Mitra, 'Pakistan and Israel: An emerging détente', in *Ibid.*, No. 88, 3 November 2005.

countries linked together through three vital trading routes:[8] (1) the ancient Silk Route that stretched from China into Himalayas, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and went through Iran and then upward to the Mediterranean via Middle East. (2) Another land route originated from Sindh, the ancient centre of cotton growth, and went through Balochistan, two provinces of Pakistan, into the Levant countries, comprising Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine, for onward trading to Europe. (3) Lastly, Debal Port (now Karachi) was one of the most important sea points for the shipment of cotton to the Arabian Peninsula and Europe up to the 8th century. It was in 1772 that the village Kolachi-jo-Goth (old name of Karachi) was changed from a fishing village to a trading post when it was selected as a port for trade with Muscat and Bahrain. The importance of this port increaed after British conconquered it in 1839. The establishment of Gwadar Port should also be seen against this historical trading link that exited between the Indian Sub-continent and Arabian Peninsula.

In recent times, it was the formation of the RCD that became the cornerstone for the promotion of economic interests between Pakistan and the Middle East with a particular focus on Iran and Turkey as partners. A number of projects were being framed under the banner of RCD, with seemingly quite moderate success. However, the economic significance of the Middle East dramatically increased by the early 1970s with oil shocks and embargos imposed by the Middle East oil producers against Western countries, which tended to be pro-Israel. On the contrary, for Pakistan, Middle East emerged as a substitute to Western aid and heavy reliance for development funds in the years to come. Fortunately, oil shocks made a quantum jump in trade patterns between Pakistan and the Middle East (See Table 4).

An analysis of Pakistan's trade with the Middle East will reveal that trade had rather steadily strengthened over the past several decades from virtually no point. Middle East had not been the buyers of Pakistani raw material such as cotton and jute as it lacked textile industry. So, for obvious reasons, trade was not strengthened soon after Pakistan's independence in 1947 through to the end of the 1950s. Trade patterns that existed during the British colonial era in the Indian Sub-continent largely continued. During 1948-50, Middle East was the only region that had fewer trading links with Pakistan. Western Europe, East Asia, and North America attracted more Pakistan's exports than the Middle East during the period mentioned above. Even Oceania (comprising Australia and New Zealand) and Eastern Europe attracted more Pakistan's exports than the Middle East as indicated in Table 1.

---

[8] This point was elaborated by Dr Rashid Ahmad Khan at a personal discussion with the writer.

Middle East's share of Pakistan's exports had been less than one percent respectively during 1948, 1949, and 1950. However, Middle East's share of Pakistan's imports slightly increased from 3.1 percent in 1948 to 3.7 percent in 1949 and 5.7 percent in 1950.

**Table 1: A Comparison of Pakistan's Exports to Middle East and Other Regions during 1947-50**

(US$ Million)

| Region | 1948 | | 1949 | | 1950 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Exports | Imports | | | | |
| | 108.9 | 94.1 | 119 | 143.5 | 106.3 | 120.8 |
| East Asia | | 178.8 | 9 | 138.8 | 106.3 | 136.9 |
| | 56.4 | 26.3 | 43.4 | 43.2 | 52.6 | 35.2 |
| Eastern Europe/USSR | 49.2 | 16.5 | 36.6 | 38.7 | 71.1 | 26.5 |
| Oceania | 1.9 | 1.3 | 3.2 | 2.8 | 7.0 | .8 |
| Middle East | 1.7 | 11.3 | 2.9 | 15.5 | 1.9 | 20.2 |

Source: Washington: IMF: *Directions of Trade Statistics* (Various volumes).

**Table 2: Pakistan's Trade with the Middle East during 1951-59**

(US$ Million)

| Years | 1951 | 1952 | 1953 | 1954 | 1955 | 1956 | 1957 | 1958 | 1959 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Exports | 1.4 | 3.2 | 4.0 | 2.1 | 10.9 | 5.5 | 6.1 | 6.3 | 12.5 |
| Imports | 22.5 | 21.1 | 20.4 | 23.6 | 18.1 | 12.3 | 13.8 | 15.8 | 29.2 |

Source: *Ibid.*

**Table 3: Pakistan's Trade with the Middle East during 1960-71**

(US$ Million)

| Years | 1960 | 1961 | 1962 | 1963 | 1964 | 1965 | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 | 1969 | 1970 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Exports | 19.9 | 27.5 | 32.3 | 34.1 | 32.8 | 36.3 | 38.8 | 47.40 | 48.10 | 61.53 | 57.34 |
| Imports | 50.2 | 48.3 | 43.5 | 50.5 | 34.4 | 9.9 | 23.8 | 44.50 | 47.50 | 44.33 | 63.72 |

Source: *Ibid.*

**Table 4: Pakistan's Trade with the Middle East during 1971-79**

(US$ Million)

| Year | 1971 | 1972 | 1973 | 1974 | 1975 | 1976 | 1977 | 1978 | 1979 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Exports | 59.1 | 55.2 | 93.9 | 228.4 | 250.2 | 274.6 | 304.4 | 253.3 | 405.6 |
| Imports | 36.2 | 44.5 | 80.1 | 243.5 | 316.6 | 363.5 | 389.3 | 707.7 | 794.5 |

Source: *Ibid.* N.B. Figures of Pakistan's exports to and imports from Indonesia, Nigeria, and Venezuela have been excluded to present a correct geographical view of Pakistan's trade with the Middle East during 1971-81.

**Table 5: Pakistan's Trade with the Middle East during 1980-89**

(US$ Million)

| Year | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Exports | 591.2 | 717.3 | 658.4 | 1,190.3 | 785.4 | 496.1 | 567.5 | 541.1 | 500.4 | 501.0 |
| Imports | 1,521.6 | 1,452.9 | 1,704.4 | 1,524.3 | 1,480.5 | 1,478.1 | 799.1 | 1,157.7 | 1,007.1 | 1,336.6 |
| Total | 2,112.8 | 2,170.2 | 2,359.8 | 1,714.6 | 2,265.9 | 1,974.2 | 1,366.6 | 1,698.8 | 1,507.5 | 1,837.6 |

Source: *Ibid*. N.B. Figures of Pakistan's exports to and imports from Indonesia, Nigeria, and Venezuela have been excluded to present a correct geographical view of Pakistan's trade with the Middle East during 1980-81.

**Table 6: Pakistan's Trade with the Middle East during 1990-99**

(US$ Million)

| Year | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Exports | 483.3 | 790.1 | 959.7 | 866 | 795 | 929 | 987 | 884 | 903 | 968 |
| Imports | 1,408.5 | 1,.255.7 | 1,457.8 | 1,684 | 1,860 | 2,249 | 2,786 | 2.895 | 1,963 | 2.812 |
| Total | 1,8918 | 2,045.8 | 2,417.5 | 2,550 | 2,655 | 3,178 | 3.773 | 3,779 | 2,866 | 3,780 |

Source: *Ibid*.

*The Recent Trade Trends*

Middle East accounts for 19.3 percent of Pakistan's total exports and over 27 percent of Pakistan's imports in 2004. The bulk of this trade is oil imports. Over the past five years, percentage share of the Middle East of Pakistan's imports has rather steadily declined from 38 percent in 2000 to 27 percent in 2004. However, percentage share of the Middle East of Pakistan's overall exports increased from 12 percent in 2000 to 19 percent in 2004. This is the result of Pakistan export drive with a focus on lucrative markets including the Middle East. Pakistan total exports to the Middle East were US$ 1.092 billion in 2000 but increased to US$ 2.621 billion in 2004. There was a slight increase in Pakistan's imports from the Middle East i.e., US$ 4.105 billion in 2000 to US$ 5.533 billion in 2004, an average increase of US$ 286 million per annum during 2000-05.

Most of Pakistan's trade with the Middle East is with the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries because of: (1) Pakistan's heavy reliance on oil import (2) close geographical proximity with the Gulf, and (3) because there are close commercial, security, and diplomatic ties besides historical linkages between Pakistan and GCC. As a result of this, there are fewer trading links with the rest of the Middle East countries such as Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and North African countries namely Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco.

United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia are the focal points of Pakistan trade in the Gulf. Pakistan's two-way trade with UAE was recorded US$ 3.383 billion in 2004. This trade was slightly in favour of UAE. The annual bilateral trade between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia totaled over US$ 2.485 billion, which included Pakistan's US$ 1.875 billion oil imports from the Kingdom and Pakistan's exports totaling around US$ 610 million in 2004. Some of Pakistan's exports to the European markets were being re-imported

to Saudi Arabia. Pakistan's business Forum, which has been recently set up in Saudi Arabia, made suggestions to capture Pakistan's re-exports to Saudi Arabia. Pakistan's third largest export destination in the Middle East was Kuwait. In 2004, bilateral trade between them was recorded US$ 1.201 billion with only US$ 100 million Pakistan's exports and the rest bulk was oil imports from Kuwait. The fourth largest trade destination of Pakistan in the Middle East was Iran with US$ 506 million annual bilateral trade in 2004 with US$ 399 million imports and US$ 107 million exports to that country.

GCC textile imports alone are over US$ 5 billion at present. With increasing oil prices and sound management of oil revenues, GCC is expected to emerge as a hub of services industries comparable to Singapore and Hong Kong. Therefore, interaction with GCC economy has enormous advantages for Pakistan and possibility for boosting its agricultural and industrial exports with GCC investment. Pakistan and GCC have signed an agreement in August 2004 to consider, *inter alia*, ways and means for the expansion of trade. Conclusion of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) of Pakistan with the GCC would open a free regime for goods and services in addition to the granting of Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status, would be highly beneficial for Pakistan. In return, this could lead toward the promotion of trade between Pakistan and GCC.
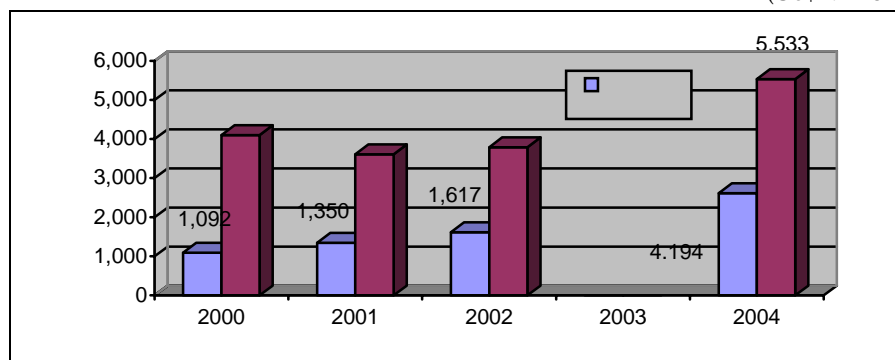
Pakistan trade with the rest of the Middle East was negligible including Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Yemen, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Libya as well as Iraq for obvious reasons. The proposed Pakistan-Qatar gas pipeline project would indeed greatly enhance trade between Pakistan and Qatar. There was virtually no trade with Iraq over the past 15 years for obvious reasons (See Chart below).

The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and the World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) greatly stressed on the need of promotion of intra-regional trade between the Islamic countries. Pakistan, which is pursuing a trade expansion policy to overcome its economic woes greatly pins hopes in the Middle East for export drive. Pakistan must be exploring markets in this region as Pakistan has great potential in exports to this promising region.

Major products of interest to Pakistani exporters in the Middle East are: cotton yarn, fabrics, denim, cloth, garments, electrical goods (air-conditioners, fans, cables, transformers, generators, water pumps, electric water meters), iron & steel products, carved furniture, hospital beds, surgical items, tractors, auto parts, and marble products. Agricultural produce such as fresh vegetables, fruits, milk, diary products, rice, meat, and poultry are some of Pakistan's notable items of exports to the Middle East.

**Chart 1: Pakistan's Trade with the Middle East during 2000-2004**

(US$ Million)



Source: IMF: *Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook, 2005.*

**Table 7: Pakistan's Trade with the Middle East during 2000-2004**
**(Country-Wise)**

(US$ Million)

| Year | 2004 | | 2003 | | 2002 | | 2001 | | 2000 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Trade | Exp | Imp | Exp | Imp | Exp | Imp | Exp | Imp | Exp | Imp |
| Bahrain | 52 | 104 | 39 | 79 | 43 | 45 | 45 | 43 | 41 | 114 |
| Egypt | 54 | 47 | 41 | 36 | 53 | 40 | 45 | 31 | 45 | 30 |
| Iran | 107 | 399 | 82 | 301 | 42 | 204 | 29 | 218 | 16 | 326 |
| Iraq | 5 | - | 4 | - | 33 | - | 23 | 3 | 5 | - |
| Jordan | 22 | 23 | 25 | 29 | 24 | 35 | 25 | 52 | 13 | 32 |
| Kuwait | 100 | 1,101 | 77 | 822 | 60 | 758 | 53 | 793 | 43 | 1,274 |
| Lebanon | 14 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 9 | - | 12 | 1 | 9 | - |
| Libya | 3 | - | 3 | - | 2 | - | 4 | - | 3 | - |
| Oman | 54 | 10 | 42 | 8 | 48 | 13 | 49 | 6 | 49 | 25 |
| Qatar | 45 | 40 | 34 | 30 | 32 | 39 | 35 | 17 | 41 | 26 |
| Saudi Arabia | 610 | 1,875 | 469 | 1,417 | 390 | 1,315 | 296 | 1,138 | 240 | 1,137 |
| S | 28 | 3 | 21 | 3 | 11 | 16 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| AE | 1,458 | 1,925 | 1,121 | 1,455 | 835 | 1,318 | 697 | 1,302 | 560 | 1,139 |
| | 69 | 5 | 53 | 4 | 35 | 7 | 30 | 3 | 22 | 2 |

Source: *Ibid.*

As far Pakistan's balance of trade with the GCC is concerned, it is obviously in favour of GCC particularly Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Kuwait as oil imports are far in excess of Pakistan exports.

*Trade Diplomacy*

Pakistan's past policy of import substitution was replaced by import liberalization and by an export-led growth strategy by emulating the miracle development experiences of Japan, South Korea, and the East Asian Tiger economies. Now, officially Pakistan has devised an East Asian Vision to strengthen Pakistan economic links with East Asia and to learn from their experience of development, as Pakistan is not oil-rich and resource-rich

country unlike the GCC. Pakistan's situation is more like Japan, South Korea and other ASEAN countries, which mainly focus on export-led growth by using precious human resources. Therefore, Pakistan is pursuing a policy of trade diplomacy designed to provide maximum possible export opportunities and moving with international trends to facilitate and intensify efforts for better market access and to create a level playing ground in this regard too. In this context, Pakistan's efforts are being focused on Saudi Arabia and UAE.

As mentioned elsewhere in this paper, Middle East is just next door to Pakistan, but there are no Free Trade and Preferential Agreements (FTAs & PTAs) signed between these countries so that Pakistan should promote trade hitherto blocked by the typical trade policies of the past. Pakistan-GCC trading links could have further expanded provided PTA & FTA were signed between them. However, negotiations are already underway between Pakistan and GCC. If agreement was signed, Pakistan can have a better market access for its fresh agricultural products such as vegetables and fruits including diary products because one of the focus areas of GCC is cooperation in agriculture. Pakistan generally believes that GCC should give relatively more preference to Pakistan than India for obvious reasons in doing trade, business, commerce, hiring of professionals, skilled and un-skilled workers and other allied activities. Under the fast changing situation in South West Asia, Pakistan hopes that GCC and other Arab countries should acknowledge this factor now.

Intra-regional trade between the Arab countries is extremely low, comprising just 6 percent of the entire Arab trade. This also has implications for Pakistan's trade with the Middle East. In spite of having 75% reserves of mineral and natural resources and 40% raw material for primary goods, unfortunately the share of OIC States of World GNP was only 7% which was not reflective of potential available in the member states.
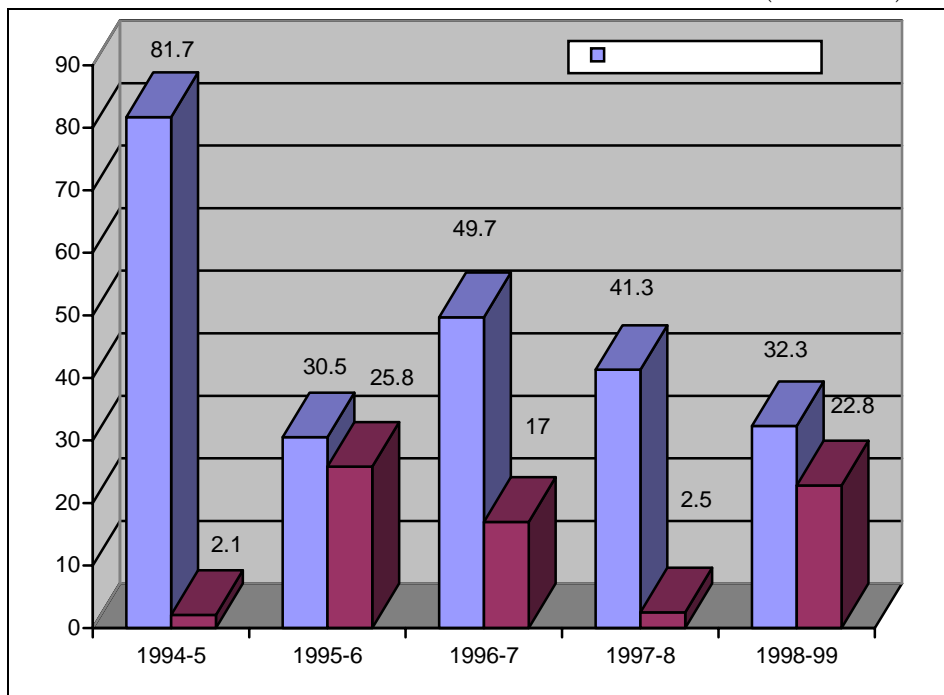
*Economic Collaboration*

Among Middle East countries, UAE and Saudi Arabia are major investors in Pakistan over the past several years. Investment from the UAE witnessed an upward trend during the last three years particularly a change was realized when investment from UAE reached US$ 417.3 million during the last fiscal year (2004-5), making it the largest investor in Pakistan. Therefore, UAE's share of Pakistan's total FDI stood as high as 25 percent during 2004-05. This rise was a sudden shift as preceding year's (2003-04) investment accounted US$ 146.5 million. However, that still ranked UAE as the second largest investor in Pakistan after the United States against the former's third ranking in 2002-03. Nevertheless, after 1999, UAE's FDI rapidly declined in Pakistan. Again, following the 9/11 event, its FDI started enhancing continuously from US$ 17.3 million in 2001-02 to US$ 120 million the following year to as high as US$ 146.5 million in 2003-04.

Apart from Saudi Arabia and UAE, recently the Kuwait International Investment Group, Kuwait's largest investment group, has shown interest in investment in petroleum, energy, and housing sector and its investment is expected to reach US$ 1.5 billion in 2005.[9] Although Saudi Arabia is also one of investors in Pakistan, yet unlike UAE, its share of Pakistan's total investment is rather negligible during the last ten years as indicated in Tables below. Throughout the past ten years, Saudi FDI has largely fluctuated and mostly shown downward trend even after the 9/11. Oman has invested US$ 87 million in various projects in Pakistan in recent years as mentioned elsewhere in this paper. Investment from Bahrain into Pakistan has been increasing after 2000 and reached US$ 71 million in total. Investment from other Middle Eastern countries such as Qatar, Bahrain, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Libya, into Pakistan is quite limited because they had not showed interest in investing in Pakistan mainly owing to political and other reasons. Moreover, as bilateral trade level is quite low between Pakistan and these countries, their investment interest could not increase in Pakistan.

**Chart 2: Investment from the Middle East during 1994-5 – 1998-9**
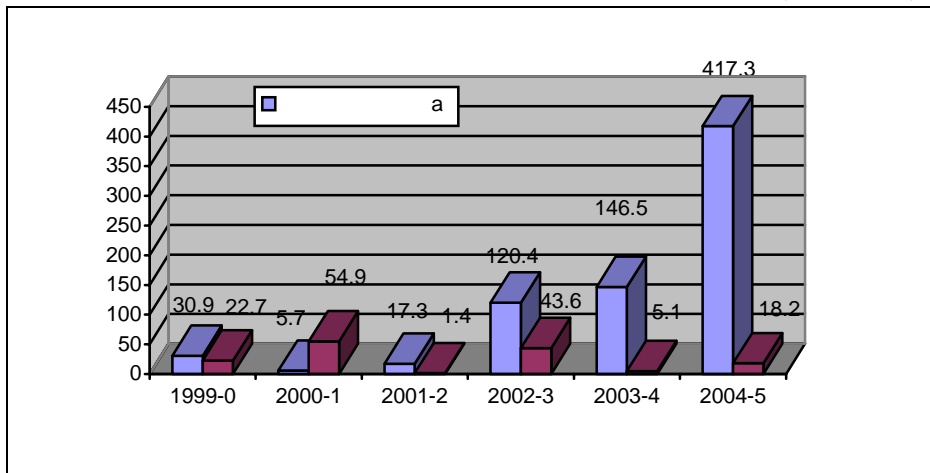
(US$ Million)



Source: Islamabad: Board of Investment, *Foreign Direct and Portfolio Investment*. 2005.

**Chart 3: Investment from the Middle East during 1999-0 - 2004-5**

---

[9] *The Nation* (Islamabad), 5 December 2005.

(US$ Million)



Source: *Ibid.*

*Joint Ventures*

Besides FDI, joint ventures are also a promising area of mutual economic interest between Pakistan and some of Middle Eastern countries namely UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, Qatar. There are bright prospects of joint ventures in oil and gas, petrochemicals, oil refinery, telecommunications, shipping, banking, defence, textile, food processing, diary products, leather industry, fine finishing of textiles, engineering goods, electric meters, construction and construction materials, transportation, cement industry, and tractor plants. Privatization is another promising area for collaboration.

Saudi-Pak Industrial and Agricultural Investment Company (SAPICO) was established in 1981, with an authorized capital of US$ 17.3 million. The company comprises: (1) Saudi-Pak Commercial Bank Ltd (2) Saudi-Pak Leasing Company Ltd. Saudi Arabian investors have stakes in a large number of joint-ventures and stocks in Pakistan. Saudi companies such as Dar Okaz Printing and Publishing Ltd, Development International Trade Co. Ltd, Kanooz Al-Watan Ltd, Saudi Arabian Airlines Corp, and Zamil Steel Building Co. Ltd are working in Pakistan in various sectors of the business.[10]

Fauji Fertilizers Company (Pvt) Limited of Pakistan and Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) Ltd have set up an integrated DAP and Ammonia / Urea Complex in Pakistan with a capital of US$ 370 million. Similarly, Pak-Oman Joint Investment Company was established in 2001 and Oman agreed to make direct investment of US$ 37 million in various projects in Pakistan including US$ 7 million that were allocated for the Gwadar Port infrastructure project. Oman also decided to further invest US$ 50 million in

---

[10] Information taken from documents filed by companies with the Registrar Securities & Exchange Commission of Pakistan.

other projects in Pakistan that increased its total investment in Pakistan to US\$ 87 million to date. The Qatar-American Investment Company (QAIC) has shown interest in the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) land development projects worth US\$ 700 million.

Pakistan-Kuwait Investment Company (Private) Ltd was established in 1979. Current capital is Rs. 2 billion. Company has several joint ventures namely: Meezan Bank, First Takaful Insurance Company Limited, Al-Meezan Investment Management Limited, Amed Software (Plexus), Faysal Management Services (Private) Limited. Recently, Inshaa Holdings of Sharjah, UAE, has planned to invest US\$ 200 million dollars in Karachi where the company has bought 13,000 square yards of Pakistan Railways land under the Government of Pakistan policy to construct a 65-storey building. This would also help improve railway efficiency.[11]  Similarly, a Dubai-based, UAE, company, Dubai Ports World (DP World), has shown interest to obtain management rights to operate Gwadar Port that will be ready for operation by June 2006.[12]

Pakistan has been leader in privatization programmes in South Asia since the beginning of the 1990s. Since then, Pakistan has completed or approved 146 transactions with gross proceeds of Rs 148 billion (US\$ 2.4 billion) as of April 2005. Privatization Commission was set up in 1991 to help deregulate public enterprises in the industrial area, power, oil & gas, transport 9aviation, railways, ports, & shipping), telecommunications, banking and insurance sectors. Government believes that privatization would help retire its public debt and reduce poverty as well as excel rate pace of development. So far, banking and insurance, power and telecommunication attracted more privatization than other sectors.   At the moment 32 transactions are up coming for privatization. In spite of some typical weaknesses and delays, privatization programme is largely on track. The following companies from the Middle East have shown interest in privatization programme in Pakistan:

- Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (Kuwait)
- Adraaj Capital Ltd (UAE)
- Abu Dhabi Group (UAE)
- PAL Group of Companies (UAE)
- Al-Ghurair Investment LLC & Associates (UAE)
- Etiasalat (UAE)

---

[11] *Business Recorder* (Karachi), 25 February 2006.

[12] Government of Pakistan, *Press Release No.177*, (Islamabad: Press Information Department, 25 February 2006). Note: DP World is an international port management company, which maintains 17 terminals in different countries since 1972. The company also plans to operate six US ports. See also *The News International* (Rawalpindi), 26 February 2006.

• The Kuwait International Investment Group (Kuwait)

Etisalat, however, backed out from the deal that enabled it to take over 26 percent stake along with managerial control of Pakistan Telecommunications Company Ltd (PTCL) as paying the earnest money on a open bid on 18 June 2005, but failed to deliver the remaining US$ 2.5 billion. It is learned that Etisalat had a 'second thought' regarding its bid and now putting pressure on the Privatization Commission to renegotiate the terms of the bid. An agreement was reached between the Privatization Commission of Pakistan and the company in February 2006 under which the company decided to pay US$ 1.4 billion upfront payment of the total US$ 2.5 billion.[13] This is the second time that a UAE-based company has backed out of the privatization transaction. Earlier, Kanooz al-Watan failed to pay up its pending instalment for the Karachi Electricity Supply Corporation (KESC), again a profit-making enterprise.[14]

The Privatization Commission has received 12 Statements of Qualifications (SOQs) from potential investors for the privatization of Pakistan Steel Mills Corporation. Previously, 19 parties had submitted Expression of Interest (EOI) in response to the invitation to qualified strategic investors interested for acquiring 51-74% equity stake in Pakistan Steel Mills Corporation (Pvt.) Ltd. The following four companies from the Middle East have also submitted their SOQs):

• Al-Tuwairqi Group of Companies (Saudi Arabia)
• Aljomaih Holding Company, (Saudi Arabia)
• Noor Financial Investment Company (Kuwait)
• Investment & Development Office of Government of Ras Al-Khaimah (UAE)

Undue favour should not be given to any firm or company interested in doing business, taking part in privatization process, and bringing in investment in Pakistan because healthy, free, and fair competition could lead toward the expansion and strengthening of foreign private business in Pakistan.

*Business Fora /Commissions*
A number of joint fora and commissions have been set up at the government levels between Pakistan and several of Middle East countries. The purpose of these fora and commissions is to promote economic and commercial ties so as to enter into joint-ventures and to explore the possibilities of establishing

---

[13] *Business Recorder* (Karachi), 23 February 2006.
[14] *The Nation* (Islamabad), 1 November 2005.

joint-ventures in each other's countries as well as in a third country where production material and manpower are available at a cheaper cost.

**Table 8: Joints Ministerial Commissions**

|   | Name of Commission | Date of Establishment |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | The Pak-UAE Joint Ministerial Commission | 1974 |
| 2 | The Pak-Kuwait Joint Ministerial Commission | 1974 |
| 3 | The Pak-Jordan Joint Economic Commission | |
| 4 | The Pak-Bahrain Joint Economic Commission | |
| 5 | The Pak-Q      int Min      l Commission | 1984 |
| 6 | The Pak-O      int Min      l Commission | 1986 |
| 7 | The Pak-Egypt Joint Ministerial Commission | 1989 |
| 8 | The Pak-S      nt Min      Com | - - |
| 9 | The Pak-S      oint Mi      l Commission | - - |
|   | The Pak-Iran Joint Ministerial Commission | - - |

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Foreign Relations Pakistan* & Board of Investment, *Country Profile.* (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, 2006).

*Utilization of Human Resources*

Nearly 2 million Pakistani workers are being employed by several of Middle Eastern countries, which is as high as 48 percent of total Pakistanis living abroad. Majority of them work in the Gulf States particularly in Saudi Arabia and UAE. A substantial number of these workers are also employed in Kuwait and Oman (See Table below). Pakistan can further meet the demand of the Middle East countries by offering highly-skilled professionals in the field of health, engineering, equipment education, information technology, and other specialized services through a well thought out planning for supply of such services to these countries.

**Table 9: Number of Pakistani Nationals in the Middle East**

(Thousands)

| Countries | Number of Pakistanis | Countries | Number of Pakistanis |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bahrain | 45000 | Libya | 30,000 |
| Egypt | 415 | Oman | 85,000 |
| Iran | 11,500 | Qatar | 52,000 |
| Iraq | 456 | Saudi Arabia | 1,100,000 |
| Jordan | 8,000 | Syria | 517 |
| Kuwait | 100,000 | UAE | 500,000 |
| Lebanon | 700 | Yemen | 700 |
| Total | | | 1,934,288 |

Source: Islamabad: Ministry of Labour, Manpower, & Overseas Pakistanis (Overseas Pakistanis Division), *Year Book 2004-05.*

The overseas Pakistani workers in the Middle East are a great source of remittances for Pakistan. Gulf States and elsewhere in the Middle East provide remittances to Pakistan that was a major source of Pakistan foreign-exchange earnings since the 1970s. So defence and security of the Middle East figures prominent in Pakistan's strategic interests.

**Table 10: Remittances From Overseas Pakistani Living in the Middle East**

(US$ Million)

| Countries | 1999-00 | 2000-01 | 2000-02 | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2004-05 |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Bahrain | 29.36 | 23.87 | 39.58 | 71.46 | 80.55 | 91.22 |
| Oman | 46.42 | 38.11 | 63.18 | 93.65 | 105.29 | 119.28 |
| Qatar | 13.29 | 13.38 | 31.87 | 87.68 | 88.69 | 86.86 |
| Saudi Arabia | 309.85 | 304.43 | 376.34 | 580.76 | 565.29 | 627.19 |
| UAE | 147.79 | 190.04 | 469.49 | 837.87 | 697.48 | 712.61 |
| Total | 546.71 | 569.83 | 980.46 | 1,506,31 | 1,537.30 | 1,637.16 |

Source: *Ibid.*

## Recommendations for Policy-Makers

First, there should be a political will on the part of all countries concerned at the highest level for the promotion of trade relations in real and practical terms. Second, trade diplomacy should be the core agenda in bilateral matters at all levels between Pakistan and Middle East countries. After having pointed out so, on the basis of above analysis, the following recommendations and suggestions may be made for the policy-makers to promote economic relations between Pakistan and the Middle East:

### I. PTA / FTA Agreements

Under increasing globalization and WTO, steps have been taken up by Pakistan to start negotiations for PTAs and FTAs with GCC countries countries. But the process seems to be relatively slow with GCC compared to East Asian countries, SAARC and ECO blocs, China, and USA with whom such agreements have already been signed and are at operational level or at the stage of finalization. This process must be accelerated.

### II. Creating Trading Hubs

Pakistan and the Middle East should jointly establish Trading Hubs in the region focused on improving intra-regional trade and customs practices. The hubs would provide a variety of services to support private sector trade flows and business-to-business contacts. Gwadar Port could be a promising point for creating such regional hub.

### III. Establishing Business Fora

Pakistan should encourage Pakistan private sector to establish Business Fora with all Middle East countries to discuss ways and means to enhance trade,

and to promote investment activities both at government and private level. The Joint Ministerial Commissions should also include leading businessmen, thus facilitating private sector's participation in order to promote trade. A *GCC-Pakistan Business Forum* stands out to be a call of the day. Similarly, *the Arab League-Pakistan Business Forum* should also be set up. These fora should loosely be based on the ASEAN and APEC models, and should cover regional economic issues, finance, trade, investment, privatization, joint ventures, public-private partnerships, customs, and other regulatory issues. Official business commissions that are inactive for over a period of time should be reactivated on priority basis as many of such fora have convened their first meeting after the lapse of several decades. The Pak-Kuwait Business Commission is a case in point, which held its first meeting in January 1999 after its establishment in 1974. This is true of many other similar fora. Therefore, all business for a must be reactivated.

## IV. Investment in Export Processing Zones
Pakistan has an open services sector including the investment regime in conformity with WTO over the past several years. Export Processing Zones (EPZ) in Pakistan should provide maximum facilities and incentives to investors and businessmen from the Middle East. Besides Karachi, every province in Pakistan is ripe for any such activity. Pakistani investors also need to invest particularly in oil and gas and in special industrial zones in the Middle East. At the moment, Pakistani investors have invested around US$ 45 million in the Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZs) of Jordan, mainly in the textile and apparel sector for onward export to the United States. This investment made Pakistan the second largest investors in Jordan's QIZs after China.[15] Pakistani businessmen in other countries in the Middle East should also take up similar investment activities.

## V. Investment in Self-Developed Oil and Gas Sector
Pakistan must learn lessons from Japan in the field of oil and gas development in the Middle East. Unlike Japan, Pakistan is located on the threshold of the Middle East. Japan has heavily invested in the self-developed petrochemical sector in the Middle East such as in the Khafji oil field in the Saudi Arabia and the Azadegan oil field in Iran. This is considered as the most economical and secure way of energy import. Pakistani oil companies such as Pakistan State

---

[15]  Informed by Arif Kamal, Pakistan Ambassador in Jordan, in a personal interaction with an IPRI Delegation that met with him on 7-8 December 2005. In 1996 the U.S. Congress established the Qualifying Industrial Zone (QIZ) initiative to support the peace process in the Middle East. These zones are industrial parks in Jordan and Israel from where goods can be exported duty-free to the United States. Currently, there are no U.S. import quota on clothes or textiles manufactured in Jordan.

Oil (PSO) and others along with Government patronization and financial stakes, should negotiate for oil concessions and rights in order to self-develop petrochemical sector in the Middle East for onward export to Pakistan. Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait are cases in point.

## VI. *Corporate Cattle Farming*

Corporate Cattle farming for goats, sheep, camels, cows, buffalos, and chickens, and birds such as coils, should be encouraged in Pakistan particularly with the GCC for meat export to these countries.

## VII. *Skilled Manpower and Professional Linkages*

The number of highly skilled workers and professionals from Pakistan to Middle East is quite low compared to similar workers from other countries such as Western Europe, United States, Japan, and South Korea. Pakistan needs to adopt a similar policy like other advanced countries toward the recruitment of skilled and professional labour force for the Middle East to further enhance the level of its economic interaction with that region.

## VIII. *The Islamic Banking and Micro-Financing*

The State Bank of Pakistan has already issued licenses to establish Islamic Banking in Pakistan last year. The *Sukuk* (Islamic Bonds) spurred for the creation of Islamic capital and money markets. Middle East financers can take benefits of Islamic Banking and *Sukuk* in Pakistan. There is large number of medium and small entrepreneurs in the oil-rich Gulf States. Pakistan is encouraging micro-financing credit facility for new and small farmers and businessmen. Financers from the GCC can avail opportunity of this business.

## IX. *The Education Sector*

Pakistan's education sector is in the process of reforms, innovation, and modernization at various levels such as professional education in medical sciences, engineering, agriculture, basic sciences and technology, and social sciences. Number of public and private universities has tremendously increased. There should be more educational exchanges both at pubic and private universities' level to further promote cultural and person-to-person interaction that would also help consolidate Pakistan's commercial and trading bonds in the future. For instance, over 9,000 Jordanian students have graduated from Pakistani universities during the past two decades which a great source of contact between Pakistan and Jordan.[16] Funding and stipends shall be arranged from the OIC pool, Islamic Development Bank (IDB), and GCC *etc.* As Pakistan is following Islamic Enlightened Modernization,

---

[16] Informed by Mr Arif Kamal, Pakistan Ambassador in Jordan, in a personal interaction with an IPRI Delegation that met with him on 7-8 December 2005.

improved its image in the West, and considering establishing diplomatic link with Israel, there will be no difficulty on the part of Middle East students and experts to interact with their Pakistani counterparts. However, Pakistan Government needs to simplify its universities' enrolment policy about foreign students as there are so many complicated steps which create difficulty for a foreign student to get finally enrolled himself in a university in Pakistan.

## X. The Israel Factor

At present, Israel is the only country in the Middle East, and perhaps the second after Taiwan, with whom Pakistan does not have any official trading links. Some people, however, suspect that there are hidden and unofficial trading links between Pakistan and Israel.[17] Israel, however, is looking forward to establish trade and economic relations with Pakistan.[18] Once diplomatic ties of Pakistan were established with Israel, contingent on the peace process in the Middle East, i.e, the establishment of the Palestinian state, Pakistan shall expect robust economic activities not only between Pakistan and Israel but also from within the region of the Middle East.

## XI. The Intra-regional Trade Promotion

The OIC Business Forum was renamed as World Islamic Economic Forum, whose first meeting was held in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia, on 1-3 October 2005, stressed upon the urgent need to promote intra-regional trade among the Islamic countries. Oil-rich Middle Eastern countries can play a crucial role in the promotion of inter-regional trade. Being geographical close to the Middle East, this could be highly beneficial for Pakistan as well.

## XII. Trade Promotion Strategies

Typical to many countries, Pakistan also focuses on the following strategies to promote trade with individual countries or blocs in the Middle East:

   (a)   *Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreements (DTAs)*
         The fold of *Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreements (DTAs) should also include Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, and Yemen as an initial step toward the promotion of Pakistan trade with these countries.*

---

[17] According to some sources, Pakistan-Israel trade accounts US$ 1 billion per annum that comes through Jordan. So trade should be officially regularized. A 174-member Pakistan's un-official delegation, comprising businessmen and others, visited Israel via Jordan in November 2005. See Aroosa Alam's report in *Pakistan Observer* (Islamabad), 13 November 2005.

[18] See meeting of the Chairman World Jewish Congress, Jack Rosen, with President Pervez Musharraf at Islamabad on 11 November 2005, *Dawn* (Islamabad), 12 November 2005, *The Nation* (Islamabad), 12 November 2005.

(b) *Bilateral Investment Agreements (BITs)*

These agreements have been signed with: Iran, Tunisia, Syria, Oman, Egypt, Lebanon, Qatar, Kuwait, Yemen & UAE. However, BIT has not been signed with one of the leading FDI partners of Pakistan, namely Saudi Arabia. This BIT must be signed at an early date to further promote investment with Saudi Arabia. Under the banner of OIC and GCC, Pakistan must hold seminars and conferences on bilateral basis with all Middle Eastern investors to attract investment from the oil-rich Middle East.

(c) *The Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) Status*

Among the Middle East countries, Pakistan has granted the status of Most-Favored-Nation (MFN) only to Iran so far but bilateral trade between Pakistan and Iran is not as large as between Pakistan and UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. Therefore, Pakistan and Middle Eastern countries particularly UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait need to extend all such trading benefits to each other granted to any third country to promote bilateral and inter-regional trade.

*XIII. Meeting Demands of Importing Countries*

Equally important is appropriate measures to be developed for supply chain and value chain for export commodities as Pakistan lacks in both these areas to meet the demand of importing countries of the Middle East. In agricultural and livestock sector, Pakistan should quickly adopt technology possessed by Australia and New Zealand in view of agreements signed during President Pervez Musharraf's visits to these countries in June 2005. These arrangements largely implied to technology, quality, and quarantine.

## Conclusion

Besides vital strategic considerations and interests, Middle East is highly crucial for Pakistan's ever-increasing economic necessities and interests. Economic relations between Pakistan and the Middle East have gradually developed and strengthened over the past six decades from 6 percent insignificant share of Pakistan's total global trade with that region in 1950 to as high as 24 percent in 2004. This made the region highly vital for Pakistan's foreign trade. A much solid foundation of economic relations was laid down during the 1970s and the region became an important source of oil requirements and remittances for Pakistan onward. The presence of a large Pakistani labour force is not only a vital source of remittances; it further strengthens Pakistan's bonds of friendship with the countries of the Middle East.

Investors from the Middle East are also keen to undertake large projects in Pakistan. The operation of Gwadar Port by a UAE-based company, by June 2006, is a clear indication of further increase of economic and commercial links between Pakistan and the Middle East. However, FDI from the oil-rich Gulf countries does not commensurate with the level of political and strategic leverage that Pakistan enjoys with several of Middle Eastern countries. Therefore, there is a need to promote FDI from Middle East countries and to further increase their interest in the privatization programme of Pakistan on priority basis. Both Pakistan and the Middle Eastern countries should reap the advantages of preferential and free trading regimes and must devise trading strategies, as mentioned in recommendations for policy-makers, to maximize and jointly capitalize economic interests in this age of increasing globalization.■

# BALOCHISTAN DISTURBANCES: CAUSES AND RESPONSE

## Dr Noor ul Haq[*]

## Introduction

*B*alochistan, the strategically important and the largest province of Pakistan, with 43.5 percent landmass of the country, is passing through a crucial phase of its history. Although there seems an unprecedented thrust for economic development of the province, the status quo is being disturbed and there is a clash of interest between the stakeholders. The centuries old feudal culture will be threatened. There is a conflict between certain *sardars* (feudal lords) and the government, the province and the federation, and the ethnic and sectarian entities in the province. Besides, there are grievances of the political parties and the people, related to the economic underdevelopment and quantum of autonomy for the province.

In fact, since independence in 1947, there have been intermittent disturbances in Balochistan. These are being variously referred to as deteriorating law and order situation, 'militancy', 'insurgency', and 'uprising' or 'resurgent nationalism'. Whatever the nature of the trouble, Pakistan Government is confronted with a challenge how to deal with the prevalent situation. There is a need to improve law and order situation and to be sensitive to the underlying and immediate causes, so as to find suitable responses to satisfy the people. The causes for the disturbance and violence by certain elements and by certain groups of people, in certain areas, especially in Dera Bugti and Kohlu districts, as well as by the 'nationalist' political parties and upcoming intelligentsia of Balochistan, can be traced into history as well as in political, social, economic and external factors.

## Historical Factor

Present-day Balochistan is reminiscent of a colonial legacy and to comprehend the prevalent situation, it is necessary to know the background history of Balochis. They generally claim to be of Semitic stock, sharing common traditions and culture. They embraced Islam during the 7th century AD, when Muslims conquered Iran and Sassanids were defeated.[1] They are settled in

---

[*]  Dr Noor ul Haq is Research Fellow at IPRI.

[1]  Mir Khuda Bakhsh Bijrani, *Searchlights on Baloches and Balochistan* (Karachi: Royal Book Company), 1974, pp. 89-98. He argues on the basis of 'oldest historical ballad of genealogies' that the Baloch were the followers of Caliph Ali. After martyrdom of Hussain in 680 AD, they migrated eastward to Seistan, Balochistan, Sind and the Punjab.

different countries - Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan. The total population of Balochis is estimated to be over sixteen million.[2] In Pakistan, they are spread in Balochistan, Punjab and Sind.[3] There are more ethnic Balochis in Sind and the Punjab, than they are in Balochistan.

The province of Balochistan is multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural. It has a population of about 6.566 million, which comes to about 4.5 percent of the population of Pakistan.[4] According to 1981 Census Report, linguistically, there are 38.28 percent Balochis, 25.15 percent Pushtoons and 22.02 percent Brahvis and the remainder 14.55 percent speak other languages.[5] The latest Census Report of Balochistan Province of 1998, has grouped together Balochis and Brahvis, making a total of 54.76 percent besides Pushtoons as 29.64 percent and the remaining 15.6 per cent, who are mostly settlers, speak other languages, i.e., Sindhi, Punjabi, Saraiki, Urdu, etc.[6] The province is rain deficit area and receives about four per cent rain annually. Since most of the land is arid, there is low density in population, i.e., 19 persons per sq. km. Most of the people lead nomadic life raising camels, sheep and goats. Fruit farming is undertaken wherever water is available. There is, however, considerable natural energy (gas, oil, coal) and mineral wealth, i.e., copper, chromite, lead, sulphur and marble, etc.

Balochis lead an autonomous tribal life and have a long history of internecine warfare between a number of their sub-tribes and sub-sub-tribes. Generally, they never had a centralized government or kingdom of their own, but remained mostly subject to one or the other neighbouring empires of India, Iran or Afghanistan.[7] It was during mid-17th century that Balochistan was formed into a loosely knit state of Kalat. During mid-18th century, Ahmad Shah Durrani occupied its northwestern part, which, thereafter, remained

---

[2] Bijarani, p. viii.

[3] Bijarani, p. 1. Also refer to Muhammad Sardar Khan Baluch, *History of Baluch Race and Baluchistan* (Quetta: Nisa Traders). 1958.

[4] According to 1998 Census Report the population of Balochistan is 6,565,885 as against Pakistan's population of 145.5 million.

[5] *1981 Census Report of Balochistan Province* (Islamabad: Population Census Organization Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan) , p. 10.

[6] *1998 Census Report of Balochistan* (Islamabad: Population Census Organization Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan)

[7] In the Shahnama of Firdosi, the conquest of Makran by Kai Khusru (Cyrus) of Persia is mentioned. Graeco-Persian kings who were the rulers of Afghanistan and the Punjab ruled Balochistan. Between 140-130 BC, the Sakas from Central Asia occupied this land. It acknowledged the suzerainty of Ghaznavids and Ghorids of Afghanistan. In 1398, Pir Muhammad, the grandson of Timur, subdued parts of Balochistan (Lahore: *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Prvincial Series, Balochistan*, reprint, 1984), pp. 11-13. In 1520, it submitted to Babur and Mughal rulers of Delhi. About mid-17th century it remained under the Safvid rulers of Persia. Later, Ahmad Shah Durrani occupied the northeaster part of Balochistan. It remained under the suzerainty of Afghanistan till the arrival of the British Ibid.,

under the suzerainty of Afghanistan, till the arrival of the British.[8] The British occupied Sind in 1843 and the Punjab in 1849 and were confronted with the Baloch and Pathan tribes, who lived in the hills to the west.

In 1854, an agreement was concluded between the British and the Khan of Kalat, who promised not to have relations with any foreign power without the approval of the English; to receive British troops when necessary; to protect merchants passing through his territory; and to prevent his followers from raiding British territory. In return for all this, he was to receive an annual subsidy of Rs. 150,000. Thus, a system of subsidy was introduced to purchase the loyalty of the Khan, who continued to enjoy a semi- independent status. With a view to further consolidating their hold on Balochistan, negotiations were conducted with the Khan of Kalat and a fresh treaty was signed at Jacobabad in 1876, which subsequently governed the relations between Kalat and the British Indian Government. Accordingly, the British occupied Quetta and surrounding area, together with Bolan Pass on lease. The lease agreement required the area to remain under the nominal sovereignty of Kalat but to be administered by the British. Next year, in 1877, a British Indian force was stationed at Quetta and Sir Robert Sandeman[9] was appointed the first Agent to the Governor-General. As the control of the Khan over his sardars was of a loose type, these arrangements did not fully meet the security requirement of the British. Sandeman tactfully established contacts with other tribal chiefs of Balochistan and succeeded in maintaining peace in the area. Sandeman's system of governance

> rested on the occupation of central points in Kalat and tribal territory in considerable force, linking them together by fair-weather roads, and *leaving the tribes to manage their own affairs according to their own customs and working through their chiefs and maliks* (Italics by the author). The maliks were required to enlist levies paid by [British] government but regarded as tribal servants.[10]

The British achieved the objective of their own protection, keeping roads open, maintaining law and order in the tribal territory, and in case of trouble, finding out the troublemakers. For this cooperation, the Maliks (i.e., Sardars) received large subsidies.

---

[8]  Ibid.

[9]  Sir Robert Groves Sandeman (1835-92) was "a pioneer, a pacificator and a successful administrator, who converted that country [Balochistan] from a state of complete anarchy into a province as orderly as any in British India." <http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/SAC_SAR_/SANDEMAN_SIR_ROBERT_GROVES_1835.html>

[10] Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans 550 B.C.-A.D. 1957* (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd), 1958, p. 376.

The British had planned to build a strategic line of defence against Russian advance in Central Asia. On 20th November 1878, the British invaded Afghanistan and, on 26th May 1879, concluded the Treaty of Gandamak with the ruler of Afghanistan, who agreed to British terms, including ceding the district of Sibi to the British. In 1889, Sandeman occupied Zhob valley, a strategic area that opened the Gomal Pass to caravan traffic, and there he established Fort Sandeman (Zhob).[11] In 1893, Sir Mortimer Durand concluded an agreement with Amir Abdul Rehman of Afghanistan fixing the boundary line "from Chitral and Baroghil Pass up to Peshawar, and thence up to Koh-i-Malik Siyah [the junction of Persia, Afghanistan and Pakistan's Balochistan].[12] The Amir also promised not to interfere with the tribes on the British side of the line. In 1899, Nushki was permanently leased and, in 1903, Nasirabad was acquired from Kalat. In the same year, Las Bela was placed under the Political Agent of Kalat.[13] Thus, the British control over Balochistan was firmly established.

Administratively, Balochistan was not granted the status of a province but was divided into British Balochistan and Agencies as follows:

1) British Balochistan included districts obtained by treaty or conquered or obtained on lease from the Khan of Kalat.[14]

2) Balochistan Agency included the native states of Kalat, Las Bela, Kharan and the Tribal Areas of Marris, Bugtis, Mengals and others. The British Political Agent dealt with these states and tribes.[15]

3) In 1887, the Baloch territories of Dera Ismail Khan and Dera Ghazi Khan were taken away from Balochistan and given to NWFP and the Punjab respectively.

---

[11] Its original name was Appozai. Robert Sandeman made it his headquarters and named it Fort Sandeman. On 30 July 1976, Prime Minister of Pakistan Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto changed its name to Zhob.
<http://www.bdd.sdnpk.org/districts/Zhob/Zhob%20background.html>

[12] Accordingly, Wakhan Kafiristan, Asmar, Mohmand of Lalpura, and one portion of Waziristan {Birmal) came under British rule (Caroe, p.381).

13 Gazetteer, op. cit. p. 21.

[14] These comprised Sibi, Duki, Pishin, and Chaman obtained under the Treaty of Gandamak in 1879 and formally declared part of British India in 1887. The "administered areas" of British Balochistan also included Chagai, Loralai (except Duki) and the territories leased from the Khan of Kalat, including Quetta, Bolan, Nushki and Nasirabad.

[15] British Political Agent controlled Kalat. A native official, who resided at Khuzdar, was appointed to assist in respect of Jhalawan. Makran was under the control of a Kalat official known as the Nazim. The rest of Kalat was divided into *niabats* who were Kalat officials. Las Bela and Kharan had become practically independent of the Khan and were administered by the Political Agent of Kalat.

Since centuries, the sardars and rulers of native states have been enjoying autonomy and self-rule. Their authority was further strengthened under the Sandeman system. The sardars provided security to the British and, in return, became more powerful and authoritarian in their respective jurisdiction, for they also received the protection of the British government. British rulers mainly required Balochistan as a buffer zone to stave off incursions from across the border. They were thus not interested in the social or economic uplift of the region and were satisfied to maintain the status quo.

Balochistan did not lag behind any other province in the struggle for Pakistan. The Khan of Kalat, as the head of Balochistan States, extended moral and material support to Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. The tribal elders, as members of *Shahi Jirga*[16] and the members of Quetta Municipality, voted for joining Pakistan in 1947. Later, the princely states of Lasbela, Makran and Kharan acceded to Pakistan. Khan of Kalat, however, aspired for a sovereign status and declared independence. This was not acceptable.[17] This led to the use of security forces in 1948 and Kalat acceded to Pakistan.

Between 1947-1955, the region enjoyed almost the same status as during the colonial period. In 1955, Balochistan, along with all other states and provinces, was merged as One Unit in the integrated province of West Pakistan. The provinces including Balochistan did not like this merger. On 8 September 1958, the Government of Pakistan purchased Gwadar from the Emirate of Oman, which is now being developed into a first-class port.

When the Martial Law of General Muhammad Ayub Khan of October 1958 was declared in Pakistan, it prescribed harsh punishments, and Land Reforms Regulations were issued, laying down ceiling of land holdings in the country. These were resented by sardars, as it would limit their land holding, and curb their freedom and authority. There were intermittent disturbances, lasting from 1959 to 1967. These were initiated by one Mir Nauroz Khan, Nawab of Jallawan, a staunch supporter of Khan of Kalat, who was arrested, followed by Mengals and then by Marris and Bugtis. These disturbances spread over about one-sixth area of Balochistan. Other ethnic groups such as the Pathans did not participate. Generally, demands of the activated Baloch sardars were the release of prisoners, retention of fire arms, restoration of *riwaj*, i.e., their customary law, withdrawal of police and revenue staff and stoppage of work on construction of certain roads, restoration of old privileges of sardars, who should themselves enlist the levies and *jirga* members

---

[16] Assembly of Royal elders.

[17] There were 565 princely states in the Indian Subcontinent and they were given the choice to accede either to India or Pakistan taking into account their geographical location and wishes of their people. Accordingly, Kalat joined Pakistan.

and above all the non-interference by the government in the areas of their jurisdiction.[18]

Balochistan, for the first time, became a full-fledged province after the breakup of One Unit on 1 July 1970.  But no effort was made to bring the internal administration of the province in line with those of other provinces. Most of the province continued to be administered through sardars. Whenever their authority was challenged, the most powerful amongst them, i.e., the tribal chiefs of Marris, Bugtis and Mengals, often resorted to militancy to perpetuate their hold and promote their interests. Except for them and the occasional sectarian conflicts in some areas, including the capital city Quetta, Balochistan has remained peaceful.

## Political Factor

Balochistan's pre-independence status of a Chief Commissioner's province persisted for a quarter of a century after independence. It was in 1970, that Balochistan acquired the status of a full-fledged province, like any other province of Pakistan, with its own Provincial Assembly and representation in the Federation. Its first provincial assembly was elected as a consequence of 1970 General Elections, conducted during the Martial Law government of General Yahya Khan.

During the government of Pakistan Peoples Party, under Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, it was alleged that some Balochi sardars were incited and activated by foreign powers, mainly the Soviet Russia, for insurgency, and arms coming for them from Iraq were captured at Islamabad airport. Soon, a situation of confrontation between the Provincial Government of Balochistan and the Federal Government of Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was developed. Bhutto decided to abolish the sardari system and introduce social and political reforms in the province. The situation had become tense and the government of Balochistan was sacked, resulting in Baloch militancy. In April 1974, while addressing the convention of his Party at Quetta, Prime Minister Zulfiqar Bhutto declared,

> today, with great courage, I announce that legally the Sardari System is being brought to an end. This is the end of the Sardari System. From today, there will be no Sardar in Pakistan. In the whole of Pakistan, the Sardari System is finished; the most tyrannical, the most cruel, the most dishonest System which has been prevalent for centuries, has been brought to an end through this Law.[19]

Although no follow up action was taken to abolish the system, Bhutto, had initiated military action against insurgent sardars in 1973 that

---

[18] A. B. Awan, *Baluchistan: Historical and Political Processes* (London: New Century Publishers 1985), pp. 227-33.

[19] Ibid., pp, 292-3.

continued till 1977. These sardars had left Balochistan and their people and lived 'luxuriously' outside the country.[20] During the government of General Ziaul Haq (1977-88), which followed Bhutto's removal, there was a reversion to the old policy, the armed forces were withdrawn, and peace was restored. Consequently the recalcitrant sardars became more powerful and confident.

Under the alternative governments of Prime Ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, lasting from 1988 till 1999, Balochistan experienced more or less the same political evolution as the rest of the country except that under Benazir, the Balochistan Assembly was dissolved in 1988 but was revived under orders of the High Court. The dissolution of provincial assembly, further added to the resentment against the federal government.

## Social Factor

The current conflict in Balochistan is as much social as it is political. The traditional sardars, in order to keep their tribesmen under their control, are generally not interested in their educational, social and political uplift. Likewise, the government did not pay the required attention to socio-economic development of the province. Ever since country's independence, Balochistan continued to enjoy the culture prevalent during colonial era. Except for the settled areas described as 'A' areas, such as Quetta, Zhob, etc., Sardari System has persisted. Briefly, the system operates as follows.

> The elected Chief holds the power of life and death over the whole of the tribe. There is no appeal against his decisions. He decides all the disputes of the tribe himself; inter-tribal disputes he settles with the help of other tribal Chiefs. He provides his flock with collective security and pursues their grievances with the government or with other tribes. When the aggrieved party approaches him, he provides them with accommodation, food and shelter. His justice is speedy and there is no beating about the bush. His decisions have only one orientation; to provide satisfaction to the aggrieved party. The punishment of the guilty is only secondary. It is the system which the tribesman understands and appreciates. The Sardar has the power to levy taxes, up to any amount. He can send his tribe hurtling into war or retire it in peace, back to their hearths, homes and families. He shares the tribe's sorrows and happiness alike and remains a part of it and at no stage alien. And every year he sends out his men to collect his share of goods and services, cash or kind; livestock, sheep, goats, camels; his share in the crop. In addition, for the trouble he carries in his Sardari, he is entitled to get percentage in the fines imposed in cases, civil or criminal. It is a two way traffic.[21]

---

[20] Abdul Ghafoor Bhurgri, *Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, The Falcon of Pakistan* (Karachi: Szabist 2002), p.8.

[21] Awan, p. 232.

Balochis are a proud people and have good traditions and traits such as honesty, brotherhood and belief in the purity of their system, inherited from their forefathers. They have 'big egos' and would not accept new systems easily.[22] Any attempt to change it, will be resisted. At the same time, the emerging educated class, the return of expatriates, the influence of electronic and print media and increased trade activity and development in the province is bound to change the feudal culture. Already, there have cropped up political parties[23] representing the emerging middle class.

**Economic Factor**

Economically, Balochistan has always remained an underdeveloped region. The reasons are: (1) It is a rain deficit area, the land is arid and most people lead nomadic life, except wherever water is available, there is fruit farming; (2) throughout its history, the region was away from centres of power and thus attracted lesser attention; (3) British, during the period of their supremacy in the subcontinent, were not interested in the economic development of the province. Their interest in Balochistan was restricted to the building of certain roads and railways, which were required for movement of troops to ensure security of the region against possible advance of Russian Empire for reaching the warm waters via Afghanistan and Balochistan; (4) the mineral wealth could not be exploited in the past due to lack of interest and absence of modern technology in the country; (5) whenever and whatever mineral wealth was exploited, such as the discovery of gas in Sui, the people of Balochistan were generally neglected, except for the sardar of the area who received certain benefits; (6) Pakistan's policy to continue with the British colonial system has been in the interest of sardars, but not of the masses. Tribal sardars were receiving subsidies from the government but spending little to improve the quality of life of the people. In fact, it is in their interest to keep their followers illiterate, so that they continue to remain subservient to them and are not in a position to question their authority. (7) The resultant poor representation of the province in the civil and military bureaucracy further increased the economic deprivation resulting in complaints of the upcoming generation of young and educated persons against injustices, meted out to the province; (8) the lack of infrastructure of roads, water, electricity, education, healthcare, etc., adds to their miseries; (9) the distribution of national finances on the basis of

---

[22] Jan Mohammad Jamali, Deputy Chairman Senate and former Chief Minister of Balochistan, international seminar on 'Economic Development for Balochistan: National, Provincial and Regional Dimensions' organized by Balochistan University of Information Technology & Management Sciences (BUITMS) and Hanns Seidel Foundation Islamabad, held at Quetta on 10 May 2006, *Times of Oman* (Muscat), 15 May 2006.

[23] Baloch National Party, Pakistan Muslim League, and Baloch National Party Awami Group, etc.

population (i.e., 5.4 percent) whereas Balochistan happened to be the largest in area (i.e. 43.5 percent); (10) since Pakistan is a developing country and its economy has mostly remained dependent on assistance from international agencies, e.g., World Bank, International Monetary Fund, etc, there have always been complaints for paucity of funds from several quarters including Balochistan; (11) there are well-to-do sardars and their poor followers living under their patronage, but there is no middle class in existence. Certain tribal sardars, instead of demanding development work, jobs, schools, hospitals, roads, water, etc., exploit the illiteracy, poverty and loyalty of their followers and use them against the security forces of the Government which are considered by them as a threat to the continuation of their authority; and (12) yet another reason 'for slow pace of development in Balochistan is non-proper utilization of government funds besides inability of [government] departments.'[24]

Balochistan has, thus, remained the poorest province, with lowest per capita income, as compared to other provinces in Pakistan and this is the main factor for the resentment of the people.

## External Factor

The province is strategically sensitive and has a history of turbulence except for a short interregnum of British rule (1876-1947). Invaders from the west used its strategic mountain passes adjoining Iran and Afghanistan. Both Afghanistan and Iran have historical claims on the region.

It is also an important area being in close proximity to the concentration of oil and gas resources in the Gulf, and mineral resources in the province itself. The liberated Central Asian states, the presence of NATO troops in the landlocked Afghanistan, the US-India bilateral defence and nuclear agreements, the development of events in Iran especially relating to its nuclear technology and consequent concerns of the West, and finally the development of Gwadar Port with Chinese assistance, has enhanced the geo-political and economic importance of Balochistan and for that matter of Pakistan. Gwadar will provide an alternative port to Iran's Chabahar and Bandar Abbas. Gwadar is closer distance-wise to landlocked Afghanistan, certain Central Asian states and southwestern China. It can become the hub of commercial activity for the region. Balochistan's strategic importance is also highlighted because of the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project, worth over US$ 7 billion, which would pass through this region.

In fact, the entire Makran coast provides warm waters to the newly independent but landlocked Central Asian countries. Throughout history, the Makran coast, approximately 800 km long, had significance for commercial and political links between Europe, West Asia and East Africa, on one side

---

[24] Editor's note, *Balochistan Today* (Quetta), February 2006.

and Central Asia, South and East Asia on the other. In the past the merchandise was ivory, spices and other commodities. Currently, the trade is mostly in oil and gas and other agricultural and industrial goods. Makran coast and its ports are of great strategic importance, as they are located at the mouth of the strategic Strait of Hormuz, the bottleneck to the sea-lane from the Gulf, from where bulk of the oil is transported worldwide.

Great powers, such as US, Russia and China, have become increasingly interested in South Asia, which further enhances the strategic importance of the Makran coast and the region. There are strategic interests of neighbours and international players in the region with a view to achieving their own political, strategic or economic objectives.[25] There may, therefore, be no surprise if the "Great Game"[26] of the 19th century is again played in this region.

## Response to Current Situation

In general, the demands of the people relate to the economic underdevelopment, 'empowerment of local population'[27] and greater autonomy of the province. These are aggravated due to a number of contributing factors. For instance, (1) the negligence and indifference of the past federal governments; (2) sardars' apprehensions that the plans to transform all 'B' areas into 'A' areas and the introduction of centralized system of policing and administration would destroy their autonomy long enjoyed by them; (3) non-fulfilment of the desire of sardars and political leaders to have full administrative and financial control of the current development being carried out in the province; (4) Balochi upcoming generation and expatriates, who are educated and enlightened, are resentful of the people from other provinces seeking employment in Balochistan; (5) increasing consciousness about the importance of mineral wealth; (6) the general desire of both the s*ardars* and of the people to have exclusive control of the mineral wealth; (7) realization of the geo-political and strategic importance of the province; and

---

[25] Tariq Saeedi and others, 'Pakistan: Unveiling the Mystery of Balochistan Insurgency' Parts I& II).
http://www.newscentralasia.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1 188 and
http://www.newscentralasia.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1> 189 retrieved on 18 March 2005.

[26] During 19th century, the "Great Game" was played between Tsarist Russia and Victorian England for supremacy in Central Asia. Russia was in pursuit of reaching warm water port in the south and Britain was determined to deny it and Afghanistan was the "chessboard" for the opposing empires. The game ended with the fall of Tsarist Russia in 1917, but may reemerge in the region.

[27] Senator Raza Mohammad Raza of Pakhtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party, cited by Shahzada Raza, 'Seminar Offers Guidelines for Prosperity', *Times of Oman*, (Muscat), 12 May 2006.

(8) lastly, the apprehension that the development in the province would result in the influx of people from other provinces and turn the indigenous population into a minority which is not acceptable to both a commoner or a sardar.

The demands of most of the political parties represented in the Provincial Assembly and forming coalition government in the province[28] are generally in favour of maintaining the status quo and retention of 'B' areas[29] and Levies,[30] so that the traditional rule of sardars is not disturbed. They are against the employment of outsiders in the province, especially in the mega projects launched by the government. They want that all finances, natural wealth and projects should be controlled and managed by the province. They demand that the criteria for allocation of National Finance Award (NFC) by the Federal Government should also include the area and the need for the development of the province and not only population. Nationalist parties[31] are opposing the establishment of cantonments, and are demanding that 'military' action be stopped and Frontier Corps withdrawn. Pakhtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party demands that Pushtoon majority area be separated from Balochistan and merged with the North Western Frontier Province. [32]

## Political Response

The government had appointed a parliamentary committee on 23 September 2004 'to deal with Balochistan and inter-provincial harmony'. The committee was subdivided into two subcommittees – one headed by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed to make appropriate recommendations on the situation in Balochistan and another subcommittee was led by Senator Wasim Sajjad to make recommendations 'to promote inter-provincial harmony and protect rights of provinces, with a view to strengthen the federation.' Since the latter committee has to work on federal-province relations, a very sensitive subject of far reaching importance, it has to take a longer period to finalize its

---

[28] Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal 18 members, National Alliance 7 members, Balochistan National (Party (Mengal) 2 members, Pakhtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party 5 members, independents 7 members (Milli Awami Party and six independents joined Muslim League (Quaid-i-Azam) making a total of 11 members and they along with Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal have formed coalition government in the province. *Jang* (Rawalpindi), Sunday Magazine, 8-14 January 2006.

[29] Since British rule and till recently, except for Quetta, the rest of Balochistan was governed according to their established *riwaj* (customs) under the overall control of the respective sardars.

[30] It is a militia maintained by the sardars, whose salary is paid by the government through sardars.

[31] Such as Jamhoori Watan Party of Sardar Akbar Bugti, Baloch National Movement of Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri and Pakistan Oppressed Nations Movement of Sardar Attaullah Mengal.

[32] *The Nation* (Lahore) 14 February 2006.

recommendations. The former subcommittee appointed 'to examine the current situation in Balochistan and make recommendations thereon'; heard the views of the relevant ministries, departments, authorities and main political parties[33] of the province during October 2004 – January 2005 and has submitted its report.[34] Its main recommendations relate to  (1) the approval of a formula regarding Royalty, Gas and Development Surcharge; (2) the job quota of 5.4 percent in the Federal Government under the Constitution for Balochistan to be  strictly implemented; (3) Head Office of Gwadar Port Authority should be shifted from Karachi to Gwadar and preference for employment is to be  given to local youths. (4) construction of highways linking Balochistan with other provinces of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran be expedited; (5) an effective anti-drought strategy should be developed to alleviate water shortage; and (6) distribution of Funds between Federation and Federating Units (National Finance Commission Award) should be announced giving due consideration to the just viewpoint of the people of Balochistan. The recommendations should be given serious consideration and appropriate actions taken as soon as possible. President Musharraf has already asked the Prime Minister to expedite work on the recommendations.[35]   Mushahid Hussain has expressed reservations about the non-implementation of the report and said that even if 15 percent of the recommendations had been implemented, the situation in Balochistan would have been different.[36] There should, therefore, be no undue delay in implementation.

Similarly, the subcommittee, led by Senator Waseem Sajjad should arrive at some conclusion in the best interest of Pakistan. It needs to be pointed out that, unlike United States of America, powers to the federating units were transferred by the central government and not vice versa. The Constitution of Pakistan, like Indian Constitution, provides for a quasi-federal structure where, although there are two sets of governments, federal government enjoys overriding authority. There is however a need that the provincial government should be excessively involved in provincial affairs. It is also necessary to increase the stake of the province of Balochistan in the Federation through various economic measures and their increased participation in the Federal Administration.

*Social Response*

Sardari system, entrenched since centuries and strengthened by Sandeman, could not be terminated overnight but it could not be allowed to perpetuate

---

[33] For example, Pukhtun Khaw Milli Awami Party, Mutahidda Majlis-e-Amal, National Party, Jamhoori Watan Party, and Four Party Baloch Alliance, *The Nation* (Lahore), 14 February 2006.

[34] *The Nation* (Lahore), 14 February 2006.

[35] *Dawn* (Islamabad), 3 March 2006.

[36] Ibid.

indefinitely. It is not in the interest of the masses. Unfortunately, the system is persisting owing to illiteracy, economic backwardness and feudal dominated governance. Various governments in Pakistan thought it convenient to maintain the status quo. Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto announced its abolition but could not implement it.[37]

If Pakistan has to progress in the competitive world of twenty-first century and follow the internationally accepted norms, the human development index has to be raised and the masses are to be given basic necessities of life, i.e. education, healthcare, jobs, etc. Balochistan cannot be kept away from the national and international influences in a world that has become a global village; expatriates are returning from abroad with an international outlook; and there is explosion of knowledge through media. It seems that the social and economic development in the province will create and strengthen a middle class, which will be the rivals of feudal leaders. There should, therefore, be a conscious effort to eliminate feudalism and sardari system through sustained efforts and solid economic development and reforms.  In course of time, the archaic feudal order will be replaced by a modern egalitarian society. If the citizens have basic necessities of life and are provided with equal opportunities for education, health care and employment, the status quo will be changed. The sooner it is done, the better for the people of Balochistan.

*Economic Response*

The Federal Government seems interested to develop Balochistan and about 140 billion rupees have been allocated to the province during the current financial year. Dozens of major and minor projects relating to preservation of water resources, water supply schemes, health, education, and energy and communication sectors have been sanctioned. Saindak project, Mirani and a number of other small dams, extension of Kirthar and Kachchi canal, etc. are being undertaken. . Besides, the mineral wealth of the province is being developed.[38]

The development of rail, road and sea communication originating from Gwadar in all directions is expected to generate tremendous economic activities in the areas, so far neglected.   For instance, the Makran Coastal Highway (653 km long) along the Makran Coast starting form Sheikh Raj, approximately 105 km north of Karachi on RCD Highway is ending at Gabd near Pak-Iran border. This highway links the ports at Ormara, Pasni, Gwadar and Jiwani with Karachi. It facilitates trade between Pakistan and Iran. The

---

[37] Awan, pp, 292-3.

[38] Recently, it is discovered that Rekodig mining area has estimated reserves of two billion tons of copper and 20 million ounces of gold  by an Australian firm. *Dawn* (Islamabad), 14 April 2006.

fishermen along the coast benefit because fish is sent to Karachi by road for marketing. In the past, about 30% fish was spoiled, at a loss of Rs.300 million per year as the journey by road to Karachi took two to three days from Jiwani and Gwadar. The new highway reduces the time considerably from the coastal towns to the bigger markets, hence better return to fishermen and a saving of millions of rupees every year. Another regional linkage is the Gwadar-Ratto Dero motorway (M-8) joining it with Indus Highway through Turbat, Awaran and Khuzdar. Apart from highways, a rail link is planned to connect Gwadar to Quetta and onwards. The existing length of runway at Gwadar airport is being upgraded and a modern international airport will be constructed. This network will usher in new avenues of livelihood for the people of the province in the form of jobs, communication, transportation and market access, etc.

In any case, the most prestigious project is the ongoing construction of Gwadar Port. Gwadar Port, located at the entrance of the Gulf, provides the shortest and cost-effective access to the landlocked Afghanistan, Central Asian states and southwestern China. This is likely to result in enormous economic benefits to Pakistan in general and the people of Balochistan in particular. Besides Gwadar, there are a number of other ports on the Makran coast of Balochistan, such as Ormara, Pasni, Gwadar and Jiwani ports, which need to be developed.

In addition, industries like shrimp farming, tuna farming, and desalination plants, etc. can be built. Foreign investors and companies can be encouraged to invest. In short, development activities must continue and be enhanced for the betterment of the common man. As far as possible, local population should be involved, accommodated and empowered, as they would be the main beneficiaries. This would also ensure sustained development of the province.

*Response to Internal and External Security*
According to Owais Ghani, Governor of Balochistan, the total area affected by the current conflict is 1.5 percent and the population affected is 1.3 percent and it is mostly restricted to Dera Bugti.[39]  Nevertheless, there is a security problem in the province, both internal and external. Internally, the militants are targeting gas pipelines, railway lines, electric transmitters, oil and gas exploration activities and other development projects. These militants also call themselves Balochistan National Army (BLA) and it is not clear who is heading this organization.[40] Perhaps the BLA is now concentrated in the hands

---

[39] Shahzad Raza, 'we want Balochistan to be new economic frontier: Governor', *Times of Oman*, 15 May 2006.

[40] According to one report, Russian KGB had created the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) to exploit the sentiments of member Baloch Students Organization

of recalcitrant sardars. Their main objective seems to be the Balochis' right of independence and use of sabotage activities as a tool to achieve their political ends. Their claim to represent the people of Balochistan is largely a hoax as they have little representation in the Provincial Assembly and that there were no worthwhile demonstrations or protests in their favour by the general public. The government has declared BLA as a terrorist organization.

Though the violence and sabotage activities may have political and economic undertones, it raises several questions. From where these bombs, rockets and other military hardware, used by the militants, are acquired and who are keeping these illegal weapons? Who gives them permission to fire these and kill innocent people, security personnel and destroy national and public assets? In short, who are the saboteurs and miscreants? Who are at the back of the so-called BLA, which claims the responsibility for using the violent means? In any case, the proper course for the aggrieved individuals and groups should be to refer their grievances to the appropriate authorities, their elected representatives and the Provincial Government instead of resorting to sabotage and illegal use of force, which is likely to be counter-productive.

President Pervez Musharraf had already offered for talks with militant tribal leaders, provided they surrender and disarm their local militias, lay down their arms, and stop hampering oil and gas exploration activities and development projects in the province.[41] No state can allow a state within a state. The interest of Pakistan and the people of Balochistan take precedence over the interest of a few militant sardars.

Externally, during the period of Cold War, the Soviet Union was interested in Balochistan and its intelligence agency, KGB (Committee for State Security) was active there. It was arming the tribes for insurgency against the state. It is not without reason that India is progressively investing in Afghanistan and is said to have increased 'discretionary grant' several hundred times of Indian consulates established close to the borders of Pakistan. India is the only country in the world, which has officially expressed its concern over the situation in Pakistan's Balochistan. It has termed Pakistan's security forces action against saboteurs of public and private life and property as "heavy military action". Pakistan immediately dismissed Indian concern as "unwarranted and baseless".[42] It is understood that during Afghan President's visit to Pakistan in February 2005, President Musharraf provided him with evidence of Indian Intelligence Agency Research and Analysis Wing's (RAW's)

against the federal government. See Shahzad Shah, 'Backtracking on banning BLA', Weekly *Pulse* (Islamabad), 21-22 April 2006, p.6.

[41] 'Disarming of militias needed for peace: President denies army action', *Dawn* (Islamabad), 4 February 2006.

[42] *Dawn* (Islamabad), 28 December 2005.

involvement in militant and terrorist activities in Balochistan.[43] The foreign interests that are either against the progress of Pakistan or are desirous of establishing their supremacy in the region are directly or indirectly connected with the terrorist's acts. This is indicated by the fact that on the eve of the visit of the President of Pakistan to China, three Chinese Engineers working for the development of the province were killed[44] Similarly, a day before the visit of US President George W. Bush to Pakistan, a US diplomat was killed on 2 March 2006 in Karachi.3333[45] These terrorist acts are obviously undertaken to harm the interest of Pakistan.

Since there cannot be development without peace, violence and militancy must stop. The criminals should be dealt with and punished according to law. Already, to maintain law and order, the Frontier Corps and the Police are dealing with the saboteurs and militants. The government seems to be trying to squeeze the sources of militant militias, in terms of both finances and weapons, internal as well as external. Earlier, the government had got the coalmines vacated, which were forcibly occupied by some militant sardars, and returned to their rightful owners. The government is bringing back thousands of Kalpar and Masuri tribesmen who were persecuted by the sardars and were compelled to abandon their ancestral homes. Thus, the changed demography in Dera Bugti may weaken militant elements and bring peace to the area.

The government may consider to do away with the existing system of payment to the tribesmen employed in installations or as levies through their sardars, and pay them directly. Thus, the tribal areas would be brought at par with the settled areas of the province and the armed men will develop loyalty to the state instead of sardars. This will require that all 28 districts of the Province be converted into "A" areas and civil police stationed. In strategic areas, besides civil police, military cantonments need to be built, as is the case in other provinces. It seems that some districts are being converted into 'A' areas and a cantonment is being built in Sui and other cantonments may come up in Gwadar and Kohlu.

---

[43] *The News* (Islamabad), 22 February 2005.

[44] During last two years seven Chinese Engineers were killed. A bomb blast killed three individuals in Gwadar in May 2004. In October the same year, two Chinese were abducted and in a rescue operation one of them was killed. On 15 February 2006, three Chinese working in a cement factory in Hub (a town in Balochistan) were shot dead. Balochistan Home Minister Mir Shoaib Ahmed Nausherwani said that 'all evidence so far collected by investigators leads towards Afghanistan' (*Dawn* (Islamabad), 27 April 2006). General Mirza Aslam Beg, former Chief of the Army Staff, has categorically accused India of establishing training camps in Jalalabad and Kandhar which were being run under its consulates and trained "terrorists were responsible for acts of terrorism in Balochistan' (*Dawn* (Islamabad), 30 April 2006).

[45] *The News International* (Islamabad), 3 March 2006.

In short, while security and law and order is ensured, simultaneous economic development and political approach and dialogue must continue, as it is the best option. The support of elected representatives and moderate elements, which may include law-abiding sardars of major tribes, leaders of political parties and members of intelligentsia, should be enlisted. In any case, the administrative reforms for good governance are needed for the benefit of the people. To eliminate the external factor, the best alternative is to put own house in order. Internal harmony and strength is to be achieved by a constitutional government established through a democratic process, rule of law and dispensation of justice, economic development and prosperity, abolition of feudalism and empowerment of the people, adequate military strength and proactive foreign policy. This will deter external powers from exploiting internal grievances and interfering in the internal affairs.

## Conclusion

Whenever there is a change in the status quo, there is an opposition from those vested interests, who are likely to be adversely affected. Interested external forces normally tend to exploit the internal dissensions. In any case, peace and security is vital for the development of the province and welfare of the people. The representatives of the people, law-abiding sardars, elder statesmen and the intelligentsia need to be taken on board and a wide range of common people should be involved. The educated Marris, Mengals and Bugtis can match the influence of their traditional tribal chiefs. The government can also talk to the insurgent sardars and acquire their loyalty, if they are prepared to live as peaceful citizens. Any foreign help to militants can be denied through a meaningful engagement with the neighbouring countries.

The government seems to have correctly adopted a two-pronged approach to deal with the present situation in the province, i.e., to seriously address the political, economic and social concerns of the people, and to use security forces in areas where there are armed insurgent elements. The Constitution of Pakistan does not allow the prevalent sardari system, maintenance of private armies or militias. These need to be disarmed and abolished. Similarly, the acts of sabotage or damage to public or private life and property cannot be permitted. No person can be allowed to take law into his own hands. The disturbed areas should be given 'A' status on priority. The unlawful activities should be effectively dealt with primarily by the civil armed forces, which need to be strengthened. However, if, in an emergency, the local or provincial authorities are unable to control violent disturbances with the help of civil armed forces, and request for help from the federal government, the armed forces can act in aid of civil power, as stipulated under article 245 of the Constitution of Pakistan.

Sustained and solid economic development on a very large scale, should be expedited. The allocation of vast development funds, if used judiciously and effectively, will gradually improve the quality of life of the masses, though this may take some time. People should have basic necessities of life and be provided with equal opportunities for education, health care and employment. In addition, the local issues cannot be separated from the larger issues of centre-province relations and the system of government and institutions in the country. Similarly, the economic, social, political and administrative issues are interlinked and should not be looked at in isolation from each other. What is required and should be ensured is that actions taken to meet the changing dynamics in Balochistan should be well considered and within the parameters of the law of the land. Although Balochistan has not been given the attention that it deserved in the past, there seems no doubt that under the new thrust and orientation of national policies, Balochistan is set for a              change              for              the              better.■

# CONCEPTUALISING ISLAMIC STRATEGY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

## Dr Muhammad Ahsan[*]

## Introduction

*A*healthy and secure environment is the key to sustaining human life on the earth. Environment protection is the core of sustainable development, and is the base of the overall process of the development of humankind. According to Muslim belief, Islam is a complete code of life, which means that it provides guidance to its followers in every aspect of daily life activities. The essence of Islamic teachings is the attainment of development for humankind. What is the Islamic approach to development for the present and future generations, and in the context of environment protection, how can this objective be achieved? With its main focus on the sustainable development, this short piece of research is an effort to analyse various dimensions of environment protection within the context of the possible role of religion.

## What is Sustainable Development?

With reference to the following discussion, it is appropriate to present a few definitions of sustainable development and explore various aspects of this process. Sustainable development can be defined as the 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.[1] In its yearly *World Development Report 2003*, the World Bank argues[2]: 'Sustainable development is about enhancing human well-being through time. … And so is appreciating the natural environment – breathing fresh air, drinking clean water, living among an abundance of plant and animal varieties, and not irrevocably undermining the natural process that produce and renew these features.'

According to the Forum for the Future (2000): 'Sustainable development is a dynamic process which enables all people to realise their potential, and to improve their quality of life, in ways which simultaneously protect and enhance the earth's life support system.' The British government emphasises the four main elements of sustainable development, i.e., i) social

---

[*] Dr Mohammad Ashan is a UK-based research analyst.
[1] E Lawrence, Andrew R.W & Julie M. J. *Longman Dictionary of Environmental Science*, (Harlow: Longman, 1998), p. 406.
[2] World Bank, *World Development Report 2003*
<http://www. dynamicsustainabledevelopment.org/…>, 19 February 2005.

progress which recognises the needs of everyone, ii) effective protection of the environment, iii) prudent use of natural resources, and, iv) maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment[3]. Hossain[4] highlights the long-term vision of sustainable development. In his view, 'a sustainable society implicitly connotes one that is based on a long-term vision in that it must foresee the consequences of its diverse activities to ensure that they do not break the cycle of renewal; it has to be a society of conservation and generational concern.' The Commonwealth[5] stresses the need for sound policies to meet the challenges of the contemporary process of globalisation. It argues that: 'Sustainable development requires the creative integration of economic, social and environmental goals inside policies. This is vital in the response to the challenges of globalisation, which arises from the increasing interconnectedness and interdependence between nations and people.'

## Environment and Sustainable Living

The word 'environment' of which a single world synonym is 'surroundings', represents all conditions, circumstances and influences affecting the development of an organism. It particularly includes every living and non-living thing found on our planet, the former comprising human beings, animals and plants, and the latter, soil, water, light, climate temperature and pressure[6]. *Larousse Dictionary of Science and Technology*[7] defines the environment as all physical and chemical factors affecting the quality of life. The environment holds a central position in most of the discussions of development strategies in the contemporary globalised world. This is why deteriorating environment is adversely affecting human lives and is a potential danger for future generations. For this reason, the basic question of human survival on an environmentally fragile planet, has gained urgency.

It needs to be mentioned here that sustainable living is the prerequisite for environment protection and sustainable development. Sustainable living is, in fact, 'an approach to social and economic, indeed, all activities, for all societies, rich and poor, which is compatible with the preservation of the environment. It is based on a philosophy of interdependence, of respect for life as well as non-living parts of nature, and of

---

[3] *Forum for the Future: Annual Report 2000* <http://www. sustainable-development. gov. uk/…>, 6 February 2005.

[4] K. Hossain, , 'Evolving Principles of Sustainable Development and Good Governance', in K. Ginther, E. Denters,  P.J.I.M. de Waart (Eds), *Sustainable Development and Good Governance*. Norwell: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995), p. 26-38.

[5] Foreign and Commonwealth Office *Sustainable Development and Globalisation,* <http://www.fco.uk/…>, 06 February 2005

[6] S.K. Khanzada, 'Trees in Combating Industrial Pollution in Environment', in M.I. Sahhid (ed), *Contemporary Affairs,* (Lahore: Caravan Enterprises, 1998), p.154.

responsibility for future generations. There is no single path towards a sustainable future – quite the contrary. Each person, community, ethnic or religious group, region, country, or culture should search for its own unique approach based on historical roots, technologies, population dynamics and specific natural conditions'.[8]

In 1994, the United Nations Development Programme[9] () presented the concept of human security. The environmental security is an important component of this concept. It can be argued that the concept of human security is itself an important component of the broader concept of sustainable development. A careful consideration of this approach reflects that environment security encompasses education and training, better health and nutrition, elimination of hunger, fewer child deaths and equal chances of progress for everyone, as these are the universally accepted principles. Therefore, in this context, it can safely be argued that sustainable living is primarily based on human and environment security which leads to the wellbeing of present and futures generations. This discussion also reflects that the concept of sustainable development is much broader than the conventional theories of economic growth or human resource development. Economic growth models deal mainly with the enhancement of per capita income, while the approach to human resources development treats human beings primarily as an input in the production process – a means rather than an end. However, in contrast, sustainable development brings together humankind and nature. It also indicates that: i) the betterment of human life of present and future generations is the centre of this process, ii) daily life activities should be in harmony with nature, iii) sustainable development means more than environmentally sound, and, iv) the achievement of sustainability requires a strategic approach at local, national and global levels.[10]

---

[7]  *Larousse Dictionary of Science and Technology*, (New York: Larousse, 1997), p. 387.

[8]  Sustainable Development Network Sustainable Development Network, 02 March 2005, <http://www. sustainableliving. org/…>

[9]  United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2004*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 28-30.

[10]  S. Owens & P.L Owens, *Environment, Resources and Conservation*, (Cambridge: University Press, Cambridge. 1991), Grubb. M. *et. al.* (1993), *The Earth Summit Agreements*, Earth Scan Publications, London; J. Robertson, *The New Economics of Sustainable Development: A Briefing for Policy Makers*, European Communities, Luxembourg 1999; W.M: Lafferty, , Meadowcroft, J. (eds) (2000) *Implementing Sustainable Development: Strategies and Initiatives in High Consumption Societies*, (New York: Oxford University Press,: C. Park, *The Environment: Principles and Applications*, London: Routledge, 2001; Pakistan, Government of *World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg 26 August – 4$^{th}$ September, 2002): Pakistan Country Assessment Report*, (Islamabad, July 2002), J. *Our* Walker, *World: Religion and Environment,* (London: Hodder Headline, 2003).

## Islamic Approach to Sustainable Development and Environment

In Islamic philosophy, air, vegetation, water, the ecosystem and agriculture etc., had their beginnings with the creation of this universe which was created by God for the sustenance of humankind. The Prophet Adam (PBUH) and his wife Eve (PBUH) were the first persons to start their life on earth. After their arrival on earth, they naturally stood in need of food. Accordingly, Adam (PBUH) started farming inline with the Divine command as well as acting on his own understanding. When Adam (PBUH) needed pots for storing food, Eve (PBUH) adopted stones for this purpose. With the passage of time, Adam and Eve (PBUT) gained extensive experience and skills in farming and managing their livelihood. Their conduct was scientific, and their approach to life and development was sustainable and environment friendly. It is narrated that Adam (PBUH) revealed that the best soil is the blackish one (i.e., rich with organic matters) with a capacity for absorbing water in such a way that it does not swamp. Since this soil is marked with the best properties, and if managed optimally it is ideally suited for cultivation and is thus in-line with the principles of sustainable development.[11] An in-depth study of Islamic literature and the philosophy of the life histories as well as the teachings of various prophets, reveals that the divine process of sustainable development and environment friendly strategy, continued in the post-Adam (PBUH) era.[12]

How is sustainable development viewed in Islam? 'The Arabic world *Islam* simply means "submission" and is derived from a word meaning peace.[13] According to Muslim belief, 'Islam is a complete code of life.[14] In the words of Imam.[15] 'This is because there is no aspect of life, such as religion, economy, politics, education, health etc., for which it does not provide guidance.' In the Islamic system, sustainable development is a purposeful activity aiming at: i) economic development with a fair distribution of benefits, ii) a fair distribution that should bring positive change in society, in order that, iii) both these activities of materialistic development should be compatible with the environment which is a gift from God, and, iv) this process of development should be supportive to the spiritual development and satisfaction of humankind.[16] It is due to this reason, that in Islamic philosophy, the main

[11] M. Ahsan, *Muslim Heritage and the 21ˢᵗ Century*, (London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 2002) pp. 28-47.

[12] A. Al-Mas'ari *Islam: Theory and Practice*, (New York: Muslim Culture and Community Centre, 2001), pp. 147-163.

[13] Washington: Embassy of Saudi Arabia, *Understanding Islam and Muslims*, Islamic Text Society, Cambridge, 1989, p. 3.

[14] G. Sarwar, *Islam: Belief and Teachings*, (London: The Muslim Educational Trust, 1994), pp. 173-180.

[15] Y.O. Imam, 'Islamic Health Care Services in the Contemporary World', *The Islamic Quarterly*, XXXIX (4), 1995, pp. 234-244.

[16] M.A. Mannan, *Economic Development and Social Peace in Islam*, (London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 1989), pp. 17-18.

emphasis is on the fact that human beings are composed of soul and body and thus development is required in both these aspects.[17]

In the Islamic system the 'Quran is a primary source of knowledge for Muslims'.[18] 'One of the basic and most important characteristics regarding social economy and the economic system upon which the Quran repeatedly lays stress is that all means and resources through which human beings earn their livelihood are divinely created.[19] Thus, it is the obligation of human beings that along with the exploitation of divine resources, they should also ensure the security and development of these resources so that the spectrum of their benefits may be widened and extended to coming generations. In the Islamic philosophy, the fulfilment of this obligation is essential for the sustainability of human security. As mentioned earlier, in 1994, UNDP presented the concept of human security. It says: 'For too long, the concept of security has been shaped by the potential for conflict between states. For too long, security has been equated with the threats to a country's borders. For too long, nations have sought arms to protect their security. For most people today, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily life than from the dread of a cataclysmic world event. Job security, income security, health security, environmental security, security from crime – these are the emerging concerns of human security all over the world'[20] UNDP (1994, p. 22). It further argues that 'human security is easier to ensure through early prevention rather than later intervention. It is less costly to meet these threats upstream than downstream.'

It may be mentioned here that UNDP's approach to human security, as well as the Kyoto Protocol[21] are compatible with the Islamic approach to sustainable development. However, the only difference is that in the former the main emphasis is on the social well-being of humankind while in the latter, the focus is on both materialistic and spiritual development.[22] It goes without saying that education is at the heart of any development activity and politico-economic or socio-religious system. The same is also true for the Islamic approach to deal with the issues related to environment and sustainable development. Although, in the contemporary Muslim World, there are

---

[17] N. Erfan, & Valie, Z.A. (eds), *Education and the Muslim World: Challenges & Response – Recommendations of the Four World Conferences on Islamic Education*, (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1995).

[18] A. Samad *Iqbal's Concept of State with Special Reference to Emergence of Pakistan*, (Niigata: International University of Japan, 1992), p. 335.

[19] Quran, 2:117, 7:54, 71:16, 23:18.

[20] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1994*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 3 & p. 22.

[21] *Kyoto Protocol: Background,* 03 March 2005, <http://www.envocare.co.uk/…>.

[22] M. Ahsan, 'The Twenty-first Century and Human Development in the Muslim World: A Multi-dimensional Approach with Particular Reference to Education', *Muslim Education Quarterly*, 16 (3), 1999, pp. 4-23.

numerous religious educational institutions, it remains to be seen whether or not they play a role in dealing with environmental problems.

## The Islamic Strategy for Environment Protection

It need not be emphasised that the environment is a collective as well as an individual issue and thus efforts are needed at both levels. It requires adoption of the principle that an individual should want the same for others as he/she wants for him/herself. This is considered to be the common denominator in all the major religions of the world. For instance, Judaism says: 'What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man; that is the entire law; all the rest is commentary.' In Christianity: 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.' Similarly in Islam: 'No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.'[23] This principle also needs to be applied to the environment and sustainable development in the context that if one expects from others to protect the environment, he/she also has the same responsibility.

The Islamic strategy being central to life, plants, trees and agriculture are extensively covered in both the Quran and the Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) teachings. It emerges from the Quranic account that the human being had its beginning in an environment full of vegetation, and the first knowledge given to him was also related to a plant.[24] Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said: 'If a Muslim plants a tree or does farming, he will be rewarded for his act, whether someone eats of it or steals it, be it an animal or bird, the planter will be rewarded, in any case'.[25] It may to be mentioned here that Prophetic teachings with regard to plants and other related aspects were not mere directives. He paid full attention to the practical aspects, too. He led to the setting up of a well-developed irrigation system. However, the objectives of this system were not limited to irrigation only; soil conservation, range management and horticulture were also components of this strategy which ultimately enhanced the overall productivity and sustainability of land. Such practices continued during Muslim medieval times and were one of the main reasons for prosperity and development during that age.[26] This fact is also

[23] M. Ahsan & R.. Najmudin, 'Community Cohesion in Multi-faith Worcestershire', A paper presented in *The Regional Conference on Community Cohesion and the Public Duty*. Worcestershire (Worcester: Racial Equality Council and The University College Worcester, 15th June 2004).

[24] Ahsan, 2002, op. cit. pp. 28-47.

[25] *Sahih Bukhari* and *Muslim*, cited in M. Ahsan,. (2002) *op. cit.*, pp. 28-47

[26] Hobson revealed that 'one of the most striking manifestations of Islamic agricultural skill was the transformation of the barren valley of pre-Islamic Spain into a paradise of grapes, grain and fruit trees by the introduction of a whole set of plants from the eastern Muslim World, together with appropriate techniques of irrigation and cultivation from the same areas. The gardens of Cordoba flourished under Muslim rule with almost tropical luxuries. By contrast, after the expulsion of the Moors

recognised by Bolens, a leading authority on history and civilisation. In one of her articles, published in an encyclopaedia, she argues that medieval Muslims lived in harmony with the environment and due to their deep love for nature; they maintained an ecological balance.[27]

This discussion reflects Islamic philosophy, in that environmental security is the precondition for strengthening the process of sustainable development. Therefore, in the Muslim World, the role of religion cannot be bypassed in this process. Another important point is that according to Muslim belief, everything is created by God and the human being is a very special creature in the universe. In Islam, Muslims are bound to total submission to God and this submission is the only way to their future security. Security within a person, security between people and the security between people and the nature, are all equally important. In the Quranic context[28] God is the ultimate owner of everything and His creatures should follow the rules fixed by Him. This commandment is based on the first verse of the Quran which highlights the basic Islamic code that this universe is the family of God. There are three fundamental principles of this religion: *tawhid*, *khalafah* and *akhirah*. *Tawhid* is the central concept of Islam which means 'oneness of God'. The characteristic of 'oneness' or unity is also reflected in all creatures of the universe, including vegetation, wildlife and environment. This unity maintains harmony in nature.[29] This fact is also supported by James Lovelock[30] who argues that the Earth and all living things are part of one great organism.

Being the special creature of God, the human being is appointed as His trustee or vicegerent on earth. Thus, God is the master and the trustee is a vicegerent. In the Arabic language, this vicegerentship is called *khalafah* and the vicegerent is *khalifah*. The primary duty of the *khalifah* is to oversee the trust. With regard to the use or abuse of trust, the *khalifah* is answerable to his master.[31] The other most important concept of Islam is accountability by God, particularly at the time of 'the day of judgement.' In Islamic terminology, this

---

from Spain, the gardens withered away, the fertile valleys grew barren again and so little profit was taken from the rich Andalusian soil that crown-lands of Granada were sold off because simply maintaining them cost more than the Spaniards could make them yield.', Hobson, I. (1998) 'Principles into Practice: Islamic Tradition', in H.A. Haleem, (Ed), *Islam and the Environment*, (London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 1998), pp. 90-102.

[27] L. Bolens, Agriculture', in S. Helaina, (ed), *Encyclopaedia of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine in Non-Western Cultures*, (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), pp. 20-22.

[28] Quran, 1:1, 20:6.

[29] A.O. Naseef, (1998) 'The Muslim Declaration on Nature', in H.A. Haleem, (ed), op. cit. pp. 12-15.

[30] J. Lovelock, *The Ages of Gaia: A Biography of Our Living Earth,* (Oxford: University Press, 2004).

[31] Quran, 6:165, 7:180, 17:70.

is called *akhirah*. Therefore, a human being is accountable for all his/her actions, whether these are personal, social or environmental.[32] For this reason, the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) said that: 'The world is a green and pleasant thing. God has left you in-charge of it and looks at how you behave'[33]

The philosophy of the concepts of *tawhid*, *khalafah* and *akhirah*, also reflects the environmental code of conduct in Islam.[34] As mentioned earlier, the *khalifah* is bound to obey God's rule and is responsible for the protection of His (God's) property, e.g., the environment. Otherwise, he/she violates the concept of *tawhid* and will be questioned in the *akhirah*. With reference to the context, it can safely be argued that the Islamic approach to environment protection is closely associated with the religious concepts of *qena'at* and *tahoor*. *Qena'at* means to optimise 'human needs' which is a prerequisite to minimising 'human greed.' *Tahoor* is a broader term, encircling spiritual and physical cleanliness and purity including the environment. The combined application of *qena'at* and *tahoor* means: human development, production of less waste, cleaner environment, more sustainable development and resultantly, fewer problems in the 'present' as well as in the 'future'. The Quran[35] highlights the fact that it is people who create environmental problems on land and in the sea. It was the impact of the Islamic teachings due to which during medieval Muslim times, laws were made to protect soil erosion, deforestation, over-grazing, safeguard water resources and fixed limits to curb uncontrolled expansion of cities.[36] The questions which need to be asked are whether these teachings are part of the curricula of the educational system in Muslim states and do contemporary Muslims act upon these teachings? The following discussion attempts to provide answers.

## State of the Environment in Pakistan

With respect to its population, geo-strategic situation and ecology, Pakistan is one of the most important countries in Asia and thus can also be presented as

---

[32] F. Khalid, 'Islam, Ecology and the World Order', in H.A. Haleem (ed), *op. cit.*, 1998, pp. 16-31.

[33] *Sahih Muslim Bi-Sharah An-Nawawi,* (Cairo: Dar Al-Ghad Al-Arabi, (Vol. VIII), 1987), p. 78.

[34] In Islamic history, many of the responsibilities of environmental protection and conservation have come under the jurisdiction of the office of the *hisbah*, a governmental agency which was responsible for the establishment of good and eradication of evils. The *muhtasib*, who headed this office, was required to be a jurist thoroughly familiar with the rulings of Islamic law which pertained to his position. In addition to performing various other duties, he was also responsible for the inspection of markets, roads, buildings, watercourses, sanitation, waste disposal, pollution and treatment to animals.

[35] Quran, 30:41.

[36] M. Ahsan, 'Land Management System of Medieval Muslims', in J. Ahmad (ed) *Kisht-i-Nao.*, (Faisalabad: University of Agriculture, 1986), pp. 211-224

an excellent example with regard to the state of the environment in the Muslim World. According to SUPARCO (2005),[37] there are five major causes of air pollution in Pakistan, i.e.: i) rapid urbanisation, ii) growing energy needs, iii) uncontrolled industrial growth, iv) increase in traffic, and, v) indiscriminate refuse burning. An official document of the Government of Pakistan reveals that increased population, uncontrolled urbanisation and industrialisation have placed immense stress on the quality of air and water resources in the country. For this reason the air pollution levels in Pakistan's most populated cities are among the highest in the world and are still climbing, causing serious health hazards. The same is also true for water where its per capita availability has decreased to nearly one sixth during the second half of the 20th century. Apart from the quantity, the quality of groundwater has also hugely declined. Therefore, according to the WHO standard, the ground water of most of the cities in Pakistan is unfit for drinking. This situation is more alarming in Lahore where even 700-ft deep water is unsuitable for drinking.[38]   In       this modern age there are various threats to the environment. In one of its reports, the UNDP[39] argued that: 'Despite widespread public support for environmental action, the driving forces of globalisation still put profit before environmental protection, preservation and stability.' It was estimated that in Pakistan, the annual cost of environmental degradation was US$ 4.3 billion more than half of the export earnings of the country.[40] It is noteworthy that human health is the major victim of environmental degradation. According to the Asian Development Bank's[41] estimates, out of five selected Asian countries (i.e., China, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines and Thailand), the losses in human health were the highest in Pakistan. Needless to say, the losses in human health multiply the effects in other sectors of the economy which slow-down the overall sustainable development process. Thus this situation threatens national stability and the security of future generations. It also displaces people to make them environmental refugee.

Furthermore, in Pakistan, the rapid growth in population and indiscriminate use of limited national resources has led to environmental degradation. It is estimated that the country generates over 50,000 tons of solid waste per day; out of which less than a quarter is collected but not managed in the proper manner, thus causing serious air, water and land

[37] Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), Pakistan, *SUPARCO: 20 Years in Environment,* 28 February 2005 <http://www. environment. gov.pk/…>.

[38] Government of Pakistan, 12 February 2004, <http://www.finance.org.pk/…>.

[39] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1999*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 104.

[40] S.R. Khan, *Reforming Pakistan's Political Economy*, (Lahore: Vanguard, 2003), p. 198.

[41] Asian Development Bank, *Emerging Asia – Changes and Challenges*, (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 2002), p. 67.

pollution and health hazards. Only three percent of industry treats its waste, while the rest discharges untreated effluent into rivers, lakes and the sea. The dumping of untreated municipal, industrial and hospital waste has caused contamination of air, land and ground water sources and poses a threat to aquatic life. Around 40 percent of the population is still without access to safe drinking water and nearly 84 percent of the rural population is without sanitation facilities. Waterborne diseases account for 25 percent of all hospital cases and about 60 percent of infant deaths in the country.[42] According to the Federal Minister for the Environment, the major causes of environmental damage are mismanagement of municipal and solid waste, urban air and water pollution, cultivable and range-land degradation and deforestation which is totally against the philosophy of Islamic sustainable development.[43] Needless to say, this type of 'environment' is an important component of the vicious circle of poverty which in fact is linked with various other components to keep this cycle in rotation.[44] This situation demands that a multi-dimensional strategy, particularly the initiation of religious based environmental education should be considered as top priority[45]

## Religion, Environment and the Educational System in Pakistan

Early Islamic history reveals that the Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) approach to sustainable development was an innovative attempt which was compatible with other modern approaches discussed earlier in the paper. His strategy for the promotion of income and employment, health and environmental security was mainly based on the creation of mass awareness, education and training. He organised a national education system and established its various sub-departments for the teaching of languages, commerce and business administration, industrial education and training, agricultural education and research, physical education and defence and strategic studies. This system was based on four types of classes, i.e., daily, weekly, seasonal and distance learning. These programmes were multi and inter-disciplinary in nature, where in addition to the teachers and trainers, participants of these courses were used to making presentations and sharing their experiences. This educational system was the first approach of its kind in the history of the Arabian peninsula. It must be noted here that in the Prophetic educational system, various aspects of environmental education (e.g., irrigational system, agricultural techniques, plantation, range management, pollution as well as corruption) were important parts of the curricula of agricultural and religious education. This system

---

[42] Government of Pakistan, (2004), op. cit.,.

[43] *The Jang, (*Rawalpindi), 23 January 2003.

[44] Robertson, (1999), op. cit.,

[45] J. Dawood, *Islamic Approach to Development*, (New York: Muslim Culture and Community Centre, 2003), pp. 122-34.

functioned efficiently, centuries after his death.[46] In the eighth century, Islam came to South Asia with the Arabs. In the following centuries, the influence of Islam was not only in the far reaching reforms of governmental organisation, but also in the entire social and educational system. Throughout Muslim rule, education and religion were associated very closely, since education is considered obligatory in Islam.[47] As a result, educational institutions were often grouped around mosques; in many cases, were supported by religious endowments.[48] This educational system was organised in two stages: elementary and higher, known respectively as the *maktabs* and *madrassahs*[49]

The establishment of British rule over the South Asian Sub-continent, contributed to the decay of this system. The new rulers wanted the education of India to suit their purpose of administration. They trained local men for clerical administrative jobs and encouraged the use of the English language along with Western ideas.[50] The post-independence (1947) educational system in Pakistan can be divided into two sub-systems, i.e., mainstream education and *madrassahs*. Both sub-systems run parallel but not complementary to each other. Mainstream education is primarily based on secular and colonial lines while *madrassahs* are working purely on religious grounds. *Madrassahs*, in fact, play an important role in improving the literacy situation and fulfilling peoples' spiritual needs by the dissemination of religious knowledge. In the words of Nayyar.[51] 'In a society that has persistently neglected the education of its children, and where investment of time and labour in schools does not go very far in fulfilling the needs of livelihood, *madrassahs* have rapidly emerged as a parallel, but non-equivalent system of education.' According to a survey conducted by the central government in 1987-88, there were 2862 *madrassahs* all over the country offering various types of religious education.[52] Later, in the year 2000, their number increased to over 40,000. However, out of such a large number only around 4000 *madrassahs* were registered with the

---

[46] M. Hameedullah, *State Administration during the Time of Prophet Mohammad*, (Karachi: Urdu Academy, 1981), pp. 195-210; Ahsan, M., 'Population Administration during the Time of Prophet Mohammad', *Ham Loug*, (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, 1991), pp. 15-17.

[47] T. Sultan, *Muslim Education and Community Development: An Anlytical Case Study of Pakistan*, (Makkah Al-Mukarramah: Centre for Research in Islamic Education).

[48] M.S. Haq, *Studies on Compulsory Education: Compulsory Education in Pakistan*, (Paris: UNESCO, 1974), p. 16.

[49] S.M. Jaffar, *Education in Muslim India (A.D. 1000-1800)*, (Peshawar: M.S. Khan Ltd., 1976), p. 21.

[50] L. Khubchandani,, 'Multilingual Education', in B. Spolski, R.L. Cooper (eds) *Case Studies in Bilingual Education*, (Rowley: Newbury House, 1978), pp. 23-26.

[51] A.H. Nayyar, Madrasah "Education Frozen in Time", in P. Hoodbhoy (ed), *Education and the State: Fifty Years of Pakistan*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 215-250.

[52] Government of Pakistan, *A Comprehensive Report on Madrassas in Pakistan*, (Islamabad: 1988), p. 33.

government.[53] In fact, *madrassahs* are well-organised institutions and generally provide free food, accommodation and books to their students. In some instances, poor students are also provided financial assistance. *Madrassahs* are mainly charitable organisations financed by individual donations. A small number of these institutions also receive *Zakāt* and *Ushr*.[54]

The importance of knowledge is fully reflected in various verses of the Quran[55] e.g., one verse reads: 'O my God, increase my knowledge.' Here, knowledge incorporates all types of knowledge, irrespective of religious, linguistics, medical, physics, chemistry or environmental issues. Therefore, the division of the educational system in Pakistan into mainstream education (i.e., secular) and the *madrassahs* is a self-created situation which in reality contradicts with the Prophetic (PBUH) approach to education. This situation creates problems in a country which on the one hand claims itself a modern Islamic state[56] while on the other, two different systems with different objectives are running parallel to each other. The major problem with contemporary *madrassah* education is that its emphasis is only on religio-spiritual teachings where medieval times' teaching methods and materials are used. This approach is incompatible in dealing with the modern challenges of the globalised world.[57] This situation also creates a huge gulf between mainstream education and *madrassahs*. In the past, various efforts have been made to bridge this gap. For instance, in 1979's education policy, several steps

---

[53] J. Stern, 'Pakistan's Jihad Culture', *Foreign Affairs*, 79 (6), 2000, pp. 115-126.

[54] *Zakāt* and *Ushr* are religious taxes paid by Muslims.

[55] Quran, 20:114.

[56] Pakistan claims to be an Islamic state. The *National Education Policy 1998-2010* reads that: 'Islam is not just a matter of belief. It is a complete code of life wherein science and technology, as well as social and human sciences, economic and cultural activities, in brief, all aspects of life are to be guided and determined by the principles of the holy Quran and *Sunnah*.', (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, *National Education Policy 1998-2010)*, Pakistan, 1998, p. 9.

[57] *Madrassahs'* curriculum consists of two main branches of learning: revealed knowledge or *uloom-e-naqliah* and the knowledge acquired through intellectual endeavour, i.e., *uloom-e-aqliah*. The knowledge of Quran (e.g., *tajweed, qir'at, hifz* and *tafseer*), *hadith* (sayings of Prophet Mohammad), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence and its principles), *ilmul kalam* (philosophy of religion) and *tasawuf* (mysticism) are included in *uloom-e-naqliah* while the *nahw* (linguistic sciences), *mantiq* (logic) and *ilmul-ul-hae'at* etc. are the branches of *uloom-e-aqliah*. Quran and *hadith* are the primary sources of knowledge for Muslims and are guiding principles for every age. It is noteworthy that: i) the problem does not lie with the branches of *uloom-e-naqliah* or *uloom-e-aqliah*, rather it is the curriculum which was developed in medieval ages keeping in view the requirements of that time, which later was not updated, ii) *madrassah* system does not include modern sciences in its curriculum, and thus, iii) this situation has created a division between main stream education and religious education. This approach is not compatible with the real philosophy of Islam where there is no such division between religious and secular education as Islam emphasises on the acquisition of all types of knowledge and its utilisation for the benefit of humankind.

were proposed to bring these two streams of education together.[58] In 1986, a seminar was organised by a research organisation in Islamabad which suggested radical changes in the curricula of *madrassahs*. Ahmad[59] advocates to Islamise the formal education system by emphasising an increase in its religious contents. In the above stated seminar, he argued: 'The leadership which is merging in all the spheres of life today, and the way in which national policies are being formulated – our religious education has little impact on it. In fact, the curriculum of our religious institutions is totally different from that of the glorious [medieval] period of Islam. At that time, the educational system was compatible to the requirement of that age while the opposite is true in this modern age'.[60] Ahmad is correct in the sense that in Pakistan, it is not only the *madrassah* but also the curricula of mainstream education that is irrelevant to the current circumstances of the daily life of the people. It is particularly true in the case of environmental education as this important sector is completely absent in the curricula of *madrassah* and the mainstream education. Unfortunately, throughout the history of Pakistan, neither financial resources nor due attention has been paid to initiate the process of environmental curriculum development.[61]

---

[58] Government of Pakistan, N*ational Education Policy and Implementation Programme*, (Islamabad: 1979), pp. 43-47.

[59] K. Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Economics*, (Jeddah: International Centre for Research in Islamic Economics, 1976).

[60] M.I.U. Shahabi, *Fourteen Hundred Years of Islamic Education*, (Karachi: Maktba-i-Saeed, 1987), p. 12.

[61] It may also need to be emphasised here that in the post-9/11 era, the *madrassahs* system is the main focus of the global media and subject to direct and indirect criticism by various international institutions and political circles. For instance, the 9/11 Commission Report reads: 'The U.S. government must identify and prioritize actual or potential terrorist sanctuaries. … Pakistan's endemic poverty, widespread corruption, and often ineffective government, create opportunities for Islamist recruitment. … These schools [*madrassahs*] … have been used as incubators for violent extremism', (*The 9/11 Commission Report: The Final Report of the National Commission on the Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States,* Section 12.2, <http://www.9-11commision.gov/ report/ 911Report_ch12.pdf>). This statement suggests that the *madrassah* system is a major cause of global instability which must be curbed. Interestingly, the World Bank, does not buy the view of the 9/11 Commission Report. In its recently published research paper, entitled, *Religious School Enrolment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data*, the Bank argues that the overall situation, particularly the enrolment figures in *madrassahs* have been exaggerated by the media and the commission's report. The Bank also reveals: '[W]e do not have data whether *madrassahs* promote extremist views' T. Andrabi, *et. al.*, *Religious School Enrolment in Pakistan: A Look at the Data*, (Washington D.C.: *The World Bank, Working Paper No. 3521,* 2005).

## Review and Reflection

The preceding discussion reflects that in Islamic philosophy, environmental security is a pre-requisite for sustainable development. It also indicates the nature of the worsening situation of the environment in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Regrettably, this situation is prevailing in a country where religion is considered the most civilising force and religious faith is taken as a direction towards righteousness and piety. The discussion raises the question of whether the concepts of *tawhid*, *khalafah*, and *akhirah* are applied in their true sense with regard to environment protection and sustainable development. In the Islamic perspective, the negligence of these concepts means the development of a vicious circle of sustainable under-development. It is considered that in a Muslim culture, the failure to adopt these approaches promotes moral degradation and ignorance, which further leads to environmental degradation and sustainable under-development. While environmental insecurity is the major cause of sustainable under-development, it is itself the violation of the concepts of *tawhid*, *khalafah*, and *akhirah* due to which a Muslim community remains undeveloped which is against the philosophy of their faith.

What role can Islam play in the promotion of environmental security and sustainable development? In Islam, the protection of the environment is an imperative, commanded by God. In a Muslim country like Pakistan, this religious aspect of environment is no less important than scientific knowledge and technology related to environmental protection. This situation also highlights the fact that technology alone is not enough to win the war against the forces destroying the environment. Here, the foremost important point is to initiate a systematised process of Islamic environmental education in the Muslim World. An adequate financial resource allocation is essential for this purpose.[62] The proposed Islamic environmental education be supported through adequate resources and a specially created 'environment security fund'.[63] This programme should be initiated both in mainstream education and the *madrassahs*. Equally important is that both these systems (i.e., mainstream education and the *madrassahs*) should also coordinate with each other in this regard. In addition, a combined approach by various governments, NGOs, multinational corporations, and UN networks, inline with the national and local religio-cultural circumstances, will also be vital in helping to resolve complex issues of environment and sustainable development. This strategy will

---

[62] Various international financial institutions, particularly the IMF and the World Bank can play an important role in this regard. They can provide enough funds for environmental protection suggest environment friendly development plans and press recipient countries to allocate more resources for this purpose.

[63] During 1994, the proposal of the establishment of the 'human security fund' was also presented by the UNDP (see United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1994*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 8-9.

promote environmental security, physical and spiritual development which would lead to strengthening the overall process of sustainable development. Sustainable development achieved through this process will be further supportive in the development and strengthening of this educational system. Therefore, various mutually supportive stages in this cycle will strengthen the overall developmental of humankind.■

# GLOBALISATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

## Nuzhat Khanum[*]

### Introduction

*T*he underlying study is an attempt to understand the phenomenon of Globalisation, its challenges and opportunities for the developing countries. The study will also examine the question whether or not Globalisation is working for the poor? It will also examine how trade, growth and poverty are interlinked and how best the benefits of Globalisation can be acquired to ameliorate threat to humanity. Presumably, solutions to such problems would then avert a backlash against Globalisation.

Hence, in this backdrop, there is a need not only to discuss the "structural elementals' of Globalisation but also to understand how it affects an individual in various capacities i.e., politically, economically, culturally, militarily. Also, it is essential to see, how Globalisation affects the society through technology and information revolution. In modern times, the type of society does not only affect the individual in sociological terms but global institutions in different fields also influence the individual. This can be termed as "global society in late modernity"

While dilating on the subject, one would note that economic aspect of Globalisation is very important. It makes the world more interdependent. Globalisation affects key actors in world politics, while it also spreads through the working of these actors. Globalisation not only affects us as a citizen but also as a "producer-consumer in the global economy".

There is also a "functional integration" between internationally dispersed economic activities, whereas the term internationalization simply refers to the increasing geographic spread of economic activity across national borders. In socio- economic terms, the individual is affected as a "producer-consumer in the global economy." For example, over the past years, one can see different unique patterns e.g., inflation in some Western countries also affects the Third World countries and as a result, there is a dramatic increase in unemployment. Traditional industries are also affected. However, an inverse trend is also observed in that, sometime decline of industries in the West is often matched by the growth of industries in the East. One thing gives impetus to the other. It implies that there is a "degree of functional integration between internationally dispersed economic activities". Hence a need was felt

---

[*] Nuzhat Khanum is Assistant Research Officer at IPRI.

to formulate trade rules and regulate trade, which led to the development of world trade, flow of "portfolio" investment, capital into overseas ventures, growth of Multinational Corporations (MNC's) and international production as well as a need for global institutions such as World Trade Organization (WTO). Obviously, now the focus was how to manage Globalisation and its effects.[1]

## Globalisation as a Phenomenon

Intense debate revolves around the term "Globalisation", which is even today a contentious issue. Theorists, policy makers and even "management consultants", have debated the origin and nature of Globalisation. However, "it has now been accepted as shorthand for the intensified and deepened cultural, economic, political and institutional interconnectedness and interdependency that has been developed between corporations, communities and states, particularly since the 1970s."

The phenomenon of Globalisation has its negative and positive effects. One of the challenges is the eroding sovereignty of the nation state and its control 'over domestic economic and political functions' to other "supranational decision making bodies". However, geographers resist such arguments and are of the opinion that "Globalisation must be seen as a set of intellectual tendencies that cumulate to produce heterogeneous and uneven processes that operate dialectically in the face of local difference."

The Globalisation process has also empowered the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that have access to funds from the international funding agencies that could work in different spheres, for example, for women rights, human rights and poverty alleviation. It has enabled millions of workforce to be employed abroad. However, on the other hand the working of global corporations can cause environmental pollution and can increase the gap between the rich and the poor. Hence, there is a need to focus on the positive aspects of Globalisation, which can bring about a positive social change and take measures to curtail its negative effects.[2]

Globalisation is a process and not an event only; it has been progressing for most of the human history. It is multidimensional, multidirectional and an uneven phenomenon. However, it affects all actors in international relations, though with different consequences. For the sake of simplicity, Globalisation can be studied under different categories e.g.,

---

[1] "Organisation in a Global Context"
   <http://www.canberra.edu.au/uc/lectures/mantech/manpol/sem972/unit3609/or ganisations_in_a_global_context.html>

[2] M. Walton Roberts, "Globalisation, Autonomy and Non-resident Indians", *Contemporary South Asia*, Vol. 13, No.1, March 2004, p.54.

economic, social, cultural, military and environmental. However, all these spheres are interlinked and affect outcome in other areas of human activities. For example, technology affects these areas as fast transportation, communications and production technologies have improved interaction across geographic space. Industrial revolution has played an important role in this regard. This interconnectedness can best be exemplified by looking at the following pattern.

With the spread of industrial revolution, there were innovations and spread of a new form of production. The transportation and communication, thus, became easier. With the advent of a new era, resources became important for military security. Armament and heavy mechanical industries were set up and "industrial production is harnessed to military needs." In this new environment, traditional social relationships were then displaced. The Globalisation also affects the culture in a society. The industrial revolution affects the "living environment", through pollution, climate change etc. The environment itself affects social, cultural areas of human activity. The industrial revolution has affected society, culture, political system and environment, radically in North America and Europe. This revolution is spreading to other parts of the world with its associated pros and cons. Hence the developing countries face the challenges. It is important that they focus on its beneficial effects and acquire opportunities and also take steps to deal with its challenges and fallout.[3]

In view of the above, a working definition of Globalisation could be: Globalisation is a complex multilevel process where the following characteristics can be observed by: a) existence of shifts in the degree to which cultural, technological, political and economic activities are 'stretching' across frontiers creating a global space; b) strong changes in the intensity, speed and regularity of global interactions and processes; c) changes in the levels of interdependence between the global and the local". Hence, we can say Globalisation affects human life in different ways.[4]

**Phases of Evolution**

The World Bank basically focuses on economic integration and it identifies three waves of Globalisation.

      a)   First wave of Globalisation 1854 to 1914
      b)   Second wave of Globalisation from 1945 to 1973
      c)   Third wave of Globalisation since 1973

---

[3]<http://www.google.com.pk/search?q=cache:1wfxTuxPkygJ:www.u.arizona.edu/~gc dixon/courses/pol365w03/pol365ws_d4.pdf+MNC%27s+in+relation+to+Globalis ation&hl=en>

[4] Claudia Caldeirinha, "An Analysis through Human Rights Lenses" <http://fairconsultancy.com/globhr/globalisation.htm>

From 1945 to 1973, Cold War was at its peak. The world was divided into two blocs of states, each led by USA and USSR. There was a capitalist economy; following free market economy rules, whereas the Eastern Bloc organized under the Soviet Union, was following the communist economy. The integration was uneven. Cold War politics, then, affected every form of cooperation. European Union (EU) and the US followed the free market economy, whereas many countries i.e., Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) followed the export led growth model. Some countries benefited from the system but the developing countries were marginalized. Hence such groups like G-77; New International Economic Order (NIEO) were formed to have their say in the economic matters.

In the post 1973 era, the Cold War subsided and there was a quantum leap forward in the 'economic integration'. The free market economy became the guiding principle and global economy spread to a larger part of the world. Hence, the historical processes played an important role in the spread of Globalisation and its fallout, its weaknesses and strengths.[5]

## Key Actors

Globalisation is primarily based on intention and planning. It is predicated upon the near global distribution of human race. It is manifested through a) the predominance of the nation state system, b) the global economy c) global communication systems and d) the world military order.

The nation state consists of a) representative government b) bureaucratic administration, c) independent judiciary d) a monopoly of the legitimate means of violence and e) clearly defined procedures of international relations.

Globalisation has made nation states economically interdependent through the working of the global economy. This economic interdependence is characterized by the following attributes of international trade and international finance, "the integration of specific manufacturing processes at a global level through the development of multinational corporations" and improvement in transport and communication as well as "spread of mass production and mass consumption internationally."[6]

State as an actor is itself affected by the phenomenon of Globalisation. Sovereignty of the state is being eroded in the era of

---

[5]  < http://www.google.com.pk/search?q=cache>

[6]  Shgaron Jones, 4 August 1197, "Organizations in a Global Context" <http://www.canberra.edu.au/uc/lectures/mantech/manpol/Sem972/unit3609/organisations_in_a_global_context.html> Also see Robbins et al, , Spybey, T *Globalisation and World Society*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), Chapter 3.

Globalisation, especially with the growing corporate power and by the evolution of international instruments and institutions. A question arises: Should the role and nature of the state be redefined in international relations? Two important issues in this regard are: Is state capable of addressing new challenges and new problems of the age of Globalisation? Is it able to retain its independence with the growing corporate power? Giddens has argued that state has become a "shell institution", inadequate to fully perform its new tasks. It is too small to solve big problems and too big to solve small problems. For example, big ecological challenges can only be tackled at a global scale while growing social inequalities at local level can be addressed by different institutions i.e., local administration or grassroots NGOs.

With regard to corporate business, the corporate business means wealth, jobs and power for the state. This issue, thus, raises complex problems. Democratic governments are, in fact, in a "complicated bargaining power situation". They have to guarantee their citizens well being as well as to keep a "norm consistent behaviour". They have to follow ethical principles e.g., ecological balance, workers rights, gender participation etc. Hence, a totally new approach is required to retain state as an important actor of Globalisation and to preserve sovereignty of state as well as ensuring international cooperation in this new era. One approach is to diversify the decisional levels, increase real participation of stakeholders in decision making, giving attention/relevance to the local as well as collaborating with regional and international organizations. By increasing the role and participation of civil society actors and by strengthening international norms and institutions, states would then be able to address new problems, reinforcing social cohesion at the local as well as increasing international cooperation. Traditional theory that states are unitary actors has been challenged where internal dynamics do matter in today's world. [7]

## International Organizations

In the age of Cold War, multinationals were perceived by many as agents of economic imperialism and as supporters of dictatorial regimes. It was thus seen as a challenge for the governments to check and ensure that these companies did not abuse their growing ability and power to shift capital across national frontiers to undermine public interest. However, in 1990's the dominant feeling regarding international business changed and MNC's were regarded as actors of development and international progress. Hence, in the new era, the role of international organizations became more important as international perceptions changed from an age of Cold War to that of an interdependent world.

---

[7] <http://fairconsultancy.com/globhr/state.htm>

In this new context, the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) developed and was finally replaced by the WTO, which is an important actor in discussing economic Globalisation. Some of the other main international actors include United Nations (UN), other United Nations agencies like International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Bretton Woods Institutions like World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). There is a growing realization at the UN to accommodate new problems of this era. UN has taken initiatives to deal with the downsides of economic Globalisation. Kofi Annan has warned of a backlash against Globalisation from the civil society due to its negative effects. Hence the "Global Compact initiative " aims at bringing together international institutions, civil society, private sector organizations and national governments, in a pursuit of "shared global values and effective global institutions to underpin the global market". Whereas the ILO plays an important role in protecting workers rights.

Thus, these actors play an important role in managing the fall out of Globalisation and thus shaping the phenomenon. WTO is a trade dispute forum while other coordinates actions of states in an anarchic world; solve problems of global collective action etc. The policies adopted by Bretton Woods Institutions like IMF and World Bank would definitely affect the shape of Globalisation as a phenomenon, whereas these actors have to accommodate and respond to the challenges of this era. [8]

## Threats and Opportunities

*Trade, Growth and Poverty: A View*

Is Globalisation working for the poor? This is an important question for assessing the opportunities provided by Globalisation and for the success of the phenomenon. What are the implications of international integration or Globalisation for inequality and poverty? Dollar and Kraay have explored this question by studying a group of developing countries that have followed the liberalization of trade or significantly opened up to international trade, during the past two decades. The writers found out that contrary to the popular beliefs, increased trade has encouraged growth and poverty alleviation and has contributed to narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor worldwide. Dollar and Kraay have focused on a study of a group of developing countries that have experienced increase in trade over the past two decades. These

---

[8] <http://fairconsultancy.com/globhr/intorg.htm>
   Also see:
   <http://www.google.com.pk/search?q=cache:1wfxTuxPKygJ:www.u.arizona.edu/~gcdixon/courses/pol365w03/pol365ws_d4.pdf+MNC%27s+in+relation+to+Globalisation&h1=en>

countries can be referred to as "post globalisers". The member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and East Asian tigers like Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and Chile, are not included. The rest of the countries were then ranked according to their increase in trade as shares of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the past two decades and selected the top one- third as post-globalisers. As a group, their trade as a share of GDP, increased to 33 percent, whereas trade as share of GDP declined among non-globalisers. Dollar and Kraay have reached important conclusions that are: a) Growth rates have increased; b) Inequality has not increased systematically; c) Poverty has declined; d) Gap between rich and poor has narrowed.[9]

*a) Growth Rates have Increased*

According to the study done by Dollar, the per capita GDP growth in the post-1980 globalisers, increased from 1.4 percent a year in the 1960s and 2.9 percent a year in the 1970s to 3.5 percent in the 1980s and to 5 percent in the 1990s. This is a remarkable growth. In comparison to it, the rich countries saw a steady decline in growth from a high 4.7 percent in 1960s to 2.2 percent in the 1990s. The non-globalizing developing countries did much worse. Their annual growth rates decreased from 3.3 percent during 1970s to only 1.4 percent during the 1990s. The rapid growth among globalisers is not simply due to strong performances of China and India in the1980s and the1990s whereas 18 out of the 24 globlisers experienced increases in growth rates. Though it shows the growth effects of trade, these are hardly conclusive. A vast amount of literature has examined the effects of trade on growth and many of these studies have found substantial growth effects of trade. However, this evidence has been strongly criticized especially by Rodriguez and Rodrik (2000), along three lines. The differences in countries trade shares, reflect their geographical characteristics i.e. countries that are close to big markets tend to trade more than the countries that are large or remote. The other factor is that it is difficult to differentiate the effects of trade liberalization on growth from other growth enhancing policies. Many countries that liberalize trade also adopt domestic reforms that boast growth. It is also difficult to identify the direction of causation in many existing studies such as: Does trade cause faster growth or do economies that grow quickly also trade more? On this account, Dollar and Kraay have conducted a new study. In order to eliminate the geographical element, the effect of trade on growth has been estimated, using decades over decades, change in countries trade as

---

[9]  David Dollar and Aart Kraay, "Trade, Growth and Poverty", *Finance and Development*, Vol. 38, No.3, September 2001
   <www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2001/09/dollar.htm>

shares of their GDP. The measures of the stability of monetary policy, financial development and political instability have been included to check the effects of other changes in policies and institutions that may effect growth. The econometric technique has been used to check the reverse causation. However, the evidence that emerges from this analysis is consistent with the experiences of the post globlisers. The writers say that there is a statistically significant and economically meaningful effect of trade on growth; that is, an increase in trade as a share of GDP of twenty percent increases growth between 0.5 percent and 1 percent a year.[10]

b) *Inequality has not Increased Systematically*

Though the growth benefits of trade are increasingly acknowledged, analysts are more concerned with the effects of trade liberalization on income distribution or inequality. In the research conducted by Dollar and Kraay, there is no evidence of a systematic tendency for inequality to increase when trade increases. By plotting changes in a measure of inequality- the Ginni Coefficient- on a vertical axis and changes in trade volume, on horizontal axis of more than hundred developed and developing countries, the result exhibits that there is a striking absence of any correlation between changes in trade volume and changes in inequality. In another research, a variety of measures for example direct measures of trade policy, international capital flows and trade volumes were included. It was also sought whether the effects of trade on inequality are different in rich and poor countries. However, there is little evidence of a systematic tendency for inequality to either increase or decrease with increase in trade. This evidence is also consistent with the experiences of the post- 1980 globalisers, while several of globalisers have seen increases in inequality; others have seen decreases. For example, in China the Ginni coefficient increased from 32 in early 1980s to 40 in the mid 1990s but in Malaysia, the Ginni coefficient decreased from 51 to 48 only.

Also, other factors can be more important for an increase in income inequality rather than international trade. For example, in China, domestic liberalization, restrictions on internal migration have played an important role in increasing inequality than increases in international trade.[11]

c) *Poverty has Declined*

Due to increase in growth and little systematic change in inequality in post-globalisers, there are more chances to reduce poverty. The fraction of population living below 1$ a day, fell sharply between 1980s and 1990s from

---

[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

43 percent to 36 percent in Bangladesh, in China from 20 percent to 15 percent and in Costa Rica from 13 percent to 10 percent.

In Malaysia, the average income of the poorest fifth of the population grew at 5.4 percent annually. However, in China where, though the inequality did increase sharply and income growth rate of the poorest fifth lagged behind average income growth the incomes of the poorest fifth still grew at 3.8 percent annually.[12]

*d) Gap between Rich and Poor has Narrowed*

Is the gap between the rich and poor countries increasing? According to Dollar and Kraay, the rapid growth of globalisers are narrowing the per capita income gap as relates to the rich countries, especially in China and India which were the poorest countries twenty years ago. "Their growth has been a force for narrowing world wide inequality." Trends, in worldwide inequality over the forty years, have been studied using the mean log deviation measure of income inequality. The mean log deviation can be interpreted as the percentage difference between the income of a randomly selected typical individual and world average income. The worldwide interpersonal inequality has been quite stable over the past forty years, showing a slight downward trend, which is unlikely to be significant statistically because of immense difficulties inherent in such calculations. The worldwide income inequality can be attributed to the large differences in average incomes between countries. What is the effect of rapid growth of post globalisers on this inequality measure? Many of the globalisers were poor. Their rapid growth has contributed to reduced income inequality between countries especially China and India, which, due to their vast economies, have given them "a substantial weight in these calculations"

The world economy has become more integrated over the years. Experiences of post globalisers show that Globalisation has great benefits, contributing to rising incomes, and reducing poverty. However, it enables some of the poorest countries in the world to catch up with the richer countries. The real losers are those developing countries that have not seized the opportunities to liberalize their economies and embark on the path of Globalisation.[13]

*Trade, Growth and Poverty: Another View*

There are two important views regarding Globalisation that is globaphobia and globaphilia. Globaphobians assert that Globalisation can never work for the poor and the free market economy or integration in the world markets would increase poverty and inequality. However, the other view is that international

---

[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.

trade can act as a catalyst to reduce poverty. It can provide poor countries access to markets, technologies and ideas, which in turn "would sustain higher and equitable patterns of growth." This might be termed as "globaphilia." Watkins believes that if globaphobia is unjustified, so is globaphilia i.e., the very argument that increased trade, through trade and openness, could automatically lead to growth and poverty reduction. Watkins believes that Globalisation is not working for the poor. The global income inequalities are widening. At the end of 1990s, the rich countries that account for 14 percent of the world population, accounted for three fourths of the world income, roughly the same as at the start of the decade. "The world economy ended the 1980s more unequal than any national economy and since then it has become even more unequal". The global Ginni coefficient rose by 3 points between 1988 and 1993 alone. These figures come from a 1999 World Bank report, "True World Income Distribution, 1988 and 1993" authored by Branko Milanovic of the World Bank Development Research Group. It is important to know that there are many difficulties in calculating these figures. However, Watkins believes that these patterns of inequality are inconsistent with international commitments to halve poverty by 2015. Unless the developing countries increase the share of exports, the trade would continue to increase gaps in absolute income. Watkins further says, "One of the problems with the current debate on Globalisation is that the non-income dimensions of poverty such as self respect, security and health have been ignored." Hence security, health and socio- economic reforms must be taken into account. The problem with openness is that the IMF believes that liberalization of trade would be a key in making Globalisation work for the poor. The confidence in this claim is reflected in policy conditions on trade liberalization as attached to IMF and World Bank loans.[14]

The position of Latin America, which pursued import liberalization models of trade openness, is quite striking. However, this rapid import liberalization was associated with further concentration of poverty. Hence, it demonstrates that distribution does matter. The income of the poor does not increase on one to one basis with the economic growth. A highly unequal country, like Brazil has to grow three times more than the rate of Vietnam to achieve same average income increase amongst the poorest one-fifth of its population. Although, rising inequality can be countered by rapid growth as in China, it also reduces the rate of poverty reduction.

Watkins says that there is an important question is to see why some countries are more successful than others in combining export growth with poverty reduction? Increasing the share of the poor in market requires

---

[14] Kevin Watkins, "Making Globalisation Work for the Poor", Vol. 39, No.1, March 2002, <www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2002/03/watkins.htm>

strategies like land distribution, investments in infrastructure, improved opportunities and access to education, health and measures to eradicate corruption. It requires policies like protection for smallholder farmers or for a few new industries, the restoration of workers rights and minimum wage protection. Openness is not a poverty reduction strategy in itself. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) provide an opportunity to develop poverty-focused approach to trade policy. However most of the PRSPs only praise the mantras/benefits of Globalisation, which have serious implications for rural poverty and income distribution. Hence, it hampers poverty reduction.[15]

## Criticism and Responses

David Dollar and Aart Kraay of the World Bank provide the most cited case for openness. The main argument is that openness is associated with higher growth rates. The post- globalisers in 1990s achieved per capita growth rates 4 percent higher than non-globalisers. The other argument is that increased trade is not associated with a systematic increase in inequality. The combination of higher growth rates with no change in income distribution/inequality, thus, results in more rapid poverty reduction. One problem with this approach is the use of large samples to derive weighted averages. If an unweighted average is used, then the per capita rate for the globalisers is 1.5 percent. Whereas many countries in the globalisers only record growth rates of 1 percent or less, this is not a very impressive record/foundation for sustained poverty alleviation. Many premier globalisers have worst records on poverty reduction.

Dollar and Kraay have responded to Watkins criticism. It is true that some of the countries that have liberalized trade or have lowered trade barriers, have not seen increase in trade, growth or poverty alleviation. Hence, as Watkins says "openness in and of itself is not a poverty reduction strategy." The evidence suggests that more liberal trade regime is only one part of the policy package for growth and poverty reduction.

Dollar and Kraay say that their finding is that increased participation and integration with the global markets is associated with faster growth and poverty reduction. Together with good economic and social policies, it worked for a number of poor countries. Dollar and Kraay say that

> It would be naive to assert that all of this improvement in growth should be attributed to the greater openness of these globalizing economies: all of them have been engaged in wide-ranging economic reforms. …China, Hungary, India, and Vietnam… strengthened property rights and carried out other reforms. …virtually all of the

---

[15] Ibid.

Latin American countries included in the grouping stabilized high inflation and adjusted fiscally.[16]

Dollar and Kraay do not agree with Watkins that income inequality is widening worldwide. Watkins only cites one example of an increase in the global Ginni coefficient of three points between 1988 and 1993. However, other estimates either show little change in inequality between 1980s and 1990s or even a modest decline. It is also to note that "given the vast measurement problems, one encounter in constructing such estimates, none of these small changes in either direction over relatively short periods is likely to be statistically robust." Dollar and Kraay are of the opinion that what can be said robustly is that the global inequality increased between 1820 and 1980s and then stabilized with modest decline. Since 1980s, the number of poor people has declined by an estimated 200 million.[17]

The growth in GDP per head from 1820 to 2001 was as follows. For Western Europe from 1973 to 2001, it is 1.88, for Western offshoots it is 1.84, Japan 2.14, Eastern Europe 0.68, former Soviet Union -0.96, Latin America 0.91, Asia excluding Japan 3.55 and Africa 0.19. All over the world, growth in GDP per head was 0.53 in (1820-1870), 1.3 (1870-1913), 0.91(1913-1950), 2.92 in (1950-1973) and 1.41 in (1973 -2001)[18]

However, these statistics can be debated. It is quite difficult to study the effects of Globalisation on poverty if there is no agreement yet on how much poverty affects the world and how poverty has changed in the last decades. Thus, there is need for collection of more reliable data on poverty, and the development of more" insightful proxies" for Globalisation and use of more sophisticated econometric techniques.[19]

Thus, Globalisation is a multidimensional phenomenon and each of its aspects must be studied. Though, Globalisation did not work well for Africa or much of Latin America, yet it brought economic dividends to large parts of the world especially Asia. There is reduction in number of people living under extreme poverty in East Asia where the number of people, living on less than 1$ at "purchasing power parity", fell from 56 percent in 1981 to 16 percent in 2001. The rapid growth of Asian developing countries has reduced the global inequalities among households since 1820s. Globalisation has brought huge dividends for the developed countries as well. According to

---

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Martin Wolf, "Will Globalisation Survive?" *Financial Times*, 5 April 2005 <http://iie.com/publications/ papers/wolf0405.pdf>

[19] Enirico Santarelli and Paolo Figini, "Does Globalisation Reduce Poverty", in *Understanding Globalisation, Employment and Poverty Reduction,* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan Publishers, 2004), p. 294

International Institute for International Economics, gains for US amount to $1,000 billion annually. Hence the situation is not that bleak; however there is a need to further acquires the benefits of Globalisation and to make it work for the poor. This would, in turn, prevent a backlash against Globalisation.[20]

## Transnational Threats and Measures

Although Globalisation, as a phenomenon helps in promoting economic growth, different aspects of Globalisation, for example fast communications, technology and easy movement of people across borders, now combine to increase the dangers of a variety of transnational threats. Some of these threats include nuclear weapons proliferation, ethnic violence, global crime, cyber attacks, terrorism, drug trafficking, environmental degradation and the spread of infectious diseases. What are these threats and what sort of strategies and actions are required to counter it? [21]

Information technologies and systems are important for the functioning of the civilian systems like communications; transportation, banking, but they face the threat of cyber attacks and disruptions. The other transnational threat is environmental degradation that crosses borders. For example, rising global temperatures that is causing droughts and floods, air and water pollution, loss of biodiversity and introduction of toxic substances in the human food chain. There is also a threat of the spread of infectious diseases due to such factors as drug resistant microbes, climate change, poor patterns of water and land use, rise of mega cities, and movement of people across borders. It has been estimated that in the coming years, HIV and tuberculosis would take a significant toll. Although ethnic violence is not a new phenomenon, but due to the shedding of traditional economic structures and spread of information technologies, (which cause disruptions in the existing patterns of political authority), such violence can then easily spread across state borders that can cause large flows of refugees. However, these transnational threats often seem uncertain and thus governments are doing less to pursue "credible preventive strategies." An important issue is that "whether these transnational threats are sufficiently serious to warrant taking the politically difficult steps necessary to implement credible preventive strategies?" The government must take politically difficult steps before the actual danger unfolds. However, these preventive strategies would not be easy to pursue, as they require a lot of revenue and commitment.

---

[20] Martin Wolf, "Will Globalisation Survive?", *Financial Times,* 5 April 2005
    <http://iie.com/publications/ papers/wolf0405.pdf>

[21] Lyne E. Davis, "Globalisation's Security Implications", *Rand Issue Paper,*
    <http://www.rand.org/publications/IP/IP245/IP245.pdf>

What measures can be adopted to counter these transnational threats? Some of these measures might include: for example, securing information systems from cyber attacks. It would require new security standards and systems for early warning and attack assessments. In this regard, information must be shared between governments and the private businesses both at domestic and international level. Thus, governments and businesses have to take new steps to secure their information systems. In order to check environmental degradation, different instruments must be evolved. Kyoto protocol on green house gases can be a credible preventive strategy to check environmental degradation. The governments have to adopt environmental friendly policies that cost them revenue. Understanding the causes of the conflict within each state can prevent ethnic violence and a system that can give an early warning of a conflict to the government/policymakers.[22]

In order to control the spread of infectious diseases, medical facilities are required. It is important to study the impact of trade, economic growth and cultural exchanges and free movement of people across borders on emergence of infectious diseases. There is a need to devise methods and measures for industry, domestic and public health, research and private sector. A recent commission on Macroeconomics and Health estimated that some $62 billion is required to provide medical facilities to over 2 billion poor people. There should be additional resources to fight the spread of infectious diseases. Growing international cooperation would help fight the spread of infectious diseases. Through multinational partnership, there are more chances of development of new vaccines and drugs as well as cost sharing for building health care infrastructure in the developing countries.[23]

## Managing Globalisation: Strategies, Responses and Recommendations

### Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction: Investing in Human Capital

Economic growth reduces poverty and offers opportunities to advance political freedom and prosperity, which is important for ameliorating transnational threats. Would these opportunities be realized? The processes leading to economic growth are complex and long term in nature. However, the requirements for economic growth are less certain. The economists are less definitive about what is the scope of requirements and critical priorities for

---

[22] Ibid.

[23] Workshop: The Impact of Globalisation on Infectious Diseases: Emergence and Control", *IOM project, Forum on Microbial Threats,* 16-17 April 2002. <http://www.iom.edu/event.asp?id=8610>
Also see Lyne E. Davis, "Globalisation's Security Implications", *Rand Issue Paper,* <http://www.rand.org/publications/IP/IP245/IP245.pdf>

economic growth. In this regard, strategies for promoting economic growth and poverty reduction should be an important part of every country's economic policy. There is a need to encourage investment through economic liberalization, privatization and reduced trade barriers. There is a need to invest in human capital, such as education and health and creating effective institutions of governance and eradicate corruption.[24]

*Linkage between Democracy and Economic Growth*
There are inter linkages between processes of economic growth and democracy. The changes that tend to accompany economic growth, the transformation of social structures, the spread of political power, and improvement in government's legitimacy also aid in transition to democracy. Democracy, in turn, empowers people so that they are in a better position to mobilize their economic resources. The abstract models of economic growth and democracy are useful but its success depends on situations in the individual countries.[25]

*Need for a New Consensus*
The political leaders must make choices amid debates if they intend to seize the opportunities to promote democracy and economic growth. A new approach is needed. One possible approach would be to set realistic economic goals, new guidelines for provision of international assistance and to integrate democracy-building programmes into efforts to reduce poverty. The donor agencies should be responsible for the successful achievement of the goals. The guidelines for how the international economic assistance would be channeled might include, for example, either assistance be given primarily to poorest countries, or to countries exhibiting good governance or directly to NGOs. The assistance programmes should be devised according to conditions in individual countries. The details are not that important but an approach be agreed upon and implemented in these areas, which would be important for the success of Globalisation as a phenomenon.[26]

*G-8 Role*
There is a lack of collective decision-making process in the political realm. Various transnational threats have been the subject of UN and G-8 declarations. G-8 provided initiative for The Jubilee 2000 debt relief campaign. UN is a venue for HIV assistance, World Summit on Sustainable Development.  Many of the efforts failed because of lack of realistic goals

---

[24] Lynn E. Davis, Globalisation's Security Implications, *Rand Issue Paper*,
   <http://www.rand.org/publications/IP/IP245/IP245.pdf>
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

without enforcement measures or requisite resources. The G-8, with its resources and influence, can play an important role. Hence G-8 as an actor can play a vital role and can thus in turn safeguards its interests and stakes in the age of Globalisation. The G-8 role would make it "currently the focus of those disaffected with Globalisation's effects, responsible for responding." Whether G-8 would be able to evolve a consensus has yet to be seen.

*Credible Preventive Strategies*

There is a lack of agreement on how many risks these transnational threats pose to the humanity. Hence, there is a lack of effective strategies to counteract it. There is a need that international community should pursue credible preventive strategies to counteract these challenges in the long run, which require political will, capital and resources.[27]

*A Real Dialogue*

If the goal is to reduce poverty, the governments, international financial institutions and civil society need to conduct a real dialogue on how to make Globalisation work for the poor.

*Link between Trade Policy and Poverty Reduction*

The trade policy should be formulated in such a way that takes into account the national strategies for poverty reduction and redistribution.[28]

*UN Recommendations*

Based on its findings, the UN Report on the world social situation recommends that: world asymmetries should be addressed, resulting from Globalisation or otherwise. The emphasis should be on the equitable distribution of the benefits of an open world economy. The equitable distribution of benefits can be facilitated by promoting democratic participation of people; democracy and rule of law should be promoted and there should be efforts to integrate marginalized groups into mainstream; to prevent global conflict and violence, there is a need to reduce inequalities in access to resources and opportunities; conditions in the informal economy should be improved by providing social protection programmes and better linkages between formal and informal economies to improve wages, benefits and working conditions of the workers in developing countries. There should be more opportunities for employment. Youth consists of 47 percent of the

---

[27] Ibid.

[28] Kevin Watkins, "Making Globalisation Work for the Poor", Vol. 39, No. 1, March 2002, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fundd/2002/03/watkins.htm>

total 186 million unemployed worldwide. Hence, youth should be the focus of the unemployment policies.[29]

## Conclusion

Globalisation is an irresistible and an irreversible phenomenon. Hence, what is required is to manage the fallout of Globalisation, which can be termed as managing Globalisation. Some of the fallout of Globalisation creates resentments, especially among the youth. The lack of attention to environmental safety, cutbacks in health and social services provide the environments in which some of the transnational threats arise. The Globalisation has adverse consequences in many areas on employment, job security and wages. However, there is still debate concerning the specific role of Globalisation/liberalization on these trends. These problems could be addressed through investing in education, social and physical infrastructure, unemployment, health sectors and alleviating poverty. There is also a need to adopt preventive strategies to counter transnational threats. Such measures would then avert a backlash against Globalisation. There is a need to include people in the mainstream and NGOs, donor agencies and civil society organizations must work together to alleviate poverty and thus acquire the benefits of an age of Globalisation. Globalisation does reduce poverty but not everywhere. Hence, there is a need to improve international architecture for integration and strengthening domestic institutions and policies. The policies regarding capital flows to developing countries are important. There is a need for social protection in globalizing economies, whereas the investment climate also affects the benefits of trade liberalization. The integration with global economy does affect employment and wages. Different actors have important stakes in Globalisation. These actors can play an important role in ameliorating transnational threats. The success of Globalisation would depend on how different actors that is governments; multilateral institutions, private business and NGOs pursue these goals, not only globally but also collectively.■

---

[29] "Report on world social situation finds much of world trapped in inequality predicament", *UN Report 2005* SOC/4681, UN Economic and Social Affairs Department, 25 August 2005
<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/soc4681.doc.htm>

# ETHNICISATION OF POWER STRUGGLE IN THE POST SOVIET AFGHANISTAN

## Dr Razia Sultana[*]

## Introduction

*E*thnicity is primordial and it has situational connotation also. In case of post-conflict situations, it has the potential to be exploited by the rival factions to the detriment of the struggling state. In this connection, Afghanistan is a case in point wherein Pashtuns the majority ethnic group and other minority groups are locked into power struggle in the aftermath of dismissal of Afghan-Socialist government in 1992. This power struggle was political in nature as also ethnic in conduct. There are misgivings about the ethnic overtones of the post-Soviet Afghan power struggle. However aims leadership and rank and file of different factions reinforce the ethnic character of the struggle. It is also needed to be underscored that though ethnic rivalries of the 90s era were not meant to fragment the country on ethnic lines, these were rather anchored in the national ambit. However ethnic politics has the potential to cause disintegration, in case the countervailing forces find it hard to sustain stability.

An Afghan anecdote," a knife has the capability to cut the vegetables and other stuff but it can also cut the throat,"[1] rightly explains the shifting role of Afghan ethnic politics. Having local roots to power, ethnicity traditionally played a constructive role in providing sustainable support to social institutions and stable foundations to successive Afghan governments. However, once intervened in the central power struggle during the 90's, it cut the throat of political order, stability and peace, just like the other role of the kitchen knife. The magic to make the knife resume its original role is presenting a tall order, which is difficult but has to be restored.

In any case to put the whole picture of the Afghan ethno-political issue in proper perspective, this paper focuses on three main themes. These are: the making of ethnic consciousness, Ethnicisation of politics, and the impact of ethnic politics on the future of Afghanistan.

---

[*] Dr Razia Sultana is Assistant Professor at the Department of History, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.
[1] An Afghan cultural anecdote learnt from my grand mother.

## Interplay of the Terms Afghan and Pashtun

For many, until recently, the terms Afghan and Pashtun were synonymous which gave an impression of ethnic uniformity of the Afghan polity. However, initially the Soviet-Afghan War and subsequently the civil war exposed the social and cultural composition of the Afghan society. People of the larger world, had to realize that all Pashtuns, are Afghans but all Afghans are not Pashtuns. Besides Pashtuns, there are more than a dozen other ethnic groups which are of significant demographic, territorial and now of political clout, such as Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks, Norishtani, Turkomen just to name a few. However Pashuns remain the dominant group demographically and also politically to the degree that the term Afghan was construed for Pashtun and even Afghanistan was termed by some scholars as an ethnic state.

The overwhelming politico-military ascendancy of the Pashtun tribes lasted for ages. They also proved uncompromising rivals for the British. Despite their pre-modern weaponry and impoverished socio-economic circumstances, they stood firm in their resolve and the British failed to colonize them.

Afghans are also known as martial people, independent-minded, proud, having resilience for survivability under extreme circumstances. So they remained dominant on the Afghan political scene and other nationalities remained on the sidelines of the power circles all through their political history.

## Origin, Composition and Political Influence of The Ethnic Groups

Being a happy combination of myriad cultures and civilizations since times immemorial, the ethnic mosaic of Afghanistan is a reflection of multiple socio-cultural experiences. According to some sources, there are more than a dozen ethno-cultural groups that make the social fabric of the Afghan society. All these people speak distinct languages and evolve separate cultures around their distinct social structures, governed by their respective social codes. These codes discipline them under their respective leaders, i.e. Khans, Sayyeds and Arbabs.

Having huge Pashtun population concentrated in the tribal belt, situated in the South and South-east, Afghanistan has also a bulk of detribalized groups representing ethnic differentiation. However, the character and attitudes of the tribalized leadership and institutions is predominant all over Afghanistan. Only the titles of the leaders are different such as in the tribal belt even among the Tajiks, the leader is called Khan while in the Hazara region they call him Sayyed and in the Uzbek social structure, the leader is called Arbab.  As each of these ethnic groups evolve their own social codes, for instance, Pashtuns have Pashtunwali, Tajiks follow the rules of

Abdurzadgi[2] and similarly Hazara and Uzbeks practice their own social codes. These codes emerge from their respective socio-cultural experiences and further support their group distinctions. However, tribal behaviour and influences in the social structures visibly exist all around.

The social structures of detribalized Afghans the like of Tajiks, Hazara, Norishtani and Uzbeks are highly influenced by the Pashtun counterparts. The rules of the game, social structure and composition of those institutions and the relationship of the individual and a group is more or less on the same pattern as of Pashtuns adherence to their social structures. This makes it convenient for the researchers to take Pashtuns social structure as a model for understanding the rest of the Afghan society.

Moreover, Pashtuns make the largest tribalised society in the world they consist of almost 395 tribes,[3] These trills emanate from three main branches of Durrani, Ghilzai and the eastern Pashtuns. The tribal structure is built around social relationship which makes it incumbent upon every member to be in alliance with a tribe or clan which is governed by three main instruments of leadership (Khan), i.e the tradition of equal share of land (at least in the common property of the tribe like pastures/forests) and Jirga, the decision making body which is conflict resolving mechanism in the tribal milieu at the local level.

Life in the tribal zone for an individual without alliance to a tribe, is next to impossible. It is the tribe, which ensures the well being of the individual in adversity vis-à-vis the rival tribe, individual or even the state. Afghans are masters of alliance system. Their state creation has also resulted from the coalition of alliances between the tribes. So the pattern of the Afghan state is on the tribal model. The king/ruler replicates the tribal Khan who secures the interest of the tribesmen during hostilities, redistributes resources acquired from sources other than the tribal realm and seeks decisions in the favour of its tribesmen in the decision making body and entertains wide range of guests from his own pocket, thus maintaining the tradition of hospitality. This distinguishes Afghans from others as warm and hospitable people.

Ethnic conflagration in political terms has not been the norm of the Afghan socio-political experiences till the beginning of 1992 civil war between Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, promoted as the revivalist of the Pashtun political dominance and Ahmad Shah Massoud as rival contender to power from the non- Pashtun bloc primarily understood as the protagonist of Tajik political ascendancy. And on the secondary level, Uzbek interests were supposedly

---

[2]  Ali Wadak "The Ethnic and Tribal Composition of Afghan Society," in Edward Girardet & Jonathan Walter *Essential Field Guide*, (Switzerland, 1998), p. 80.

[3]  From Interview with Afersiyab Khattak, Chairman Human Resource Commission of Pakistan, August 2002.

championed by Rashid Dostum and of Hazara by their own leadership under the party hierarchy of Hizb-i-Wahdat.

The representatives of ethnic politics, deployed the terminology of ethnic, tribal and Qoam identities and took references from the past. Bacha Saqa who overthrew King Amanullah in 1929 was the only non-Pashtun Tajik who had contested the central power and had become a term of reference for Ahmad Shah Massoud. He was referred as the political reincarnation of Bach-Saqao against Hikmatyar and later as rival to Taliban who were striving to deter the overtures of the non- Pashtuns to take over power.

## Interaction with Foreign Powers and State Formation

Of the Afghans, Pashtuns occupy the most strategic South and Southeastern high land of the country. All the invading armies whether Central Asians, Persians or others, had to negotiate their way in to subcontinent through Pashtun highland. Similarly, the empires in the East whether Mughal or the British in order to safeguard their territorial interests, had to occupy or take these border tribes into confidence through the payment of subsidies to the Pashtun tribes. So the sheer hardship of the terrain and the strategic location of these tribes inculcated warlike traits in them, which made them favourite mercenaries of the invading armies. Central Asian and Persian invaders recruited them invariably during their military campaigns against Indian princes, and this provided them an opportunity to refurbish their warlike skills through interacting with well-trained and well-equipped armies of the invaders. It also provided them an opportunity to use their martial skills for earning livelihood, which even now is a common feature of Afghan war-economy. In the absence of legal and normal economic institutions for three decades, war is the only industry, which works as a source of employment for the Afghans, and this does not sound unusual, but is a continuation of old practices.

The combination of military skills and interaction with the neighbouring empires developed political consciousness among the Pashtun tribes much in advance than other ethnic groups. Consequently, the decision to form the first Afghan kingdom was the decision of the Pashtun tribes back in 1747.[4] The other ethnic groups stayed quiet and continued with their sedentary professions of agriculture and animal husbandry. So they remained just on the fringes of power struggle.

The emergence of Afghan kingdom was the result of an alliance of Pashtun tribes, which was authenticated by a saintly figure named Sabir Shah[5]. This explains the role of ethnicity and religion in the formation of Afghan state. The political consciousness of the ethnic group, conditioned by the political circumstances in the region emerged in the wake of decline of two

---

[4] Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 329.
[5] Ibid, p. 333.

leading empires of that age. The Saffavid in Persia and Mughal in India helped establish the Afghan kingdom. Even thereafter, religion played the legitimizing role of the political power during the subsequent coronation or inauguration ceremonies of the Afghan Kings.

## State-Periphery Relationship

The Afghan experimentation with modern state system is not very old, although exposure to the international system could be traced to the Great Game (19th century) period. This was the time, when Afghanistan emerged as a buffer state during British and Tsar Russia's imperialistic overtures to take Afghan territory into their sphere of influence. The democratic, liberal policies of King Amanullah Khan back in 1928 served as a very short-lived experience. The king had to pay in terms of his throne in the face of staunch opposition from the conservative forces. Even all through these experimentations with democratic system, Afghan elite remained in alliance with the periphery. If Ahmad Shah Durrani, the first Afghan king down to Amanullah Khan came to power with the support of Durrani tribes, Nadir Shah and his successors (Zahir Shah), also got power through the support of Eastern tribal belt. Similarly Sardar Daud maintained the same tradition Even the Socialist Afghan leaders of the regime such as Dr. Najib after having lost all hope of receiving any substantial assistance from the Soviets, resorted to the traditional Qoam loyalties. He tried to mend linkages with Pashtuns and employed ethnic militias of Uzbeks and Ismaili origin, when he found the security situation was in jeopardy in the wake of massive desertion of military forces.

## Policies of Consolidation and Liberalization

Although, the process of ethnic consciousness was very much under way, however, its roots were mainly traced to the repressive policies of Amir Abdurrehman who, through his policies of internal colonization, repressed Hazara community and relocated his Pashtun rivals clan[6] in their lands and pastures. This they deeply resented and when they autonomized their territory in the aftermath of the Soviet withdrawal, the first thing they did was putting a ban on Pashtun entry in the their region.

North (Uzbek/Tajik) also showed resentment against Pashtun settlements. They resented the memories of oppressive policies of Amir Abdrrehman, which they demonstrated after the fall of the Taliban regime by inflicting huge atrocities against the Pashtuns in the North. Large Pashtun family clusters were terrified and compelled to leave their existing settlements.

---

[6] Barnett R. Rubin, (Ed), *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 50.

The policies of Pashtunization of the state by King Nadir Shah such as the establishment of Pashto academy for the promotion of Pashto language, publishing textbooks in to Pashto language, restricting admission into military schools and academies for Pashtuns only, also tax and conscription exemption to the eastern tribes[7] on the support of whom he managed to come to power . These were important factors which introduced ethnic awareness between other distinct groups who felt the pangs of exclusion from power structures.

Also, Sardar Daud after becoming the prime minister (1953-63) of Afghanistan emerged as staunch supporter of Pashtunistan issue.[8] This issue envisaged the Afghan claim on the Pashtun territory, stretched across the South and South Eastern borders of Afghanistan located in the present day Pakistan. He purused the issue through official propaganda, focusing more on the Pashtun character of the Afghan people. During the effort to uphold the cause of Pashtunistan, he tried to Pashtunize the nature and character of the term Afghan that antagonized the ethnic minorities for being ethnically proselytized for the achievement of political goals of dominant group at the cast of their distinct identity.

The redeeming feature of this exercise was the access to modern education, which opened a new window of self-realization and awareness for the Afghan people. By the turn of the century Afghan king Amir Habibullah and King Amanullah, who were the pioneers of exposing Afghans to secular education geared to establish educational institutions in Kabul. A tiny educated class graduated from the Kabul University (established in 1947), became torchbearers of varied ideologies, liberal and Islamist enormously fuelled the engine of change. As minorities opted in bulks for education, which can safely be translated as their desire to improve their lot or bring themselves at par with the dominant group and to use educational forums as vehicle to introduce liberal democracy in the country so to make sharing power with the traditional leaders possible. Consequently, it was the pressure from the educated class that king Zahir Shah had to introduce democratic reforms, which despite having his detractors, provided some room to the minorities in the central power structure.

The reign of Zahir Shah was the period of integration and peace. However, the last decade of his reign was volatile due to restlessness of the educated class against the monarchy. The intelligentsia wanted more political freedom for voicing their demands to the government. They also pleaded for different models of political change such as Islamic, liberal and socialist. The dominant ideologies of intellectual discourse were political in nature. However, the underlying currents of those discourses and demonstrations revolved

---

[7] Ibid, pp. 62-69.
[8] Dupree, op. cit., p. 499.

round the overthrow of Pashtun dominance and larger political role for the minorities. This was evident from the King's decision, not to allow the members of royal family to become part of the cabinet. They were also barred from contesting election for any high post in the government at the time of elections. Besides, he formed the cabinets mostly of non-Pashtun Prime Ministers and encouraged minority members in the cabinet.

Still the king along with core members of the royal, family retained power in his own hands and even both the Houses of the Parliament, Ulasi Jirga (lower house) and the Masharano Jirga (upper house) comprised of 60 percent Pashtun members[9]. While military top echelon and even cadres were dominantly Pashtun, the non-Pashtuns in an ongoing struggle to balance the void made for the difference by qualifying in majority for bureaucracy and other state business.

## Ethnicity & Jihad

During the Jihad against the Soviets, which was fought with religious zeal but with the moral and material support of ethnic/tribal support system maintained strictly the distinct identity of the groups. On the other hand Islam upholds the ideal of Ummah and strictly abhors fragmentation and divisions of society on the bases of, race, cast, colour and creed. Hence it could prompt motivation for unity among Afghans in the face of common enemy. Later downplaying the role of religion resulted in traditional ethnic segmentation prone to stark differentiation of identity causing clash and strife.

Even during the Jihad, the Pashtun parties fought under Pashtun leaders, commanders and cadres. And non-Pashtuns mainly Tajiks and Hazara fought under their own commanders, even within their own solidarity territory. This also showed their immobility out of their Qoam jurisdiction that barred them from developing common strategy and unanimous leadership. The resistance against the Soviets in terms of groups, leadership and strategy, remained ethnically divided.

Also, the subsequent realignment on the ethnic and tribal solidarities of the resistance factions with partners of the regime, was the consequence of the prevailing fragmentation. Thus, Soviet phase presaged the environment for ethnically driven civil war that let loose hell during the whole decade of 90's.

## Islam, Ethnicity & Mujahideen

All through the Soviet-Afghan conflict, the Islamic ideological factor remained dominant, and defeated the communist ideology. Afghans have diverse ethnic and intra-ethnic background although it is fractious in many ways. However they made a common cause against the Communist invaders and its Afghan

---

[9] Interview with Afersiyab Khattak, op. cit.

surrogates. The popular slogan that Islam is in danger not only forged unity among the Afghans but also attracted trans-national Islamist ideologues/ financiers and fighters to support the cause of the Afghans, Consequently Usama bin Laden and the like fought against the Soviets side by side with Afghans and afterwards used Afghanistan as a platform for the pursuance of larger militant Pan-Islamist agenda.

The end of Jihad and the failure of the Mujahideen to replace the Afghan socialist government created ideological gap which was filled up by ethnic politics. Ethnic or Qoam politics are the norm of local Afghan structures and emanate from their socio-cultural experiences. In the absence of viable political ideology to put together diverse factions, under an umbrella periphery made a bid to take over the helm of affairs at the centre. Periphery is segmentary in nature and has the potential to be used by myopic leaders for the achievement of their narrow goals against their competitors, at the cost of political stability, peace, economic rehabilitation and reconstruction of the national institutions. So the competing Afghan ethnic groups Pashtun under Hikmatyar and later Taliban, Tajiks under Rabbani and Massoud, Uzbek under Rashid Dostum and Hazara under their own leaders were exactly thriving on the fragmentary aspect of ethnic politics.

During the battle of Jalalabad (1989) and even of Khost, wherein some degree of success was achieved, the efforts of the foreign supporters of Hikmatyar to super impose him as the future leader of the Afghan government made other factions conscious of their vulnerability for sharing power in the future government. They had no interest and even will to struggle for the resurrection of Pashtun dominance under the leadership of Hikmatyar, who was a favourite of foreign supporters and enjoyed lesser clout among Afghan public. Also he enjoyed no good will among multiple Afghan factions representing distinct identity groups because of his over-ambitious strategies for gaining power.

## UN's Efforts for Establishing Transitional Government

Parallel to military solution, political efforts for the settlement of the problem were well underway under the auspices of the UN. Although the Geneva Accord completely ignored the issue of transitional government, it only addressed the external dimension of the conflict. However by 1987 UN opened a new channel to negotiate the transitional government in Kabul for which it involved the political groupings, such as Mujahideen who were so far treated as an outstanding party vis-à-vis the government. These efforts of political settlement were not originated in the Security Council or general assembly but were initiated by the successive secretary-generals. Soon after the withdrawal of Soviet forces the political processes envisaged by Secretary General, Peres De Cuellar and later Boutros Boutros Ghali picked up speed.

Model political solutions for the establishment of broad-based transitional government based on intra-Afghan dialogue, cease-fire between the armed groups, and disarmament of militias were recommended. However, they lacked insight of the internal and regional dimension of the settlement. Afghan factions divisive on ethnic and sectarian lines and armed to teeth also banking on their foreign supporters for future assistance insisted on the military solution of the problem and paid lip service to the UN efforts for political settlement.

## Realignment between Regime and Resistance Groups

The Kabul regime having scarce prospects of support from Soviet supporters due to their pressing internal political and economic pressures combined by international agreement on Afghanistan concluded between the two powers, Soviet Russia and United States of America for negative symmetry which was supposed to be implemented from January 1, 1992[10] accelerated efforts of the Kabul regime's for national reconciliation which included abandoning altogether of the Communist political system that was introduced in Afghanistan in the wake of Saur revolution of 1978. Dr. Najib tried to patch up with defunct Khalq and Parcham leaders by offering them government positions. He also tried to initiate dialogue indirectly with the Mujahideen leaders to find out a common ground for compromise. Building contacts with Hikmatyar evidently demonstrated his reliance on ethnic commonalties between the two. Belonging to the same Pashtun Ghilzai tribe provided an opportunity to both to become political partners, which was reciprocated by Hikmatyar when he conveyed his message to Najib through Libyan leader Muammar Qadafi, [11]"You and I could do something in Afghanistan". Although the contacts between the two did not materialize into political alliance however, it gave enough evidence how ethnic bonds replaced ideological fervour.

Other government and resistance stalwarts also strived to reach out to one another in order to survive the post-Soviet anarchy. So, banking on their ethnic bonds, they forged alliances such as Raz Mohammad Paktin Khalqi defence minister and other military officials being ethnic Pashtuns extended support to Hikmatyar[12]. Even Shah Nawaz Tanai,, dissident general of Dr. Najib's government, declared to side with Hikmatyar. Tajik Parchamis the like of Farid Mazdak, foreign minister Abdul Wakil, Army Chief of Staff, Asif

---

[10] Henry S. Breshder, *Afghan Communism and Soviet Intervention* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 369.

[11] William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*, (New York: MacMillan, 2002), p. 187.

[12] Ibid, p. 189.

Delawar and Kabul garrison Chief Baba Jan, joined Massoud[13]which explained the power of ethnic affinities playing role in the future of Afghan politics.

## Trends of Unification between Minority Groups vis-a-vis Pashtuns

During the civil war, the trend of some level of unification was noticed between the minority groups such as Tajiks, Hazara and Uzbeks. Though all Persian speakers are not Tajiks, yet given the exigencies of political vulnerability even those Persian speakers who are not Tajiks, introduce themselves as Tajiks to the outside world with the aim of joining bigger ethnic group in order to gain maximum political weight, essentialized by the effects of power struggle. Also, between Hazara and Uzbek rallying around ethnic identity was very much noticed, especially Hazara who are a Shi'a minority having been persecuted for the sectarian differentiation was found to be uniting under the banner of Hazara ethnic identification rather than sectarian distinctions.

Conversely, Pashtun despite being the largest of ethnic groups having the advantage of model ethnic structure and long politico-military experience intra-ethnic rivalries prevented them to foster a united front in the face of competition for power stimulated by minorities for seeking secure grounds in the future political arrangements. Of the seven Mujahideen parties six claimed Pashtun origin, Hizb-i-Islami Hikmatyar, Hizb-i-Islami Khales, Ittihad-i-Ilami, Harakat-i-Islami, Mahaz-i-Islami but all failed to forge a viable political alliance against the rival ethnic groups. Similarly, if it was a question of deterring the Pashtun dominance the minorities had either not explore the options to join hands for the realization of their dream of tackling Pashtun hegemony. Hazara, Tajiks and Uzbeks joined hands momentarily. However those opportunities were not turned into concrete political alliances, which prevented them to forge a larger group to settle the conflict in their favour.

## Personality Clash between Hikmatyar and Massoud

Personal rivalry between Gulbaddin Hikmatyar (Pashtun) and Ahmad Shah Massoud (Tajik) were equally responsible for giving ethnic semblance to the post Soviet Civil War. The scholars of Afghan history term the power contest between Tajiks and Pashtuns as ethnic conflict. Hikmatyar striving for complete control of power found in Massoud his staunch rival and he left no stone unturned to shatter Massud's dream to share power with him. Killing 36 best commanders and high-ranking officials of Massoud in 1989[14]the cleavage of mistrust once created between the two was never bridged. Hikmatyar, as Prime Minister did not reconcile with Massoud as a defence minister (the

---

[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid, p. 329.

positions assigned to them under the Peshawar Accord). Hikmatyar did not accept that office till June 1996. He kept on insisting to relegate the powers of defence minister by bringing it under the control of prime minister. Having refused to accept his demands he put on the mantle of a total spoiler and kept on destabilizing Rabbani government by entrenching in the South of Kabul and launching artillery barrages from 1992 to 1995, killing hundreds of thousands of civilians and destroying the remaining infrastructure. There was a great deal of mistrust between the two which even could not have been mended when Hikmatyar was taken as Prime minister in the Rabbani government in June 1996. He is still an outlaw who champions the cause of Pashtuns in his own right.

## Mujahideen Rule a Battleground of Ethnic Divisions

The establishment of Mujahideen government under the Peshawar Accord (April, 1992) ignited ethnic conflict between the rival groups when Hikmatyar playing to the tune of total spoiler contested the presidency to Tajik president Bruhanduddin Rabbani who was supposed to be the head of state for four months as concluded in the Peshawar Accord.

Even before the arrival of entourage of the interim government division of Kabul into four zones each controlled by distinct ethnic faction explained the future political landscape of the country. The control of Hikmatyar on the southern portion of the city, Hazara (Hizbi-i-Wahdat) in West, Dostum in the area around the Bala Hissar fortress and Teppe Meranjan, Massoud in the North and Sayyaf in the Pagaman area [15] was enough to speculate bloody power struggle this time between the Mujahideen themselves to decide who will be the ultimate leader the Pashtun the Tajik or else. Once the stage was set it was not dismantled until the military power of international forces destroyed it.

## Involvement of Foreign Actors

Adamant to gain control of Kabul through armed struggle Mujahideen found willing foreign supporters in the ensuing power struggle that used ethnic criteria in supporting their favourite ethnic groups for the attainment of their wider regional interests. Although the nature and character of involvement of the neighboring countries kept on changing following the emergence of new realities on political scene of the region and the world at large, however none of them could afford to ignore playing role in the ongoing Afghan political strife.

Russia, being the initiator of the conflict by invading the country in 1979, even felt cornered after the withdrawal of its forces in 1989. Especially

---

[15]Ibid, p. 202.

for securing their national interest, emerged from the unstable Afghan political situation.

Similarly, Central Asian states most conspicuously Uzbekistan and Tajikistan sharing borders with Afghanistan in the South, felt threatened of the spillover effect of Islamist movement into their own lands which, as speculated would cause impetus to the local Islamist movements in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to contest the power of existing government leaders. They in order to secure their borders supported most frequently Rashid Dostum the Uzbek leader and the Tajik government led, by Rabbani and Massoud in material and moral terms.

On the other hand, Pakistan sharing a long border of around 26,00 km in the Northwest, bearing the brunt of three million refugees in the mid of Soviet-Afghan War (1985) still more than half of total strength of Afghan refugee inhibit the country is a natural partner of three decades long conflict. For the realization of its wider geo-economic and security imperatives, Pakistan supported radical Islamist Pashtun groups in Afghanistan. Serving its strategic interests Pakistan supported Hikmatyar who, when failed to achieve the stipulated goal, was dumped and replaced by the Taliban who surfaced in 1994 as a small group of crusaders that wanted to provide security and establish peace in the land. Soon they would fit in the mould, framed by Pakistan for the native actors, having the potential to promote its interest in the region. It still carries the blame of supporting the Taliban who not only became a source of harbouring international terrorists but also are posing a serious threat to the newly established Karzai government.

Also, United States of America despite being the distant partner remained a key actor in the Afghan conflict. Using Pakistan as frontline state and supporting the Pashtun radical Islamists it supplied arms to the resistance fighters and relief assistance to common Afghans. It invested billions of dollars in the war against communism. However, the fall of communism proved the end of issues of real-politick for the US, which led them to roll back from the region.

However, sharing the perceptions and informal alliance of the Jihad period, the US kept on supporting the Pashtun radical Islamist Gulbuddin Hikmatyar and also the Taliban to be the likely candidates of settling the long-standing morass. However, it is the historical turn of the circumstances and obvious shift of strategic interest that Northern Alliance is now at the helm of affairs with the support of American and international security assistance forces and the Pashtun radical Islamists are now on the run.

Interestingly, all the neighbouring countries in the bid to serve their national interests wanted to resolve the Afghan conflict by envisioning their favourite ethnic groups sitting at the helm of affairs at Kabul caused the continuation of the civil war and made ethnic factor a permanent feature of Afghan politics. If any other factor which played an outgoing role in the

ethnicising Afghan politics, it is none else but the foreign support to belligerent power groups garbed in ethnic costume.

## Ethnic Group's Political Goals

The continuation of the civil war also unfolded the exact political interests of the rival political factions. Pashtuns, whether Hikmatyar or the Taliban struggled for complete Pashtun domination, in other words undermining the idea of sharing power in a broad based government. Tajiks under Massoud were also striving for centralization of power. However, they made up their mind that Tajik political ascendancy will never go uncontested by the Pashtuns who were the traditional political leaders of the power game. Those were dictates of conventional wisdom, which stopped Ahmad Shah Massoud from conquering Kabul, although he was in a position to accomplish the task with little effort. Knowing the fact that Tajik rule would never be acceptable to Pashtuns who are the largest majority of the country, he abstained from occupying Kabul in April 1992. It also prompted him to insist on the brokers of the Peshawar Accord to agree on transitional government comprised of all Mujahideen factions[19]. Though Jamiat opted for power sharing with other contenders it strived for strong position for the Tajiks in the central government.

     Uzbeks wanted regional autonomy in the North and a share in the central government. While the Rabbani government wanted more influence in the North and limited share for the Uzbeks in the central government, it kept the two struggling against each other till the end. Hazara wanted similar concessions, autonomy in their own land and proportional share in the centre. Though they constituted 12 per cent of the total population yet they demanded 25 per cent representation in the government[20] at the centre for which they struggled all through the 90's decade. Even now Mr. Mohaqiq the Hazara Vice President of the present government presented a formula of Hazara regional autonomy to the central government, which was not acknowledged by Karzai because of security constraints and hazards of warlordism which flourish on the regional autonomy of the warlords.

## Ambivalent Alliances between the Groups

The fluid nature of alliances during the Mujahideen rule gave an impression to some that it was a typical political struggle for power that down played the ethnic aspect of the war. Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara alliance against Hikmatyar broke up in 1993, which stimulated the formation of another alliance between

---

[19] Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*, op. cit., p. 191.
[20] Amera Saeed, "The Peshawar Accord and After", in *Afghanistan, Past, Present and Future*, (Islamabad: Institute of Regional Studies, 2000), p. 340.

Wahdat, Hikmatyar, Dostum and Mujahideen, just to reshuffle between Dostum, Taliban and tacitly Rabbani in 1994 against Hikmatyar. An amazing shift in the ambivalent alliances that formed and dismantled with increased rapidity happened when Hikmatyar joined Rabbani's government, Wahdat and Dostum were next in line to follow suit in 1995-96, which provided enough material to the monitors of Afghan political scene that it was a political struggle which had nothing to do with ethnicity or any ideological scarcity.

However, two factors are very binding that do not disturb the ethnic connotation of the civil war. First of all this is how traditional alliance system works in the local Afghan politics. Alliances are forged between forces of common interest and after the achievement of that goal they break automatically and the parties are free to realign for realization of some other objectives. And second political and ethnic identities in political sense are processes they kept on changing with the shift of interests of the concerned groups which means the civil war of 1990s was political in nature but ethnic in character.

## The Demon of Warlordism

The civil war, which began soon after the collapse of Socialist-Afghan State, thrived on politics of identity. It undermined the political process installed within the framework of Peshawar Accords (1992) and later Islamabad Accords (1993). The Rabbani regime failed to expand authority beyond Kabul and a few surrounding provinces. Most parts of the country remained under the control of local commanders and regional strongmen, who keeping their own militias and generating their own resources, posed greater challenge to the stability of the central government. The phenomenon of warlordism is the product of Mujahideen rule wherein those regional power holders consolidated their power on their ethnic support networks. The Taliban disarmed the warlords and some were banished such as Ismail khan and Rashid Dosutm as a result of successful military action against them. However, the demon of warlordism has resurfaced in the aftermath of the Taliban's fall, which now poses great threat to the process of restoration of secure and stable political environment in the country. The very presence of regional warlords holds a threat of deadly ethnic-based civil war, once the international community slackens support to the existing regime.

## Taliban: The Legacy of the Mujahideen

The emergence of the Taliban was the direct consequence of the failure of Mujahideen rule to reconcile political differences over the negotiating table rather than settling them on the battleground with the rival groups. President Rabbani's overtures to remain in power were viewed with mistrust by other politico-ethnic factions. His delays in holding the meeting of the

Shura-e-Ahl-e-Hal-o-Akad and then when eventually the meetings was called, the selection of its delegates and his selection as president for the eighteen months transitional government, were construed as manipulation and usurpation of chances of others who desired to run for the same position.

Rabbani's alliance with Hikmatyar in 1996 when he became a political liability for his foreign supporters was a disaster for the fledgling legitimacy he enjoyed among the residents of Kabul, whose life and properties were put at stake by the artillery barrages of Hikmatyar since 1992. Also, Rabbani's party henchmen resented Hikmatyar's inclusion into government who was a bloodthirsty rival just a litter while ago. A tacit alliance with the Taliban in 1994 against Hikmatyar also demonstrated lack of political acumen on the part of Rabbani who in lesser than expected time became a substitute for the Rabbani government. So once again in political terms, power shifted from the minorities to the Pashtuns.

## External Factor

The internal squabbling among the Mujahideen groups provided an opportunity to the neighboring countries to serve their interests in the region through proxy factions, representing their solidarity groups on the chessboard of politics. The Taliban, although a product of anarchic Mujahideen rule and supported by Pakistan for being Pashtun Islamic fundamentalist, were blamed for ethnic cleansing and Pashtunizing the state through the politics of exclusion of minorities from power.

Pakistan, being one of the three countries, which included Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirate, recognized the Taliban regime in 1997 on the eve of occupation of Mazar-o-Sharif. It kept on supporting the Taliban regime till the very last when eventually it had to abandon them in the wake of joining the international coalition against terror. It explains how Pakistan found in Pashtun Islamist the most likely ally to promote its interests in the region. It also denotes that Pakistan was perhaps sharing the perception of the Taliban in their local affairs.

As the Taliban remained intransigent to share power with other ethnic minorities, who by then formed themselves into a broader alliance with the name of Northern Alliance comprising Massoud, Dostum, Sayyaf, Haji Qadir of Jalalabad Shura fame and Hizb-i-Wahdat were invariably supported by Iran, Central Asian States and Russia to secure their respective security and economic interests in the region. The outcome of such policies and approaches of the external actors was nothing else but the continuation of the civil war.

## UN's Renewed Efforts

The lack of confidence of the Afghan elites on the sincerity of the UN's initiatives led to frustration, which resulted from successive UN's efforts failure. Mostly because of sluggishness with regard to applying new strategies for the restoration of political order till Lakhdar Brahimi took over as the Secretary General's representative in 1999. The February- March 1999 Ashkabad negotiations held under UN auspices and especially deliberation through the UN's six plus two forum in Tashkent and Kandahar in Jul 1999[21] involved the neighbouring countries to convince them to stop meddling in the conflict. Although they signed the Tashkent declaration, nothing came out of it in practical terms. It also failed to convince Taliban leadership to share power and establish a broad-based government, which they responded by fresh bout of hostilities against the minorities. Needless to say that it also failed to convince the regional powers to suspend arm supply to the rival factions involved in the conflict, which was again evident from the resumption of fresh hostilities between the rival groups.

Interestingly, till quite late (before 1999) UN representatives unwittingly down played the role of ethnic groups and the involvement of regional countries in exacerbating the Afghan civil strife. For instance, UN Secretary General's representative, Mohmoud Mestiri (1995-96) disapproved the idea of a settlement between Massoud and Dostum because in his view it could provoke further ethnic tensions[22], which not only killed the will for compromise between the willing groups but also encouraged further meddling of the external powers. Similarly, applying regional approach to resolve the problem was a later phenomenon, which was visible for the first time in the 1999 UN-Afghan deliberations through the six plus two forum for the establishment of broad based government with the consensus of the regional powers to desist from supplying military support to warring factions. Even now any political settlement desired to be a success has to have three tiers approach, local, regional and international. Internal political issues need to be addressed primarily through cooperation and support of regional powers and international assistance and guarantees are of course very much essential to the realization of that goal.

## Taliban's Isolation and International Terrorism

The Taliban in fact gained local popularity from determination or rigidity over the basic agenda of peace, security and sharia, which they legitimized through Islamism and Pushtunwali. Conversely, the Northern Alliance comprised

---

[21] Larry Goodson, *Afghanistan Endless War*, (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2001) p. 174.

[22] Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*, op. cit., p. 212.

ethnic (Hazara, Tajik, Uzbek) and political minorities (Sayyaf, Mujadidi, Gilani) having the baggage of failure of the Mujahideen rule had no chance to once again expand their constituency among the alienated public. Since they have failed to establish their writ during the Mujahideen rule so the International community also did not bet much on the political capabilities of the Northern Alliance, which provided additional leverage to the Taliban government to expand and consolidate power. Though Northern Alliance is back in power, they however, still have to struggle hard to gain internal legitimacy.

The Taliban insistence on military solution and reluctance to share power with other factions alienated other Pashtun groups to join them. Although the Khaliqi Pashtuns, Commander Jalalduddin Haqqani and even Hamid Karzai (for a while) sided with the Taliban[33] however later they had to renegotiate their support in the wake of the international condemnation invoked by the extremist policies over the issues of gender, religious fundamentalism and adherence to Usama Bin Laden, an Arab dissident, who fought with Mujahideen during the Jihad time and rejoined the Taliban for political asylum.

In fact, failure to receive recognition from the larger international community and intransigence to share power with other ethnic and political groups resulted in the isolation of Taliban. This strictly circumvented their resource channels that brought them close to the radical Islamist Usama Bin Laden who joined the Taliban leadership for ideological reasons and also by forging matrimonial bond after he married the sister of Taliban's supreme leader, Mullah Umer. So the bottom line is that the lack of sustainable international support and economic assistance made eventually Bin Laden and Taliban as partners.

## Post-Taliban Situation

The fall of the Taliban regime prompted the need to establish the long sought-after multi-ethnic broad-based government comprised of leading groups of Afghan political scene, which was materialized by the Bonn agreement concluded in December 2001. A Kandahari Pashtun Hamid Karzai hailing from leading Durrani tribe, led the interim government who has been reinstated in his position as head of the transitional government after the June 2002 Loya Jirga. However, both the cabinets largely comprised of Tajiks (Panjsheri group) in strength and significance of the ministries, (defence foreign affairs, interior) which gives nightmares to the Pashtun elites given the fact of being the majority of Afghans having fresh memories of Northern Alliance's insane atrocities against the Taliban and Pashtuns of the North who were forced to leave their homes. They do not feel comfortable with the strong Tajik presence in the government, which marginalized the traditional Pashtun political leadership clout.

Their apprehensions accelerated when Pashtun stalwarts, Haji Qadir Governor of Nengarhar also holding the post of vice president was killed in last July, Abdurrahman aviation minister ethnic Noristani but politically identified with Pashtuns was killed last February and even Karzai had a narrow escape from attempt on life last September. Tajik clique is suspected for these political murders and life attempts on the President, which brew ethnic tension in the top government echelon. Even the new constitution that is ratified in January 2004 after holding deliberations at the constitutional Loya Jirga has handled superficially with the ethnic issues. Some cosmetic concessions are awarded to the minorities but it falls far short of their real demands of regional autonomy and substantial share in the central government. Also, the Pashtuns, given the intricacies of implementation of the constitution, feel vulnerable in the presence of Tajik dominance in the government. The means the present constitution does not stop renewal of future power struggle between the minorities and the Pashtuns in the wake of strategic shift of American interests from the region.

So, ethnic balance in the government and in the security forces is the dire need of the hour. How to sort it out needs the initiation of a plethora of processes such as establishing democratic institutions, organization of multi-ethnic security forces, rehabilitation of the economy, rebuilding of the infrastructure and national reconciliation through building the civil society. Of course, the beneficiaries of these long desired initiatives are the people of Afghanistan who are wary of war and want to make a success of the first stride towards that direction that has taken place under the Bonn Accord in December 2001[23].

## Conclusion

What about the future? Given enormous ethno-political complexities of the present conflict, it is still a tall order to be handled with prospects of reconciliation. Especially, not taking into account the internal intricacies of the Afghan politics, ignorance of their socio-cultural complexities and the sheer vested interests of the foreign actors make the future stability a far cry.

The internal dimension of the Afghan conflict has to be addressed first, which suggests resolving the issue of warlordism, which is deeply embedded in the ethnic politics. Building security and political structures and construction of infrastructure to support the formation of vital national institutions, ethnic harmony is a pressing need of the hour.

The external dimension of the problem is crucial, though addressing the internal aspect of conflict is vital. Ethnic politics, which flourished because of the collapse of the state and the disappearance of ideological fervour, provided enough material and strong emotional source to continuation of the

---

[23] *The News International* (Islamabad),7 December 2001.

civil war. If foreign military assistance and drug money fuelled the Pashtun, Tajik Hazara and Uzbek factions so is championing of the diverse interests of ethnic differentiation provided them convincing excuse to be at loggerhead against each other. Given the enormous devastation, ethnic differentiation has caused it still has the power to become a cause, of war (initially it was considered the consequence of prolonged war) if neglected to resolve.

Ethnic politics has introduced political consciousness between the minority communities about their political rights and distinct identities. Power sharing at the centre and struggle for securing maximum hold in handling local matters in their respective regions are wake up calls for present power brokers emanated from the decade long ethnic driven war and may become a strong cause of another deadly round of strife.

Though the new Constitution addresses these issues, yet problems of implementation and challenges to stability signal dangers ahead. The vulnerabilities of the minorities against Pashtun hegemony at one hand and though presidential form of government court Pashtuns fears however they also feel vulnerable in the given Tajik dominated governmental set up. So the dividends of the new constitution for the majority and the minorities are still doubtful. How far would it be able to settle the ethnic divide, depends on judicious implementation of the constitution.■