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CONTENTS

VISION AND THE INDO-PAKISTAN PEACE PROCESS

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Introduction

No effort for peace building can yield positive results without vision articulated by the stakeholders involved in an armed conflict. Peace process, as a wholesome and a comprehensive approach to terminate a conflict situation, can reach a logical conclusion if innovative and path-breaking solutions are worked out and implemented with proper political will and determination.

Since August 1947 when India and Pakistan emerged as new states on the map till today, the two neighbours, despite having a shared history, geography and way of life are bogged down in endless conflicts resulting into three wars and several armed engagements. Hope and pessimism shaped the fluid nature of Indo-Pakistan relations whereby the two neighbours missed several opportunities for peace and paid a heavy price of confrontation. Yet, since 1997 when a degree of peace process was launched during the second government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif until today, India and Pakistan are unable to make a breakthrough in resolving contentious issues outlined in the composite dialogue. Ups and downs in their peace process is certainly an issue which needs to be analyzed in some detail because several track-I, track-II and track-III initiatives launched by the stakeholders at the official and civil-society levels in the two countries provided a road map and a comprehensive plan to amicably resolve conflicts and move in the direction of permanent peace.

Following its victory in the 11 May general elections, the Pakistan Muslim League (N) formed government and Nawaz Sharif became prime minister for the third time. He said that "it was his desire to move ahead in ties

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by picking up the threads from the peace process in 1999 when former Indian prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee made a historic visit to Lahore.[1] His Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh also expressed his optimism to 'jump-start the stalled peace process. In that scenario, new prospects to revive the process were certainly gaining momentum, but with several challenges and impediments amidst skirmishes along the Line of Control in Kashmir in August 2013.

This paper will examine in detail different pros and cons of the Indo-Pakistan peace process while taking into account the issues which since long seem to have impeded the process of peace. Furthermore, the paper will argue to what extent there exists a linkage between vision and peace process and how the leadership of India and Pakistan can pursue a visionary and forward-looking approach so that opportunities which exist for meaningful cooperation between the two neighbours are seized and a better future is ensured for their coming generations. The following questions will be examined in the article:-

1.   What is a peace process and how it can be relevant in case of India and Pakistan?

2.   What are the major requirements of the Indo-Pakistan peace process and how the two sides can resolve issues which impede the process of peace?

3.   What is the linkage between vision and peace process and to what extent the destiny of South Asia can change for the better if New Delhi and Islamabad are able to articulate a vision which can be perceptible, practicable and help the process of peace?

4.   What is the future of Indo-Pakistan peace process?

The role of moderates and hardliners in the Indo-Pakistan peace process will also be examined in the context of mindset which happens to be inflexible, indifferent to the costs of conflicts and supportive to the maintenance of status quo.

Dynamics of peace process

Peace process is a multi-dimensional concept which after the end of the Cold War is widely used to resolve inter- and intra-state conflicts. Its comprehensive nature is obvious from the fact that at the individual, group, community, state, regional and international levels, stakeholders involved in a conflict attempt to initiate the process of peace in an attempt to terminate the state of violence and armed conflict.

There are several definitions of peace process which can help understand its nature, role and dynamics. According to the *Free Dictionary*, peace process means, "any social process undertaken by government who want their citizens to believe they are trying to avoid armed hostilities."[2] *Macmillan Dictionary* defines peace process as, "a series of discussions to try to find a peaceful solution to a war or to political violence."[3] According to *Collins English Dictionary*, "the peace process negotiates (between governments,

countries, etc.) toward peace or the resolution of a conflict.[4] Harold Saunders, the architect of Israeli-Palestinian peace process and a former US government official in his book *The Other Walls* maintains that,

> The peace process is more than conventional diplomacy and negotiation. It encompasses a full range of political, psychological, economic, diplomatic and military actions woven together into a comprehensive effort to establish peace between Israel and its neighbors. Progress toward peace depends on breaking down the barriers to negotiation and reconciliation, the other walls. If we ignore the politics of breaking down these barriers the mediator and negotiator many never have a chance.[5]

Saunders further elaborates the dynamics of peace process by arguing that "any negotiating process encompasses two large periods — one that precedes actual negotiation and one that start when negotiators are gathered around the table. The theorists and the diplomats normally concentrate on identifying the formulas and techniques that are useful in the negotiating room. They have historically paid less attention to ways of persuading people to enter that room.[6] About "the other walls" as an impediment to peace, Saunders is of the opinion that "the other walls that block the way for peace are often barriers in human perception and feeling that are all too infrequently addressed by the diplomatic option papers."[7] He outlines five different phases in a peace process viz:

—   Defining a problem.

—   Committing to a negotiated solution.

—   Developing framework.

—   Negotiations.

—   Implementing the negotiated settlement.[8]

Saunders's explanation of peace process cannot be applicable in cases where the parties involved not only lack basic knowledge about peace process, but also do not possess the professional approach, will or determination to move in that direction. In conflicts where the stakeholders reach the realization that enough destruction has been caused as a result of armed conflicts or a conflict-like situation, one can expect a plausible outcome of peace process. The case of India and Pakistan fits into the category of "no war, no peace" situation as neither the two sides are engaged in a war nor are living like peaceful neighbours. The absence of a purposeful dialogue is a major failure of peace process because the lack of progress leads to frustration, despair and loss of hope for a better future.

Sydney D. Bailey, in his book *Peace is a Process,* defines peace process as,

> Peace begins within ourselves. It is to be implemented within the family, in our meetings, in our work and leisure, in our localities and internationally. The task will never be done. Peace is a process to engage in, not a goal to be reached.[9]

Likewise, "peace process is a long drawn-out affair, based on the will of the parties concerned to find a peaceful solution to their conflict. It is based on reciprocal measures. Among its ingredients are measures which favor part of a package. One party may not be happy with what it is expected to give away but may willingly do so in return for some reward that it basically needs."[10] Therefore, "a peace process needs to send a clear message to the world that its participants are serious about the resolution of their conflicts and can sustain the process of dialogue despite frustration and impediments. They must also show that they realize the risks of derailing the peace process through the politics of confrontation and understand the benefits if they move in the direction of unity."[11] Therefore, "peace process means systematic efforts made by warring parties to defuse tension by unleashing a process of dialogue for the resolution of issues which cause friction and instability in their relations. The end is peace but the techniques which are used to build bridges of reconciliation and cooperation require a process without a particular time framework."[12] An Indian civil-society activist, Paula Banerjee talks about peace process in the context of South Asia by arguing that,

> What is known as the peace process in Kashmir, North East India and Sri Lanka does not present before us a scenario of sanitized vacuum, but rather of acute contentions, a situation where dialogue for peace continues, at the same time, violence looms large over the scene. Hence, a conflict and dialogue for peace exist side by side in most of South Asia, a case of war — peace continuum.[13]

Like other conflict-ridden parts of the world, in South Asia also peace process got an impetus in the post-Cold War era. In both inter- and intra-state conflicts, peace process emerged as a useful tool for the parties concerned to deal with an intractable conflict by launching a process. Some of the peace processes known have worked or to be in existence for quite some time in South Asia are as follows:

- The Afghan peace process.

- The Indo-Pakistan peace process encompassing a broad canvass of numerous unresolved issues.

- The Kashmir peace process.

- The peace process in Nepal.

- The peace process in Sri Lanka.

- The peace process in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Bangladesh.

One major missing link in peace processes in South Asia and, for that matter, in other parts of the world is the absence of a practicable vision. The requirements and conditions of peace process must be met but without foresight and a forward-looking approach to see things beyond one cannot expect a peace process to take off. Unfortunately, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, which got a jump start as a result of vision shared by the then Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and the PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, failed to reach its logical conclusion when Rabin was assassinated by a hawkish Jew in November 1995. His successor, Benjamin Netanyahu, belonging to the Likud party, had a different vision on Israeli-Palestinian peace process based on denying Palestinians a viable state and reaching a just peace with them. With tunnel vision and a parochial mindset, peace process cannot render positive results. In the case of India and Pakistan, the missing link in the peace process is also the absence of visionary approach by the leadership from both sides or a vision which lacks adequate foresight, flexibility, plan and purpose.

Four major obstacles which prevent the pursuit of positive vision by India and Pakistan are:

First, the baggage of the past particularly the events of 1947 and the post-partition armed conflicts between the two countries. The enemy images of both sides still impede pursuing an approach which can look beyond historical cleavages and move forward.

Second, the absence of a vision for a better future for South Asia. As long as India and Pakistan are unable to normalize their conflict-ridden ties, South Asia would remain poor, backward and marginalized in the global sphere because both countries account for more than 75 per cent of the population, area and resources of the region. The two countries do talk about regional cooperation in South Asia and better connectivity, but their approach and statements do not go beyond rhetoric.

Third, parochial mindset on resolving conflicts, particularly those threatening peace in South Asia is a reflection of lack of vision on the part of India and Pakistan. It is because of the absence of positive vision that New Delhi and Islamabad are unable to make a breakthrough in composite dialogue, a fundamental part of their peace process. The politics of "blame game," allegations and counter-allegations form the core of Indo-Pakistan antagonism. Finally, the absence of participation of the youth in the Indo-Pakistan peace process is a major failure on the part of the two countries to articulate a better future for those who will continue to suffer if policies based on positive vision are not formulated by the two sides. When the syllabi of educational institutions of India and Pakistan is devoid of substance promoting goodwill and amity about each other, the mindset of the youth of the two countries cannot be different from the older generations. Unfortunately, mistrust, suspicion, ill-will and paranoia which existed in the partition generation tend to permeate as far as

the youths of India and Pakistan are concerned. In the name of patriotism, nationalism and jingoism, vested-interest groups in the two countries are able to influence the minds of youths so as to transform them as hawkish and intransigent.

Summing up the dynamics of peace process in the context of South Asia, one can figure out six major impediments:

1. Unresolved conflicts.

2. Enemy images.

3. Lack of political will and determination.

4. Absence of positive vision.

5. Unprofessional and non-serious approach to deal with issues present in the composite dialogue.

6. Inflexible approach.

Without overcoming such impediments, the very existence of the Indo-Pakistan peace process would remain fragile and in jeopardy.

The Indo-Pakistan Peace Process

The other walls which since 1947 until today tend to deny the people of India and Pakistan the resolution of their contentious issues are primarily psychological in nature. The walls of paranoia, mistrust and suspicion still remain a reality in South Asia. Unless these walls are demolished as a result of a positive process of peace, any breakthrough in the Indo-Pakistan peace process is unlikely. What is the nature of this peace process and why the two countries, despite the launching of composite dialogue since 1997, are unable to proceed in the right direction? How the Indian government will seize the opportunity which exists in view of the clear commitment of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to take the peace process to its logical conclusion?

Some of the major areas of the peace process over the years are listed below.

1. Agreement on ceasefire along the LoC since November 2003

2. Demobilization of forces along the borders following the attack on the Indian parliament on 13 December 2001 and the deployment of forces of the two countries on their borders

3. Holding of talks under the composite dialogue on contentious issues

4. Holding of periodic talks between India and Pakistan on issues, particularly on maintaining better communication lines for averting nuclear accidents and other nuclear-related matters

5.   Improving trade, commercial and communication linkages by promoting people-to-people contacts

6.   Launching of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, Tharparkar-Monabao bus service, Amritsar-Nankana Sahib bus service which has facilitated thousands of Indians and Pakistanis and Kashmiris and has helped reduce enemy images about each other

7.   Improving ties in education, science and technology

8.   Better cooperation for combating terrorism, drugs and narcotics

9.   Stabilizing their relations in the nuclear field by exchanging every year documents related to their nuclear installations and reaching an agreement on nuclear risk regime[14]

During his election campaign Nawaz Sharif promised to revive the Indo-Pakistan peace process. It is often argued that "the then Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee travelled to Lahore on the inaugural run of the Delhi-Lahore bus service and went up to the Minar-e-Pakistan firmly stamping the authenticity of the two-nation theory. But soon there was the Kargil episode, which Nawaz Sharif claimed was General Musharraf's brainchild to discredit the democratic government and grab power, later on to be countered by the general's foreign minister Abdul Sattar by writing that the Lahore peace process was a convenient alibi to world opinion, and especially influential powers, to abdicate responsibility to promote a joint settlement of the Kashmir question."[15] According to the report of the Washington-based Center On Contemporary Conflict, "the Pakistan Army had planned the Kargil operation to scuttle the Indo-Pak peace process which had been initiated by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and which had led to the 1999 Lahore agreement."[16] What had happened in 1999 is now the thing of the past and both India and Pakistan need to pursue a fresh and innovative approach for a result oriented peace process. Instead of getting bogged down on historical events, which may appear to be unpleasant, the two neighbours need to pursue a fresh approach to seek out of box solution of issues which since 1947 till todate tend to impede normal and good-neighbourly relations.

According to a renowned Indian journalist, A.G. Noorani, "Manmohan Singh wants to work with Nawaz Sharif to chart a new course and pursue a new destiny in the relations between our countries. Nawaz Sharif fought the 1997 general elections on the plank *inter alia* of improving relations with India. Deve Gowda's (Indian Prime Minister at the time) message of congratulations proposed an early resumption of dialogue. Nawaz Sharif's reply suggested talks between Foreign Secretaries. This resulted in the Islamabad joint statement of June 23, 1997 which embodied a charter for a composite dialogue. I. K. Gujral wrecked it by reneging on his commitment at Male to set up a working group on Kashmir. The Bharatiya Janata Party regime which followed (1998-2004) did worse"[17] Noorani's detailed account of the ups and downs in the bilateral relations since the launching of the composite dialogue proves how fragile is the

political will from both sides to take the peace process to its logical conclusion. In order to seek better coordination at the track-I and track-II level, Nawaz Sharif emphasized the need for regular contacts at the highest level.

Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesman Aizaz Chaudhry said in his weekly media briefing that "the Prime Minister has given Ambassador Sheharyar Khan the responsibility of conducting track-II diplomacy in order to improve our ties with India."[18] Senior Indian diplomat, Ambassador Satinder K. Lambah, was named as the counterpart of Sheharyar Khan. According to media reports, when the announcement appointing Ambassador Sheharyar Khan was made, he was already in India and had met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and conveyed to him "Pakistan's sincere desire to move forward on improving relations with India."[19] It is yet to be seen how Ambassador Khan and Ambassador Lambah will deal with the enormous challenges facing positive transformation of the peace process. The unresolved conflict over Jammu and Kashmir is a major challenge but more than that is the failure of the two sides to maintain ceasefire along the Line of Control agreed to in November 2003. The people of Jammu and Kashmir are the main sufferers of Indo-Pakistan conflict and may be the principal beneficiary if there is a meaningful breakthrough in the peace process.

Addressing a public meeting in Jammu, People's Democratic Party (PDP) patron Mufti Mohammad Sayeed said things had started falling in place for rejuvenation of the peace process with Pakistan. He said Jammu and Kashmir would be the biggest beneficiary if India and Pakistan were at peace with each other. The "LoC should become line of cooperation and not mere control. The propaganda that militants would sneak in through bases has been proved wrong. Time has come for breaking barriers and it will happen."[20] Referring to the viability of Indo-Pakistan peace process for the people of Jammu and Kashmir Mufti Sayeed further said that,

> Though the entire population of the subcontinent has suffered due to prolonged conflict and armed confrontation between the two neighbouring countries, the brunt of such enmity has been borne mostly by the hapless people of Jammu and Kashmir. The ceasefire on the borders has brought much relief to the people living in the border areas besides paving way for pursuing the dialogue process between the two countries. The peace process, despite frequent disruptions and its slow pace, had brought hopes in the lives of millions of people in the two countries.[21]

He reminded the people in his public meeting that the PDP had pioneered the process of peace and reconciliation.[22] Unfortunately, the Indo-Pakistan peace process derailed after the terrorist attacks in Mumbai in November 2008. The composite dialogue resumed in February 2011, and as a result a liberalized visa policy for the people of the two countries was announced but later the military skirmishes on the Line of Control in Kashmir

once again slowed down the peace talks.[23] On 7 August Directors General, Military Operations (DGMO) of India and Pakistan talked on the hotline over the growing escalation of tension along the LoC.[24] India had accused Pakistan that its forces killed five Indian soldiers in the Poonch sector, a charge categorically denied by Pakistan. That incident which indicated the fragility of the ceasefire along the LoC, led to the resumption of charges and counter-charges against each other and overshadowed expectations for a new impetus to the peace process.

It is not the first time that the bilateral peace process is at stake because of tension along the LoC. In the past also, skirmishes along the LoC led to allegations and counter-allegations but this time it is quite serious because New Delhi squarely accused Pakistan of killing five Indian soldiers in the Poonch sector. In the Indian parliament, a lot of heated debate took place on the LoC issue in which the BJP blamed Defence Minister A. K. Anthony on taking a soft stance of what it called "deliberate" killing of Indian troops by Pakistani forces. It was because of the pressure exerted by the BJP that the Indian defense minister had to retract his earlier statement and making a fresh statement blaming Pakistan for the killing of Indian troops. The BJP also demanded that India suspend the composite dialogue with Pakistan in retaliation against the incident. Unfortunately, whenever there is a spell of cold war between India and Pakistan, no effort is made to independently probe the cause of the incident which triggers another round of confrontation. Until the two sides stick to a policy of not encouraging provocation and false allegations against each other following any unpleasant incident, whether at the LoC or elsewhere in their countries, one cannot expect any major transformation in the peace process.

The following table will help understand the dynamics of the peace process and the issues covered under it.

Table

Indo-Pakistan peace process

Issues	Results
Jammu and Kashmir	No progress, except the launching of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service
Siachen, Sir Creek and conflict over water resources	Stalemate
People-to-people interaction	Marginal progress owing to some relaxation in the visa regime
Trade and commercial ties	Marginal progress because of non-granting of MFN status to India by Pakistan
Military confidence-building measures	At risk because of periodic violations and skirmishes along the Line of Control

Consultation and meetings at the highest level	Not regular as bilateral visits by the heads of state and government have not taken place in the last few years
Role of track II and III dialogue	Continuing but without any significant impact on the peace process
Cooperation to combat terrorism	Still not institutionalized but in existence under the framework of SAARC
Role of civil society	Marginal
Review of peace process at track-I level	Infrequent

It seems, there are more minuses than pluses in the process. The two sides have a history of derailing the peace process on account of some event and then reviving it again. The ups and downs in the peace process no doubt reflect the mindset of the two sides which still lacks positive vision and foresight. The price of confrontation between the two neighbours is paid by their people who continue to live in poverty, social backwardness and with a poor quality of life.

Composite dialogue and the way forward

Composite dialogue is a major component of Indo-Pakistan peace process. It covers the following issues:

1. Peace and Security

2. Jammu and Kashmir

3. Siachen

4. Sir Creek

5. Terrorism and drug trafficking

6. Wullar Barrage/Tulbul navigation project

7. Promotion of friendly exchanges

8. Trade and economic cooperation

The Indo-Pakistan normalization process, which was suspended after the attack on the Indian parliament in December 2001, was resumed following the meeting between Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf on the sidelines of the SAARC summit held in Islamabad in January 2004. Prior to that, on 22 October 2003, India had offered Pakistan a number of CBMs, including the resumption of sports, air and shipping links, and a bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad.[25] India's emphasis in the peace process has been on trade, people-to-people interaction

and combating terrorism, whereas Pakistan focuses on the resolution of contentious issues, primarily Jammu and Kashmir.

The peace process which appeared irreversible after the resumption of the composite dialogue again got suspended following the Mumbai terrorist attack of November 2008, only to be resumed in February 2011. After the violent incidents at the LoC in August 2013, the two countries exchanged allegations of the November 2003 ceasefire violations thus derailing the talks held under the composite dialogue. There were attacks in India on the Lahore-Delhi bus service; at the Pakistan High Commission and the PIA office in Delhi both by the Congress and BJP demonstrators.

There are more reverses in the composite dialogue that any substantial progress achieved. Stagnation, stalemate, despair, fear and pessimism still loom large on the prospects of peace in South Asia. When one looks into the rich cultural heritage of the Indian sub-continent, particularly the Indus-Ganges civilization, gets a sense of bitterness finding so much mutual mistrust, suspicion and paranoid mindset. As the custodians of a centuries old civilization, the two countries can concentrate more on reviving the culture of peace and tolerance which was the hallmark of the Indian subcontinent. It appears to be difficult on account of more than six decades of animosities but not impossible.

One way to break the logjam and transform the mindset responsible for decades of confrontation is by pursuing a renaissance approach which would require focus on promoting better sharing of art, culture, music, history, archaeology and education. "While maintaining their identities, India and Pakistan must lift restrictions which impede the revival of their cultural heritage so that the present generation of the two countries is able to understand how tolerant and peaceful their ancient past was, and why the generations following the partition of the sub-continent pursued a violent and confrontationist path. In the political sphere, a renaissance approach would require reviving some of the symbols of peace and harmony which existed amidst the environment of hostility and mistrust. These symbols are the Liaquat-Nehru Pact of April 1950 for establishing communal peace, the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 which tried to resolve a water conflict, the 1972 Simla Pact which enabled New Delhi and Islamabad to move forward following the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971, the Salal Dam agreement of 1978, the agreement on not attacking each other's nuclear installations of December 1988, the Lahore Declaration of February 1999, the agreement on preventing air and space violation, troop monitoring, [accord on] advance notice of military exercises (April 1991), agreement on banning chemical weapons (1992), and the Islamabad Declaration of January 2004 which provided a road map for the India-Pakistan peace process."[26] Therefore, "after decades of hostility and confrontation, it is time for India and Pakistan to think in terms of launching a renaissance so that the two neighbours, regardless of past bitterness, can cause the rebirth of centuries-old civilization. That will certainly help take the peace process to its logical conclusion.[27] According to a renowned Indian security analyst, C. Raja Mohan, "Indo-Pak dialogue is a complex political theater. The signals put out by the principal players are often lost in the

posturing of the political leaders on both sides. What is meant for the domestic audience is instantly relayed across the border and elicits violent verbal reaction. After considerable deliberations in the mid-1990s, India and Pakistan unveiled in September 1998 a framework for what is called a composite and integrated dialogue."[28] Raja Mohan also raises 10 key questions related to Indo-Pakistan dialogue and peace process, viz:

—   What do they talk about?

—   What are the 'Core' Issues?

—   What about linkages?

—   Are there pre-conditions?

—   Sequential or Simultaneous?

—   Shape of the Table?

—   Bilateral and Third Parties?

—   Role of CBMs.

—   Appropriate Interlocutors.

—   Backchannel.[29]

Had those at the helm of affairs in India and Pakistan been visionary in their approach and acts, the two neighbours would have been able to sort out most of the contentious issues. What is vision and how it can bring a qualitative change in the Indo-Pakistan peace process? What is a negative and a positive peace process and how a positive vision can make a difference in bettering relations between the two neighbours? *The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus* defines vision as, "imaginative insight," "a think or idea perceived."[30] "A positive vision for South Asia means shared ownership of culture and civilization across the region from Afghanistan to Bangladesh, from Nepal to Sri Lanka, the regional culture of tolerance, coexistence and peace is to be reclaimed so that the world can have a positive image of South Asia. Again, it is India and Pakistan where qualitative change should take place so that the baggage of corruption, bad governance, poverty, illiteracy and intolerance can be shed."[31] It is ironical that after every pledge which India and Pakistan make following the resumption of their peace talks, there are two steps forward and four steps backwards. Because of the lack of positive vision to take the composite dialogue to its logical conclusion and pursue a flexible approach on bilateral basis, one can observe the same old rhetoric, allegations and counter-allegations.

What is lacking in the Indo-Pakistan relations is a positive peace process which means the two countries' resolve to work on the pluses while neutralizing the minuses. The positive side in their relations needs to be highlighted. Negative peace process means a situation where unresolved issues are prolonged and either or both sides focus more on blaming each other for the

failure or stagnation in talks rather than taking steps to remove the cause of stalemate and failures. While the peace process continues, it is only symbolic in nature and is devoid of any meaningful progress. Conceptually, peace process, which primarily evolved in the West, lacks the ownership in those regions where one can observe unabated process of armed conflicts. Whether it is the Arab-Israeli peace process, Afghanistan or India and Pakistan, there exists lack of ownership and a sense of better understanding on issues which provide a viable justification to support and strengthen the peace process. In such regions, peace process is perceived in a negative rather than in a positive sense. There cannot be a positive understanding of peace process unless the parties involved possess a positive approach about each other. When negativity is part of a particular culture, one cannot expect people to move in a positive direction.

The following table highlights important pros and cons of the positive and negative peace processes in the context of Indo-Pakistan relations.

Table

Positive and Negative Peace Process

Issues	Negative PP	Positive PP
Holding of composite dialogue		✓
Relaxing the visa regime		✓
Hotline between Directors General Military Operations		✓
Advance notification of military exercises		✓
Nuclear restraint regime		✓
Suspension of composite dialogue	✓	
Stalemate in resolving Siachen, Sir Creek and water issues	✓	
Hardline position on the Kashmir issue	✓	
Non-granting of MFN status to India	✓	

Stalemate in track-I dialogue	✓	

From the above table four conclusions could be drawn. First, superficial nature of the peace process as less serious and less visionary approach is pursued by the two sides on issues which require flexible and prudent response. Over the last 16 years, one can observe the mushrooming of track-II and III dialogue involving civil-society groups, former policy-makers and others but such initiatives are vulnerable to periodic suspension in track-I dialogue. Second, there is lack of follow-up and professional approach on the items of composite dialogue. Time line, which is a fundamental requirement for a positive peace process, is missing in the case of Indo-Pakistan composite dialogue. Negative peace process in Indo-Pak relations is indicative of the fact that no time line has been given ever to deal with the less contentious issues resulting into stalemate and stagnation in the composite dialogue. Third, military confidence-building measures, which are an integral part of the Indo-Pakistan peace process faced a setback when in August 2013 serious violations of ceasefire and skirmishes took place at the Line of Control. At least, one was optimistic that the ceasefire along the LoC which was agreed by India and Pakistan in November 2003 would hold. But, it seems, the very existence of military CBMs is at stake.

Finally, despite the rhetoric for peace demonstrated in track-I, II and III diplomacy, the mindset has not changed as far as the hardliners are concerned. Each time there is some incident along the LoC or acts of terror in India, Pakistan is held responsible. Whereas, as compared to India, Pakistan has suffered enormously because of large-scale violent and terrorist incidents in which around 50,000 civilians and security personnel have been killed. But Pakistan has not launched a vicious tirade against India despite the fact there are wide allegations of India's involvement in sponsoring terrorist groups particularly in Balochistan. India was not even a major issue in the May 2013 general elections in Pakistan. The fragility of the Indo-Pakistan peace process, including the composite dialogue, is due to the mindset which deepens mutual mistrust, suspicion and paranoia against each other.

With a parochial mindset, it is impossible for India and Pakistan to pursue a positive vision in their peace process. That is the lesson which can be learned from other peace processes. There is a way out of the periodic impasse in the Indo-Pakistan peace process provided the two sides create strong constituencies for peace composed of committed people with determination and clear objectives.

Notes and References

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2. C.f. *The Free Dictionary*, <www.freedictionary.com/peace+ process>, accessed on 3 August 2013.

3. <www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/peace.process>, accessed on 3 August 2013.

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5. Harold H. Saunders, *The Other Walls: The Arab-Israeli Peace Process In a Global Perspective* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), revised edition, p.3.

6. Ibid., pp.4-5.

7. Ibid., p. 6.

8. Ibid., 22-37.

9. Sidney D. Bailey, *Peace is a Process* (London: Quaker House Services, 1993), p. 173.

10. Talat A. Wizarat, "Peace Processes: A Comparative Study," in Moonis Ahmar (ed.), *The Arab-Israeli Peace Process: Lessons for India and Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 41. According to her, "no peace process can lead to success unless it addresses the concerns of both or all parties. Either side should not monopolize the agenda. Although, there is a tendency among stronger parties to project their own concerns without any regard for the interests of the weaker party, unless the major concerns of all parties are included, the peace process will not lead to positive results," Ibid., p.50.

11. Moonis Ahmar, "The concept of peace process," in Ahmar (ed.), *The Arab-Israeli Peace Process…*," (ref. 10) p.26. Conceptually, "peace process is a pragmatic mechanism to break centuries of animosity between or among state and non-state actors. While the state is a major player in peace process, non-state actors, particularly those belonging to civil society also have a stake for sustaining the environment of dialogue and negotiations." Ibid., p.37.

12. Moonis Ahmar, "Where is Indo-Pak Peace Process Heading?" *South Asian Affairs* (Visakhapatnam), Vol. 1.No. 1, January-June 2008, pp. 35-36.

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18. "Pak-India inch closer to resuming peace dialogue," *Pakistan Today* (Lahore), 8 July 2013.

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20. See, "Next government will have to revive Indo-Pak peace process: Mufti," *The Hindustan Times*, (New Delhi), 23 June 2013.

21. Ibid.

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24. "Army Officers in hotline contact to ease tension" *Dawn*, 8 August 2013.

25. Ishtiaq Ahmed, "The Future of Indo-Pak Peace Process Amid The War On Terror In Afghanistan," *IPRI Journal* (Islamabad), Vol. VII. No. 2, Summer 2007, p.61.

26. Moonis Ahmar, "For a South Asian Renaissance," *The Times of India*, (New Delhi), 29 June 2011.

27. Ibid. The Indo-Pak peace process should not be confined to official rhetoric from two sides; it requires a movement at the popular level, so that a sense of ownership is created for a process which can bring enormous benefits to the poverty-stricken people of the two countries.

28. C. Raja Mohan, "India-Pakistan: Ten Questions on Peace Process," *Economic and Political Weekly*, (Mumbai), Vol.39, No.28, 10-16 July 2004, pp.3092-3102.

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EMERGING THREATS TO GLOBAL PEACE AND SECURITY

NAVEED KHALIQ ANSAREE

Today's world is confronted with multiple security issues that are accentuating the discords amongst the states and nations across the globe. Out of several emerging threats, this paper focuses only on four major ones, such as: Water, Food and Energy Insecurities; Global War on Terror (GWOT) and Anti-Islam Paradigm; Global Economic Contraction; and the security concerns related to Global Warming as well as Safety of Nuclear Plants and Disposal of Nuclear Waste.

In the theoretical framework, the threats under discussion may appear distinct from each other and represent different elements of peace and security, economics, culture and religion but in strategic sense they are interlinked in a template of "Cause and Effect." While the underlying causes could be diverse, the effect created is same. The common effect in this case that connects the dots and runs through the diverse elements discussed in the article is "instability, anarchy and chaos." If these elements of threats are not effectively managed globally and in institutionalized manners, these could compound the security dilemma across the globe and transform "brush fires into wild fires" that could lead to intra-state, inter-state or regional conflicts, thus endangering global peace and security.

Water, food and energy nexus:
A new weapon of war

Water, food and energy securities not only have an interdependent nexus but also have social, economic and ecologic dimensions that have a potential to gravitate into a conflict within the segments of a society or the constituent units/ provinces of a state. The conflict can escalate into inter-state,

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regional or a global conflict depending upon the nature and magnitude of underlying causes, issues and interests. Energy requires water and runs modern society; and water requires energy to move it across long distances from sources to the users.[1]

Needs for clean energy at an affordable price as well as availability of water and food in adequate quantity and quality have created a national and human security problem across the globe, particularly for the developing countries. Global trends such as population growth and rising economic prosperity are fast creating demands for energy, food and water which are bound to compromise the sustainable use of natural resources and result into shortages which may put water, energy and food security for the people at grave risk, impede economic development, lead to social and geopolitical tensions amongst the states and their peoples.[2] These could also cause irrevocable damage to the global climate and the environment.

According to statistics from the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), about 33 per cent of the people in the world are suffering from shortage of water (which was a threshold set for the year 2025); about 25 per cent of the world's population lives in areas of "physical water shortage"; and another one billion people face "economic water shortages" due to lack of necessary infrastructure to access water from rivers and aquifers.[3] Egypt imports more than half of its food due to lack of water to grow food domestically; Australia is facing major water shortage as a consequence of diverting large quantities of water for agricultural use; the Aral Sea disaster.[4] There is a world-wide concern and challenge as to how to meet the food requirements of about 7 billion people which are expected to rise to about 9 billion in the next 30 years. This would require doubling the world food production which would create increasing demands for water and energy as agriculture is the largest user of water and has enormous demands for energy. There are already major deficiencies in the existing water-energy infrastructure. The high population growth rate, change in lifestyle and dietary habits of the people will continue to put additional demands on water and energy. Drought, floods and non-availability of fresh water may cause global instability and conflict in the coming decades, as developing countries rush to meet demand from exploding populations while dealing with the effects of climate change.

Although water tensions have led to more water-sharing agreements than violent conflicts but the fragile pacts and treaties may collapse if there is not enough water to share or go around. It is globally feared that water is likely to become "a weapon of war" or "a tool of terrorism" beyond 2022, particularly in South Asia, Middle East and North Africa. Nations could cut off rivers to prevent their enemies opponents having access to water downstream; terrorists could blow up dams, and states that could not provide water for their citizens would collapse; this is the future as painted in a top US security report based on the US National Intelligence Estimates.[5] The US is preparing for threat of a global war over water which it believes to occur by 2030.[6] The study primarily focuses on the following rivers and water basins: the River Nile in Egypt, Sudan

and countries farther south; the Tigris and Euphrates in Iraq and the greater Middle East; the Mekong in China and Southeast Asia; the Jordan River that separates Israel from the Palestinian territories; the Indus and Brahmaputra rivers in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh in South Asia, and the Amu Darya in Central Asia.

Most dangerously, there are whole clusters of unstable countries fighting for the same waterbodies. Incidentally such rivers and water-basins which involve alarmingly high water shortages are also located in the same regions and theatres where the New Great Game rivalry is taking shape between the US-NATO camp and its opposing camp. It is also feared that the upstream nations who are more powerful than their downstream neighbours could be tempted to limit water access to downstream neighbours and use water as a "weapon of war." Similarly, the terrorist or rogue states may be tempted to target dams, barrages and power infrastructures. Such threats could force the states to adopt cost-intensive safety measures to protect the extensive length of rivers; albeit with little success and at huge cost to the national socio-economic development.

According to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, "A struggle by nations to secure sources of clean water will be 'potent fuel' for war and conflicts."[7] Even without outright fighting, countries will use water as a tool of political leverage, similar to how gas and oil are used today. States would use their inherent ability to construct and support major water projects to obtain regional influence or preserve their water interests as evident from the following developments. Laos has proposed a $3.5-billion Mekong dam which has become a subject of an international dispute with Cambodia and Vietnam. China has recently announced a plan to build 38-gigawatt Motuo dam which would be over two times bigger than the Three Gorges Dam and located near the Tibet-Arunachal border, disputed between China and India. Through such gargantuan projects on the Tibet plateau, China is actually set to augment its long-term water and energy security. The project is perceived by an analyst as being aimed at using control of water as a political weapon against China's lower-riparian neighbours.[8] Similarly, India is also building small and medium dams by diverting or stopping water flows in the Indus, Chenab and Jhelum; all in violation of the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan. China, India and Pakistan are nuclear-armed neighbours, and their nuclear deterrence is tightly coupled because of geographic proximity which could become unstable in a number of ways. Therefore, water discords among China, India and Pakistan should be taken more seriously and managed and resolved in an equitable and mutually acceptable manner, failing which the whole region could be plunged into further chaos and instability, endangering the global peace and security.

Water shortages will hinder the ability of the affected countries to produce food and generate energy, posing a risk to global food markets and hobbling economic growth. North Africa, Middle East and South Asia will be hit the hardest.[9] While the coming shortage is a manageable problem for richer countries, it is a deadly "destabilizing factor" in poorer ones as such countries

are already prone to political, social and religious turmoil; and failure to provide water for farmers and city dwellers can be the trigger point for a wider "state failure." Among those most vulnerable to this scenario are Sudan, Pakistan and Iraq, which are all locked in debilitating civil conflicts; and Somalia, which has effectively ceased to function as a state.[10]

The world is faced with an energy crisis that is taking a huge toll on countries around the globe with soaring oil prices that could go up to US$ 200 a barrel (even the price of coal has doubled).[11] More than 1.6 billion people have no access to electricity; world's energy needs could be 50 per cent higher in 2030 than today; 2.4 billion people still rely on traditional biomass for cooking; the fossil fuels are finite; and several countries have been hit by riots due to electricity disruptions, including the blackouts in the developed countries.[12] The most pessimistic of experts believe the world has a few decades at least until the oil, on which prosperity hinges, starts to run out.[13] According to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), hefty investments are needed in the oil, natural gas, coal and electricity sectors, such as: US$2.4 trillion (for 2001- 2010); US$3.2 trillion (for 2011-2020); and US$4 trillion for the period 2021 to 2030.[14] These extraordinary investments, which are extremely difficult to be realized, would only decrease the number of people with access to electricity to only 1.5 billion in 2030. This would mean four out of five living in the rural areas of the developing world, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia would not have access to electricity. And that includes South Asia where 70 per cent of the rural population would not have access to electricity compared to 32 per cent of the urban population.[15] Therefore, the projected energy crisis could create instability and chaos within a state as well as on a wider scale and across regions thus projecting a grave threat to global peace and stability.

It may be concluded that the water-energy-food shortages worldwide and their strategic nexus are fast creating a scenario that could trigger intra-state, interstate, regional or global conflict in the not too distant future.[16] Water being the first and most critical need the problem demands to be addressed on war-footing. The concept of Integrated Water Resource Management and its four guiding principles could be made part of the water-strategy: firstly, recognising fresh water as an economic-good; secondly, water as a limited and endangered resource that is indispensable for the sustenance of life, development and environment; thirdly, cooperative mindset and attitude towards water-development and water-management; and fourthly, the role and responsibility of women in water-management.[17] Put plainly, it is a lose-lose or win-win scenario. The latter demands effective mass-awareness campaign at grass-roots level about the danger of water, food and energy insecurities looming large across the globe, as well as tangible measures towards instituting global, regional and state structures and mechanisms to enable the vulnerable to become part of the solution rather than becoming part of the problem.

GWOT and Anti-Islam Paradigm:
A March towards 'Clash of Civilizations'

The long-drawn-out global war on terror (GWOT) and Islamophobia that the US, European Union (EU), and their like-minded entities have embarked upon for the last two decades have created an anti-Islam/ anti-Muslim paradigm and the associated faultlines that pose a grave threat to global peace and security. The threat, if not addressed in strategic terms, could lead to confrontation between civilizations or a wider conflict. Unfortunately, no sooner the "threat" of Communism receded after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, NATO very conveniently replaced it with the "fear of Islam"; and Muslims became the "Enemy Number-1" and "Enemy from Within."[18] The template of "good and evil" that had been formed in the public mind during World War II and Cold War, was updated with a new enemy, ie Islam.[19] Fear of Islam provided justification for NATO's continued existence even after the Cold War had ended.

War with Islam fits into the plans of the neo-conservatives, Jewish and Christian extremists, who believe that until the present structure (Al-Aqsa Mosque) is destroyed, a total war with Islam takes place and the Solomon Temple is rebuilt, the "End-Time" will not come.[20] Therefore, they have to encourage war with Islam as given in their Divine Scriptures; until that happens Israel would not be restored to its ancient boundaries.[21] Such mindset of the neocons who wield substantial influence on the US foreign policy explains the doctored pretext of "weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq and the "9/11 incident." US invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, and the so-called 'GWOT' finally got turned into a campaign aimed at discrediting Islam and associating it with the wider threat and, in effect, creating a fear of Islam amongst the public. The doubt, if anyone had any, was removed when president George W. Bush went on to claim that he was in communication with God, Who had instructed him to invade Afghanistan and Iraq.[22] Now the world knows how the GWOT got expanded to Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, Yemen and Libya, conveniently justifying spending trillions of dollars on the US war machine. Syria, Iran and Pakistan have also been on the brink, the clock ticking on-and-off for an imposed conflict.

The world population of Muslims is growing fast and estimated at 1.4 billion now, surpassing the population of the Catholic Christians. Hardly in a span of a century, the combined population of only six Muslim countries (Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Egypt, Turkey and Nigeria) is expected to rise from 252 million in 1950 to a total of 1.34 billion in 2050. Today, 48 Muslim countries are the members of UN General Assembly, making it a majority bloc. As the growth rate in Europe is in the negative, its indigenous populace is being replaced by the immigrants who are mostly Muslims. The house of Islam is divided between Sunni and Shia. If demography is an advantage, the future seems to belong to Islam; which is accentuating the fear of Islam becoming the dominant religion of the world.[23]

Islamophobia is "*an exaggerated fear, hatred and hostility towards Islam and Muslims that is perpetuated by negative stereotypes resulting in bias, discrimination and the marginalization and exclusion of Muslims from state's social, political and civic life.*"[24] Islamophobia network is fast growing in the Western countries particularly in the US. A structured campaign appears to have been launched as a matter of national policy to exploit fears concerning terrorism and national security, and portray fellow Muslim citizens as perpetual and hostile suspects; thus creating an ideological and civilizational divide within a state. The Islamophobia network usually consists of the following five distinct elements.[25] Firstly, donors and funders who have given millions of dollars to anti-Muslim organizations in the last decade to empower a number of small and interconnected individuals and organizations to spread hate and fear against Muslims in the US. Secondly, scholars and policy experts that act as the central nervous system for manufacturing fictitious threats about Islam or mis-define Islamic principles. Thirdly, grass-roots level organizations and the religious-right that have been spreading the propaganda about the 'Islamic threat' through their national chapters in states, and members worldwide. Fourthly, media enablers and experts are the ones who broadcast misinformation around the country and the world, with their work cited many times. Fifthly, political elite who use anti-Islam and anti-Muslim sound-bites and rhetoric to appease anti-Muslim lobbies, secure hefty funds for their election campaigns and enhance the prospects of their electability. Therefore, the above stated structured campaign is creating an anti-Islam and anti-Muslim paradigm that could lead to intra-state, inter-state or regional conflict or maybe a clash between civilizations, thus posing a grave threat to global peace and security.

The anti-Islamic language and mindset also cropped up at a US military academy where an academic discourse talked of the possibility of a "total war with Islam" and the need for "Hiroshima-style tactics" to counter the emerging threat from Islam.[25] On 14 March 2011, Stephen Coughlin presented a 'Model of Operational Framework' at the US Joint Forces Staff College, Virginia. The model suggested that Geneva Convention-IV (1949) should no longer be relevant to Islamic terrorist or respected globally; and the war should be taken to civilian population wherever necessary, such as the Islamic Holy cities of Mecca and Madina (like it was applied in Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima, Nagasaki).[27] The model further argued, with Saudi Arabia threatened with starvation and Mecca and Madina destroyed, the Islam would almost be reduced to the status of a cult.[28] Such war-mongering, strategic brinkmanship and offending talk could bring the civilizations on a collision course and endanger the global peace and security faster than could be imagined.

As regards the 9/11 incident, a large number of professionals consider the *9/11 Commission Report* and the US official account to be "fatally flawed" and full of "cover-ups."[29] They also take the evidence that "America was attacked by Muslims on 9/11" to have been fabricated, and rather suspect that the Americans were murdered by their own government who used the 9/11 attack as "causes-belli" to invade Afghanistan thousands of miles away.[30] The

wars of Iraq and Afghanistan along with their related military operations in Pakistan are set to cost $3.7-4.4 trillion to the US economy, besides the huge cost in terms of human misery.[31] The number of people injured, maimed and dead from malnutrition or lack of treatment is far higher. It is estimated that when the fighting stops, the wars are expected to have created some 7.8 million more refugees,[32] thus making the region more vulnerable to instability and conflict.

After the 9/11 incident, New York Police Department (NYPD) has also been found to conduct increased scrutiny of the Muslim communities living in America. Some of the reports revealed the presence of a "Demographics Unit" in the NYPD that has been carrying out the profiling of ethnic communities based on "28 ancestries of interest," and incidentally all were related to Muslims.[33] Such type of demographic profiling is not only derogatory and against the values and norms that the US Constitution fiercely protects but could also strike at the very foundation of civilized societies, thus sowing dissension, resentment and chaos.

During the last two decades the paradigm of war has undergone huge transformation, adding complexity and more dimensions to the spectrum of conflict, particularly the 'Global War on Terror.' In fact the whole paradigm of war has been altered; rather it has been turned upside down. Since the 1990s, the world has been plagued with perpetual conflict, insecurity, public mind control and double-thinking;[34] all manifesting into 'permanent' wars, 'pre-emptive' wars, 'humanitarian' wars, long wars and 'wars without borders' etc; that too in flagrant violation of international law and public interest. War or state terrorism is being sold as 'humanitarian' intervention; 'pre-emptive' or 'preventive' war as 'just' war or a 'noble endeavour in service of humanity and peace'; aggression justified as 'self-defence'; and mass murder as 'collateral damage.' Perpetrators of war are presented as victims, and the antiwar movements are demonised and criminalized. The public is misled and asked to defend their homeland against the self-created enemies or the Islamic terrorists. Enemies are fabricated and terrorist organisations are created and funded. Thereafter, terrorist threat warnings are issued concerning the same self-created enemies and terrorist groups to shape public opinion and justify a multibillion dollar counter-terrorism campaign to go after such enemies.[35] Then justice is served in a bizarre manner. Instead of bringing the alleged terrorists to justice through a process of law, justice is brought to them in the form 'Drone-Attacks', state-sponsored assassinations and extra-judicial killings; like the elimination of Osama bin Laden. Such alteration in the paradigm of war has created space for the powerful states for flouting international law on 'self-defence' to further their national interests without any fear of retribution, thus promoting acceptance of unlawful norms of behaviour in the international system, leading to anarchy amongst the states and endangering global peace and security.

Unfortunately, Westerners and non-Muslims have increasingly become so used to 'scapegoating, stereotyping and denigration of Muslims (particularly Arabs)' in their art and entertainment that there is hardly any realization as to

how, and to what extent, the Western media and the Hollywood Industry is vilifying Muslims as subhuman and depriving the entire Muslim civilization of its humanity; just like the Nazi propaganda against the Jews did during World War II.[36] According to a survey, about 300 Hollywood movies vilified Arabs and Muslims in one way or the other, and the number was more than 25 per cent of the sample of movies surveyed.[37] Therefore, Hollywood and Western media is one of the causes of rise in hate-crimes against the Muslims in the Western countries, and 'blow-back' against US foreign policies and instability across the Muslim world.[38]

In summary, the Global War on Terror, anti-Islamic mindset of the neo-cons, Islamophobia and the altered paradigm of war as explained above are fanning anti-Islam and anti-Muslim perceptions in the US and Western countries as well as providing impetus to the growing fundamentalism, extremism and radicalization of the Muslim world. Indoctrinating the future leaders at military colleges that a 'total war' against the world's 1.4 billion Muslims would be necessary to protect America from Islamic terrorists are accentuating the ideological and religious faultlines that could precipitate into confrontation between civilizations or a wider conflict, thus endangering global peace and security in strategic terms.

Global economic contraction:
A stimulus for a wider conflict

'Great Economic Contraction,'[39] or economic meltdown that some may call it, has engulfed the US and other Western economies since 2008, and is projecting a serious threat to global peace and security. The 'Great Depression' of the 1930s led to World War-II, and the war turned out to be a huge stimulus to US economic growth; not because it was a cost-effective use of resources, but because nobody got worried about deficit spending.[40] The defence industry is the key driver and a major stimulus for the US economy. Therefore, the notion that war is good for the economy could make an economic sense to the US and the other countries in West once again, and entice them towards a major conflict.

The ongoing economic contraction is more severe in a sense that it applies not only to output and employment, as in a normal recession, but to debt and credit, and it takes many years before the two effects are deleveraged. The real problem is that the global economy is badly overleveraged, and there is no quick escape without a scheme to transfer wealth from creditors to debtors, either through defaults, financial repression, or inflation. That is why the present economic meltdown is more severe than the Great Depression of the 1930s. Steve Clemons, a leading economist while analysing diminishing American military power and eroding economic and moral leadership, has commented: "America is at a key inflection point in its history and that the US network of global control (aka, "empire") is disintegrating......"[41] As the United States confronts economic, demographic, budgetary, and populist constraints over its global role and power, "American decline" has gone from fringe theory to

conventional wisdom in a few short years.[42] Therefore, unless and until cost-benefit equation is unfavourable to the US and/or the anti-war deterrence is prohibitive, there is a grave danger that the US may be tempted towards instigating a major conflict, and become a potential threat to global peace and security.

Similarly, Europe is also facing major economic challenges as evident from the financial crisis in Italy, Spain, etc and particularly in Greece — a soft belly of Europe. Europe is not playing with time, it is playing with fire.[43] Poverty has returned to Europe by leaps and bounds with unemployment rising (Italy: 28 per cent, Greece: 43 per cent, Spain: 51 per cent), standards of living getting lower, number of suicides growing (Greece registered an increase of 40 per cent), and, the crisis situation may take three to four years to improve.[44] Some of the real-life indicators in the UK are: 83 per cent of teachers daily see scores of hungry students; one in five cannot pay their utility bills, and one in eight young people omit lunch to create the opportunity to feed their families; and it must be noted that the UK is not the poorest state in Europe.[45] Italy's public debt has reached $2 trillion Euros (123 per cent of GDP) and Greek is indebted by 160 per cent of its GDP.[46] Therefore, the notion that war is good for the economy could make an economic sense to some of EU/NATO countries which could be drawn on board the US war-band wagon, thus accentuating the potential threat to global peace and security.

Another dimension of the EU economic crisis is its political dimension which has struck at the very foundation of the EU and could lead to erosion of the Union-hood. The EU economic crisis has also accentuated the crisis of confidence both in the global financial system as well as in the global political system, thus creating a 'Crisis of Legitimacy.'[47] EU political elite not only protected financial elite but some of the EU members distrusted the others thus creating an existential crisis for the European Union. Therefore, the crisis has delegitimized EU's political elites, deeply divided the society and united the public in hostility. European Union stands divided in two groups; the happy ones (Germany and Scandinavians) and the unhappy ones (the rest of 20 states), and the situation is leading to rise in nationalism, envy and resentment.[48] Therefore, if the economic crisis is not managed in the strategic, political and economic sense, intra-state as well as inter-state resentment could strike at the very foundation of the Union and present a grave threat to regional and global peace and security.

Could the European Union get out of the trouble? The EU exercises very little financial and executive control over the fiscal policies of its member-states. It would be a very tall order for the European politicians to create a new financial system, either with a more integrated fiscal union or a breakup of the current euro zone. Germany has gone overboard in salvaging the EU economic mess. The German Constitutional Court had initially barred but recently allowed Germany to join the 'Euro Bonds'. Nevertheless, it is yet to be seen whether EU's parasite-economies undertake the needed structural reforms in the form of austerity steps and reduced incentives or continue with a 'carry-on' attitude as

seen over the last few years. The fear is that the parasite-economies/ peripheral countries could continue to feed on the healthier ones, (particularly on the German economy) and the EU may continue to stay stuck with the liabilities due to the decisions of the peripheral states.[49] If that happens, the European Union would start experiencing wave of individualism and heightened centrifugal forces. Europe is not very comfortable over the supply of Russian-gas and fears energy-shortfalls in the next decade. With weakened US, EU and NATO economic, political and military might, it would be difficult for the EU to influence and benefit from the Caspian energy resources which could rather get diverted to China, Pakistan and India and other energy-starved Asian countries. There appears to be no quick-fix to EU's political and economic problems. The fear is that another wave of centrifugal forces could erupt in EU in the near future and accentuate the existing threat to regional and global peace and security.

The 'Crisis of Global Political Economy' has also created the 'Crisis of Legitimacy' in China which could cause a reversal of unbridled capitalism and is fraught with the danger of regional fragmentation.[50] The Chinese economy expanded at a GDP growth rate of 8 per cent in 2012, is projected to grow at a 6 per cent during 2013-2016 and 3.5 per cent during 2017-2025, surpass the US economy by 2025 and beyond.[51] China is also worried about the possibility of a US default for the reason that China is the largest foreign holder of US Treasuries; either a default or a downgrade would incur huge losses to China, and impinge heavily on its economy.

Another dimension of the global economic contraction is the collapse or nervousness in the world's leading currencies, such as the dollar, euro and yen. It is widely speculated that if the dollar falls, its power also falls with it.[52] Standards & Poors downgrade of US long-term debt rating is a case in point. As the global contagion of deep recession, euro-zone breakup and a global financial crises spreads, the net outcome would be a significant drop in global trade volumes, by as much as 25-30 per cent, and also a high or hyper-inflationary scenarios in the dollar and euro zones. In case central banks move to control inflation it would make economic contraction conditions even worse. That is why there has been a shift in investments towards gold, metals, commodities, and Far-Eastern and smaller currencies.

The world's reserve currency is usually the money that circulates in the world's biggest economy. That was true of the British pound sterling in the 19th century, and the dollar in the 20th. If the Chinese economy is the world's biggest, as it soon will be, that is going to be the currency that would really count. A number of central banks are desperately looking for an international-reserve portfolio that is an alternative to both sick currencies, dollar and euro. Even after the debt-deal with the US, China may not be able to break free from the dollar trap and the governments would be left with no option but to inflate the burden away.[53] It is a catch-22 situation for China. Chinese Officials have been pressing for introducing an international supervision over the issue of US dollar.[54] Second-tier currencies, such as the Swiss franc, the Canadian dollar

and the Australian dollar (even when combined) cannot create an international reserve portfolio. On the back of this double global jeopardy we can anticipate widespread public strife, anger, demonstrations, riots and rebellions across regions and the globe. Therefore, the fall of the dollar, if and when it comes, could have major geostrategic fallouts and implications, thus projecting grave challenges for global peace and security.

Summing up, the US and EU appear to be failing in confronting the current crisis involving colossal debt, bleak prospects for growth and a panic situation on financial markets around the world. Common sense might call for a significant reduction in the US military budget but that is not happening. "War is the continuation of politics by other means (Clausewitz)." Economic Depression of the 1930s paved the way for the rise of fascism and the Second World War. Given the impasse and a recession in such a crisis, the fear is that war may become the last recourse of capitalism to revive the Western economies. Asymmetrical conflicts or low-intensity wars like the ones in Iraq and Afghanistan do not suit the scheme of industrial production; rather these only serve to deepen the deficits.[55] Therefore a war, if ever breaks out, would be 'a war of the first order' involving high tempo of operation and colossal destruction; so that a real-time show of American aerial military machine could boost the confidence in the US and alleviate market sentiments. Therefore, the notion that war is good for the economy could make an economic sense to the US and its allies and lure them towards a major armed conflict.

Global warming/climate change:
What could it mean to global security?

Global warming or climate change is the major environmental threat that the world is facing collectively as a whole, primarily by the act of its inhabitants and their way of life. The world is already lagging behind too much in addressing the underlying causes. The main cause is the collection of carbon dioxide and other pollutants in the atmosphere, forming a thick blanket which entraps the solar heat and causes the atmosphere to heat up slowly and gradually over a long period of time.[56] And if the world did not succeed in mitigating the global warming threat, we will pass on a hotter and dirtier air and water to our next generation along with a range of associated environmental and humanitarian disasters, such as melting of world ice cap and glaciers, heavy rains, floods, raised level of oceans and seas, submerging of coastal countries, droughts and wildfires, etc. According to a projection released by Natural Resources Defence Council (NRDC), the past decade (2000-10) has been the hottest since 1880, and the global average temperature could rise by about 7.2 degrees Fahrenheit by turn of the century. Global warming will have a far-reaching impact on the weather patterns, health, wildlife, and glaciers and sea levels.

The consequences of global warming on the weather pattern could include a greater number of powerful and dangerous hurricanes of the category 4 and 5. The hurricanes become more intense because the warmer oceans are

likely to pump more energy into storms and make them more dangerous and destructive, like the Hurricane Katrina that hit the US in August 2005; the deadliest in the US history. According to NDRC, Katrina caused the evacuation of 1.7 million people, death and health issues to 200,000 in the New Orleans and a loss of around $125 billion to the US economy. Raised atmospheric temperature causes water to evaporate faster (more pronounced in summers/falls) thus exacerbating the danger of droughts and wildfires like the ones witnessed in Russia and China in the last few years. According to NDRC, the year 2006 registered about 100,000 fires and burning of about 10 million acre of land which was 125 per cent more than the average for the last decade. The cost on fire-fighting and to the economy could be colossal. With more energy getting accumulated or pumped into the climatic system due to the raised temperature, instability of the atmosphere increases which manifests itself in the form of intense rainstorms, flooding and the consequent devastation to lives, stocks, land and properties, etc. According to NDRC statistics, 50 million people have become environmental refugees in the world by the end of 2010, and alternating floods and droughts could cause mass-migrations due to food shortages and malnutrition thus projecting grave danger to global peace and security.

The consequences of global warming on health are also grave, such as bad air, allergy, asthma, deadly heat waves, infectious diseases, food- and water-borne illnesses, epidemics etc. Hotter conditions increase smog and pollution, degrade air quality and thus aggravates the risk of pulmonary diseases, asthma and pollen allergies, etc. Even a higher level of CO_2 intensifies the wild growth and weeds (ragweed) whose pollen triggers allergies and asthma. Hotter climatic conditions enable dangerous insects like mosquitoes, flies and germs to survive, cover large band of heights and travel larger distances, thus causing outbreak of diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, diarrhoea and tick-bone encephalitis, etc. The dengue fever virus that was earlier considered to be limited up to an elevation of 3,300 feet has been found at 7,200 feet.[57] Severe heat waves could cause larger numbers of deaths. In 2003, an extreme heat wave caused 70,000 heat-related deaths in Europe and 15,000 in France alone.[58] Heavy rain falls could bring in pathogens and germs from contaminated soils like the 1993 outbreak of diarrhoea in Milwaukee that resulted in the death of over 0.403 million people.[59]

Global warming is also posing grave danger to the wildlife as the raised temperatures disrupt and shift the ecosystem. It is extremely difficult for wildlife to cope with such disruption in the ecosystem. If the present trend of global warming continues, more than one million species could become extinct by the year 2050, including the polar bear from Alaska. There is an increasing incidence of polar bears drowning while travelling greater distances in search of or reaching the ice floes. According to NDRC, only an increase of 2.7-4.5°F in global average temperature could obliterate about 20-30 per cent of the animal and plant species known so far. Similarly, the oceans are becoming more acidic

due to rising CO_2, thus posing grave danger to coral reefs and marine life. Only an increase of 3.6^OF could obliterate 97 per cent of coral reefs in the world.

Another major threat and consequence of global warming is the melting of ice-caps and glaciers that could raise the water levels in lakes, rivers, seas and oceans. According to the NDRC, if the present trend of global warming is not arrested, the sea level could rise 10- 23 inches by the end of the century in addition to the rise of 4-8 inches in the 20th century. The rise in sea-level as the result of thermal expansion or melting of ice-caps and glaciers would flood the wetlands, barrier-islands, coastal areas and low-lying regions. Maldives, a country comprising 12,000 islands, could disappear under water by the end of the century, as also cities like Miami.[60] The Arctic could be ice-free in summers by the year 2040. The area of the Antarctic ice-shelf is shrinking at a rate of 9 per cent per decade and has already shrunk by about 40 per cent of its size since 1960s. In March, 2002, a section of ice which was bigger than the Rhode Island collapsed in the Larsen B ice-shelf in Antarctica. In the last 30 years, one million square miles of permanent sea-ice has vanished, i.e. an area equal to the combined size of Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The sea level could rise by 21 feet if the whole of the Greenland's ice melts as it forms 10 per cent of the ice-mass in the world.

What could be the solution? A short answer is: cut pollution and expand use of clean energy. Technology exists that could help in minimising emission of the greenhouse gases, particularly CO_2, or running vehicles on clean energy, modifying power plants and producing electricity from clean sources. The governments could adopt a five-step approach to minimise their contribution towards global warming, such as: setting limits through effective legislation on pollution that contributes towards global warming; encouraging enhanced investments in areas that involve green jobs and clean energy; driving energy-efficient and smarter vehicles, using energy-smart appliances, thus minimizing the need and addiction to the use of fossil fuel; creating green infrastructure, particularly weatherised and energy-efficient homes and buildings; and, above all, encourage people and communities to align their way of life and living style with energy-efficient practices, such as driving less, using alternative and mass-transit systems, choosing to live near transport hubs and work centres, etc.

Safety of nuclear plants and disposal of waste:
A global disaster in the making

Safety of nuclear plants as well as disposal of nuclear waste is a Herculean challenge that has grave implications for global peace and security. The world has 33 recorded accidents/incidents since 1952 of varying INES (International Nuclear Events Scale) which includes six in the US, five in Japan, three each in the UK and Russia in addition to the ones in Sweden and Switzerland, etc.[61] According to Rogers, a major accident of the highest magnitude (INES-7) was in 1986 at Chernobyl in which a significant fraction of

the nuclear reactor core was externally released, thus causing widespread health and environmental effects and counter-measures over a large area. The latest nuclear plant accident took place on 11 March 2011 at Fukushima after Japan was hit by a tsunami following the Sendai earthquake. The accident was of the magnitude of INES 4-5 as it involved a release of more than 0.1 per cent of the core inventory and had only the local consequences.[62] Imagine the challenge and the cost that even two years after the accident, decommissioning of the Fukushima Nuclear Plant is turning out to be a formidable challenge not only for Japan but also for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the international community; and yet the process may take decades to complete.[63] Once a nuclear meltdown commences and the core is released externally, there is no easy solution or easy ending. In Fukushima's damaged reactor, several cubic metre of water is being pumped every hour to keep the reactor cool. Generally, the basements are not built with the specification to hold radioactive water. Therefore the radioactive water continues evaporating, leaking and seeping into adjoining areas; thus contaminating everything that comes in contact or gets exposed to the radioactivity, particularly the drinking water, dairy products and other foodstuffs, etc.

Need for energy at an affordable price is expected to rise exponentially. By 2030, as discussed above, the number of people having access to electricity is expected to reduce to only 1.5 billion, meaning every four out of five would have no or limited access to electricity. The world has a few decades for the fossil-fuel to run out, forcing countries to increasingly rely on the use of nuclear energy. Therefore, sooner or later, use of nuclear energy would become a necessity rather than a choice even for the developing countries; thus not only exponentially increasing the risk of nuclear proliferation but also the risk of accidents at the nuclear plants.

Even the developed and technologically advanced countries like Japan are finding it hard to decommission the Fukushima damaged reactor, how would the developing countries be able to ensure fail-safe security, manage a nuclear catastrophic accident and also mitigate the radioactive effects with their meagre resources. What if the nuclear accident is of the magnitude of INES-5 and above where the radioactivity is not localized and rather affects a very large area, like in the case of Chernobyl? What if terrorists struck a nuclear plant, the victim country will be in a national security fix of retribution against whom and how.

The disposal of the spent nuclear fuel rods is yet another emerging challenge related to the use of nuclear energy. The spent fuel requires interim as well as permanent disposal sites which must be locked away for tens/hundreds of thousands of years. Take the example of South Korea which is operating 23 reactors and plans to commission an additional 11 by the end of 2024; however, its temporary storage site for the spent fuel is already full by 70 per cent and the permanent management/storage plan is progressing painfully slow.[64] According to Lee, South Korea could need a nuclear waste disposal cellar of about 20 km^2 and 500 metres below the surface to accommodate 100,000 tons of the nuclear waste it would have by the turn of the century; and what to talk of building, even

finding a space of such dimensions in an overcrowded small country like South Korea would be a daunting challenge. Similar challenges are being faced even by the more developed countries. Transporting nuclear waste within a country stirs up fierce opposition from the populace for the safety, security and health related risks. The trans-shipment of nuclear waste across oceans is extremely vulnerable to accidents, theft and criticism and, above all, the process is laborious and cost-intensive. Imagine the challenges that the world could face if there was a widespread proliferation of nuclear plants to meet the energy needs, particularly in the developing countries.

What could be the answer? It must be kept in mind that any effort aimed at limiting or denying the use of nuclear energy would eventually fail. Countries would find ways and means or loopholes in the international nuclear regimes and policies to meet their energy needs and ensure state security. Therefore, international policies need to shift their strategic focus from "limiting to the safe management and control structures," albeit with zero tolerance for the violation of nuclear safety and regulatory standards. Enable the states to access nuclear energy but under iron-clad international safeguards, control and monitoring. Hopefully, the world could mitigate the nuclear energy related risks through a 'collective, inclusive and participative approach' rather than an 'exclusive, proprietary and limiting approach'. Similarly, the IAEA and other international forums could lay down mandatory requirements and mechanisms for the safe management and storage of the spent fuel. Temporary storage capacity could be capped at certain percentage of the total nuclear waste produced in a country. International approval for the subsequent upgradation or installation of an additional reactor in a country could be linked with the mandatory compliance of benchmarks for the disposal of nuclear waste piled up there.

Reprocessing could be an offsetting option for nuclear-waste management but it could increase the risk of weaponization and nuclear proliferation. Nevertheless, sooner or later international community would have to adopt the reprocessing option; albeit under IAEA safeguards. Let the nuclear energy succeed or fail under the weight of its own merits and demerits. Let a state have access to nuclear energy if it could afford and manage it without risking others; albeit according to the ironclad international criteria. The nuclear energy access criteria could include the following mandatory structures for a state:[66]

- Establishment of a department of nuclear energy and repository to oversee and manage long-term nuclear energy access and nuclear waste management programmes according to international standards;

- Establishment of a 'permanent repository' for the permanent disposal and storage of nuclear waste in a country;

- Placement of the primacy, responsibility and onus of disposal of nuclear waste on the producer of the nuclear waste;

- Establishment of internationally-regulated entities and agencies, in addition to the government, for promoting market forces and competitiveness in costing, management and permanent disposal/ storage of the nuclear waste; and

- Provision for irreversible budgeting by the government or producer for nuclear waste disposal as well as provision for direct payment to the service provider for the management and disposal of nuclear waste; albeit all under international auditing, etc.

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PERSECUTION OF THE ROHINGYA – THE DARK SIDE OF DEVELOPMENT IN MYANMAR

HEBA AL-ADAWY

As the latest pictures emerge of refugees swarming the shores of South and South-East Asia, seeking asylum with their hands outstretched, the plight of the Rohingya people today aptly evokes the ancient figure of *Homo Sacer* from the writings of Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben. As a symbol of "bare life," *Homo Sacer* is the object of biopolitics and sovereign power, its tragic life such that it can indeed be taken by anyone, without the law's authority or mediation.[1] These are lives that exist in a "zone of indistinction," falling outside of traditional state punishment by homicide, gathered into asylum camps or torture cells, or simply made to disappear without logic. For Agamben, brute sovereign power lies precisely in producing and controlling such "zones of indistinction." With over 100,000 Rohingya displaced since the recent outbreak of communal (involving Buddhists and Muslims) violence in June 2012, human rights observers have decried what they describe as a systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing in Myanmar's western province of Arakan, along the border of Bangladesh. Indeed, as Myanmar struggles against ethnic insurgencies in the borderlands, the widespread animosity towards the Rohingya in mainstream society is remarkable — if not ironic — given their status as one of the world's most vulnerable minorities.[2]

Although anti-Rohingya pogroms and operations have not been uncommon in Burmese history since independence, the recent outbreak of violence, nevertheless, begs the question: Why now? As Myanmar stands on the cusp of economic expansion, a former 'pariah state' now touted by international investors as "Asia's next economic tiger" and the "last frontier" for resources, there lies a darker face of the success story that remains overlooked. Since the

advent of the quasi-civilian government headed by President Thein Sein in 2011 and the subsequent march to political reform, the international community has embraced the new regime, with occasional reminders to curb the ethnic and communal violence plaguing the country. For a country that is recovering from decades of military heavy-handedness, much of the violence is taken as being part of the democratization process; and amidst the resumption of conflict in the Kachin and the Shan states of Myanmar, the violence against the Rohingya population as seemingly commonplace. Missing in this framework, however, is the particular exceptionalism of Rohingya persecution in Myanmar, now with ripple effects on the Burmese Muslim community at large. Even more so is the role of political economy, aided by inequitable investment, in fuelling the enduring persecution of Muslims in Myanmar.

Despite their precarious position in society, scholarly literature focusing on the Rohingya is scanty, or at best, scattered. A large part is devoted to the issue of Rohingya refugees as a humanitarian concern, including the challenges and consequences for host countries.[3] Myanmar/Burma has been no stranger to conflicts — be they ethnic insurgencies or pro-democracy struggles against the military junta. Perhaps as a consequence of this sidetracking, there is little comprehensive study on how the present economic and political situation of Myanmar carries particular implications for one of its most persecuted minorities. On the other hand, mainstream coverage of the recent violence has primarily focused on the "communal" roots of the violence, as epitomized by *Time* Magazine's controversial story "The Face of Buddhist Terror."[4] Many have argued that the process of democratization in Myanmar is giving vent to existing ethnic hatreds, while others have insinuated a post-reform power struggle between the hardliners and the moderate forces in the military.[5] While there is some truth to the arguments above, this study tries to bridge the existing gap in literature by focusing on the *economics* of hate in Myanmar. It examines the international development and aid enterprise in Myanmar, and how it exacerbates existing cleavages within the society. In this sense, the violence of 2012-13 is linked with the larger dynamics of political economy alongside an exclusivist national vision that puts the Rohingya people and, by extension, Burmese Muslims as scapegoats in the economic sphere.

Arakan state of Myanmar

Source: "All you can do is pray" Human Rights Watch, April 2013

Background

As Muslims with a culture and Chittagonian dialect of their own, residing in a predominantly Buddhist province of Arakan (Rakhine), the Rohingya are a minority within a minority within the country's diverse ethnic landscape. In the absence of a proper census and amidst various waves of displacement, it is difficult to get an accurate number of the Rohingya population, though estimates point to approximately one million. The prominence of the Rohingya in urban commerce existing at the time of independence has declined over time, with most of them now occupied as rice-farming peasants, while a fewer number as traders, fishermen, woodsmen, craftsmen, mariners and labourers. While Myanmar officially recognizes 135

ethnic groups in the Constitution, the Burmans as the majority followed by another seven major minorities (Shans, Karens, Buddhist Arakans, Kachins, Chins, Kayas and Mons), the Rohingya are excluded from holding an ethnic status. Under the Ne-Win military regime in the seventies, the Rohingya were rendered effectively 'stateless' with the promulgation of a citizenship law that excluded those whose ancestors settled in the country after 1823. In 1978, under a state-led operation to purge 'illegal immigrants', approximately 250,000 Rohingya fled en masse to Bangladesh, and again during an operation in 1991-2. Although the exoduses were resolved through repatriation agreements mediated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), those who came back found little improvement in their quality of life upon return; having lost the remnants of their possessions and their ID cards, in fact many of them were left even more vulnerable to state-based discrimination.

But unlike its precedents, the recent outbreak of violence did not begin with direct state orchestration. On 28 May 2012, in a small township of Ramri, a series of incendiary pamphlets began to circulate from one house to another. Reports suggested the alleged rape of a 27-year-old Buddhist woman, Thida Htwe, by three Muslim men. Six days later, a few dozen miles southeast of Ramri in Toungop, a group of villagers detained a bus, killing ten Muslims onboard. Following the two incidents, spontaneous rioting began in Sittwe, the capital of Arakan, and the northern township of Maungdaw; mobs from both communities took law into their own hands, storming unsuspecting neighbourhoods with spears, knives and makeshift weapons. On 10 June, the violence was brought to a brief halt as President Thein Sein announced a state of emergency. Civilian power was now effectively transferred to the Myanmar military in the affected areas.

According to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, it is at this point of state intervention that a wave of concerted violence began as reprisals against the Rohingya community.[6] In the Narzi quarter in Sittwe, the largest Muslim quarter home to 10,000 Muslims, witnesses described how Arakanese mobs burned down Muslim homes on 12 June 2012 while the police and paramilitary *Lon Thein* forces opened fire on them with live ammunition. Between 12-24 June, state security forces conducted systematic killings and mass arrests in Muslim townships of northern Arakan, rounding up Rohingya men and boys and transferring them to unknown locations. If the events of June were initially random, a fresh wave of violence breaking out in October was much more organized. Thousands of Arakanese men descended on Muslim villages with machetes, swords and guns, in nine different townships throughout the state, all whilst the police either participated or failed to intervene. The pattern of violence between June and October shows that 7 out of 9 townships attacked in October were different from those that had been hit in the first outbreak of June 2012. Sittwe and Rathedaung townships suffered in both waves of violence. Many witnesses of the October violence claimed that the assailants were from outside their villages; the attacks on the villages also occurred simultaneously, suggesting a pre-meditated plan in action.

Between June and October, local party officials and senior Buddhist monks in their respective townships publicly vilified the Rohingya population and called for their excommunication. Members of the Rakhine Nationalities Development Party (RNDP) — the dominant ethnic Arakanese party in Arakan State — held several meetings in Sittwe to press Rohingya to leave the area, so that they do not reside mixed or close to the local Arakanese. Meanwhile, the army organized forced relocations of the Rohingya people, often on the pretext of preventing further violence, but with little recourse to return or compensation for properties. Many of the displaced Muslim residents were virtually jailed in overcrowded camps, with restrictions placed on their travel, their access to markets and their interaction with humanitarian agencies. On 18 October, just days before the renewed violence in the state, the All-Arakanese Monks' Solidarity Conference in Sittwe issued a virulent statement that urged townships to band together and help solve the 'problem.'

Although the central government has dismissed claims of state complicity, opting to portray the October violence as spontaneous 'communal rioting', it nevertheless played a role in stoking fear and animosity. After the first outbreak of violence, President Thein made a public statement that the 'only solution' lay in the expulsion of Rohingya to other countries, or to camps overseen by UNHCR. Latent in his statement was an implicit carte blanche to the local Arakanese government to effectively create a refugee situation. Amidst the culture of impunity prevailing throughout the 2012 violence, it is no surprise that a third wave of violence has broken out in 2013, spilling beyond Arakan and targeting the Rohingya as well as the Burmese Muslims at large.

Development and its discontents

The Big Picture

It is instructive to examine the impetus to violence against the Rohingya community through the paradigm of political economy and lopsided development. Over the past decade, particularly in the aftermath of mass violence in Central Africa and the Balkans, the development community has been theorizing and codifying an agenda of using aid and investment for peace, democracy and reconciliation in recipient countries. Deliberations over a new policy have emerged in response to long-standing criticism of how the aid enterprise could condone or exacerbate human rights violations, social exclusion and conflict. Arturo Escobar provocatively argues that violence or displacement is not only endemic but also constitutive of development. For him, development as a feature of modernity has made its associated violence so natural that it is no longer remarked upon, and at times even celebrated. Building on Escobar's criticism, other theorists have presented the case of how development could aid violence, particularly when it is blind to the politics of underdevelopment or the socio-political trends in the recipient country.[7]

Amartya Sen joins the chorus of theorists who emphasize inclusive development, forewarning the dangers of economic growth, if concentrated in the hands of a few, and of investment, if it is conflict-insensitive. Writing on the

subject, Sen describes development as a means of expanding freedoms, with freedom not only being its end but also its principal means.[8] For him, the process of development requires the removal of poverty, tyranny, lack of economic opportunities, social deprivation, neglect of public services and the machinery of repression. At the heart of his thesis is the "capability approach," where the central concern of human development is the "capability to lead the kind of lives we have reason to value." Breaking from the orthodox view that economic growth must be a prerequisite to social welfare, Sen presents the case that welfare expenditures can actually spur economic growth. More importantly, he argues that overt indicators such as a rising gross domestic product (GDP) or industrialization do not signify growth in real terms, unless people are given the opportunity to "shape their own destiny" instead of being "passive recipients of the fruits of cunning development programs."[9]

In Myanmar, the agenda of political liberalization and development was, by and large, driven by two overwhelming concerns: a staggering economy, pitching the country as the poorest of its poorer neighbours, and its over-reliance on China for sustenance. After half a century of being shunned by the international community, the picture began to gradually change in 2011 when former general and president of the quasi-civilian government, Thein Sein, announced the need for political reform. The promise of a more democratic order ushered in through political reforms was an essential requirement for getting support and investment from the West; but much in contrast to Amartya Sen's vision, it was not a principal objective behind the reforms. Min and Brian Joseph write:

> It is too soon to say precisely what the generals mean when they talk of building a modern, developed and democratic state. Likewise, it is too soon to say how many hardliners remain in posts from which they can undermine reforms. But it increasingly appears that the government's goal is to set up a system, run by military backed dominant party — that will bring all political and ethnic forces within a single constitutional framework and pursue economic development more or less in the style of Malaysia or Singapore.[10]

Although the constitution effectively ensured the continued dominance of the military in politics, Thein Sein followed up with the relaxation of press censorship, the release of political prisoners and former dissidents, and the revision of party laws allowing opposition leaders to participate, including most notably Aung San SuuKyi from the National League of Democracy.

In turn, political reforms have allowed the warming of relations with the US, giving it a new opportunity to engage with the resource-rich country as part of its larger 'pivot to Asia-Pacific.' For the West, Myanmar holds the promise of growth and investment opportunities in an underserved market of 60 million people.[11] It also serves as a battleground over which regional and international powers, namely the US, China and India, vie for influence. As

secretary of state Hillary Clinton visited Myanmar in December 2011, Washington suspended most of its economic sanctions, paving way for aid, investment and advice from US and its allies, and multilateral financial institutions. This was followed by President Obama's landmark visit to Myanmar in November 2012, ironically coinciding with the outbreak of communal violence in the Arakan state. Obama's visit, in which he praised the government for its reform agenda, was a mark of renewed relations with Myanmar after decades of ostracism. Although Obama fell short of addressing the depth of the Rohingya issue in particular, he nevertheless reminded the government to institute greater measures to address the general human rights concerns in the country.

Unfazed by the recent outbreak of violence, in fact many American policymakers and international investors have sought to justify the move from sanctions to "principled engagement" on the pretext of promoting democracy and the rule of law.[12] Additionally, as Pederson argues in the Woodrow Wilson report of 2012:

> The [previous] curtailment of international trade, investment and aid has also caused several collateral damage, often hurting innocent bystanders. […] While the generals […] have undoubtedly lost more in absolute terms, personal consequences have been far worse for small-scale farmers, fisherman and workers who have been denied vital livelihood opportunities with grave implications for the life and health of themselves and their families.[13]

Notwithstanding the merits of the above argument, there are two major caveats with this approach. Firstly, this policy of principled engagement is formulated with broader oversight of the country's problems, namely the historical pro-democracy opposition against the military junta. In so doing, it does have specific applicability for the Rohingya community, which has its own unique context within Burmese society. Secondly, it overlooks the Burman-Buddhist hegemony in Myanmar, and the intricate web of inter-ethnic relations there.

Although international financial institutions (IFIs) and foreign governments have endorsed economic liberalization as the path to national development, the question of what the 'national' actually constitutes remains deeply contested in Myanmar. Since independence, Myanmar has been confronted with the challenge of defining an inclusive national ideology encompassing the breadth of its ethnic diversity. In the absence of alternatives, a Burman hegemony has largely been filled by an emphasis on Buddhism, the religion of 88 per cent of its population. Following the end of British colonialism, the political era of U Nu under a civilian leadership was characterized by a pragmatic Buddhist revival in order to ensure state expansion into the hinterlands. Although U Nu's emphasis on Buddhism over economic and infrastructural concerns could only go so far, heralding the 1962 *Tatmadaw* (military) coup, it

set a precedent for the involvement of Buddhism in state politics for the successive military regimes. General Ne Win, who succeeded U Nu, exercised greater control over internal monastic affairs, but nevertheless fashioned a civic religion that combined scripturalist, non-political sangha with popular piety of the Buddhist majority.[14] The decade of the nineties further cemented the bond between Buddhism and Burmese national identity. Additionally, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), which transformed into the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) in 1997, rigorously promoted the 'Myanmarization' of local cultures, which not only privileged Buddhism but also Burman linguistic identity over all others.

With some exceptions, ethnic minorities in Myanmar have not traditionally been at the forefront of the pro-democracy struggle, viewed as majoritarian in nature, and have opted to fight their own disparate struggle for autonomy. Now as Myanmar moves towards democratization — with all its limitations — many pro-democracy groups, including the National League of Democracy led by Aung San Suu Kyi, have chosen to pay lip-service to the reforms led by the ex-military regime and to maximize their efforts in garnering support for the upcoming elections of 2015. Although the government has followed a policy of instituting ceasefire arrangements with minority factions in the ethnic borderlands, so as to allow investment to flow in the area, the degree to which they represent the collective will of the constituents is questionable.[15] Such alliances at the expense of the more marginalized communities — particularly the Rohingya community — can be gauged from the response of pro-democracy groups after the June and October violence. Tapping into populist rhetoric, prominent pro-democracy activist Ko Ko Gyi, speaking at a press conference in early June in Yangon (Rangoon), categorically denied that the Rohingya were an ethnic group of Burma. While conceding that ethnicity is not a requirement for citizenship, he blamed the communal violence on "illegal immigrants from Bangladesh" and "mischievous provocations from the international community." "Such interfering efforts of powerful nations on this issue without fully understanding the ethnic groups of Burma, will be viewed as offending the sovereignty of our nation," he said. Perhaps most significant was the response — or rather the silence — of Aung San Suu Kyi, who was on her first European tour in 24 years when the violence first broke out in June 2012. For the West, Suu Kyi is the icon of democracy, whose approval and green signal for engagement with the ex-military regime paved way for the removal of sanctions against Myanmar. After a period of initial silence, Suu Kyi finally characterized the communal violence in Arakan State as governments' failure to enforce its immigration laws. As to whether the Rohingya should be considered Burmese, her response was ambiguous. "I don't know." She suggested "some of them" would meet the requirements of the citizenship.[16]

Considering the caveats above, it is questionable how equitably the benefits from international investment have been distributed. With national wealth still concentrated with the military, the filter-down effects of international engagement in Myanmar's political economy, therefore, would be

restricted to a narrow elite, or remain uncertain at best. International development that is blind to existing differentials in society — political and economic — can potentially magnify the risks, instead of the opportunities, brought about by the fast pace of economic expansion. It is in this light that a recent Oxfam report on Myanmar has emphasized equitable development:

> Governments, donors and businesses must act in ways that empower poor people to influence policies and gain access to markets that respect, uphold and promote basic rights, including land and water rights and gender equality; and that support the establishment of diverse markets that respond to varied rural contexts and needs. Crucially, political leaders must ensure an end to all human-rights abuses and address the underlying causes of ethnic conflicts, which threaten to undermine political and economic progress and stand in the way of long term social, political and economic gains.[17]

With Myanmar lurching towards unprecedented economic expansion with a projected rate of 6.3 per cent in 2013, the stage is simultaneously set for the majority of Burmese — living below the poverty line — to fight for their own place in the economic field. It is within this backdrop of the bigger picture that we now turn to the state of Arakan, home to the Rohingya community and the ethnic Arakanese population.

The provincial picture:
The Arakan state & the Rohingya

Over the past decade, Myanmar has consecutively ranked as one of the poorest countries in the Human Development Index (HDI), despite carrying large swathes of natural resources, oil, gas and minerals.[18] The term 'resource curse,' coined by economist Richard Auty in 1993 to describe the paradoxical underdevelopment of resource-rich countries, is typically used to characterize the situation of Myanmar. But more accurately, the term captures the country's ethnic borderlands, where most of the natural resources are located. Myanmar's western-most coastal province of Arakan, lying along the border of Bangladesh and India, is one such region. Geographically rich in oil and gas, Arakan ranks second in poverty among the 14 states and divisions of Myanmar according to a report published by UNDP in June 2011.[19] Several Arakanese scholars have, in fact, described Arakan as a 'colony' of Myanmar. Explaining the high level of poverty in the Arakan state, Dr. Aye Chan writes: "All natural products and resources are being monopolized by the government and its forces. For example, the local residents have no right to fish in their nearby waters such as ponds, creeks, rivers and the sea, for their livelihoods without paying a huge toll and tax to them."[20]

Adding to the list of grievances of the ethnic Arakanese are a series of development projects launched by international and regional investors in partnership with the quasi-civilian regime. Since the advent of political reforms

in Myanmar, India and Bangladesh have revived talks over a joint Myanmar-Bangladesh-India pipeline in the Arakan region, a project that had been shelved in 2004-5 following a deadlock between the two countries.[21] Two foreign-funded mega projects that are currently in operation include the Kaladan Gateway Project and the Shwe Gas Pipeline Project led by Indian and Chinese companies, respectively.

In December 2008, China and Myanmar signed a deal to construct an oil pipeline in the western coastal town of Kyaukphyu in the Arakan state. Subsequently on 30 November 2010, the China Development Bank and Myanmar Foreign Investment Bank signed a $2.4 billion loan deal to construct the 1,060-km pipeline from Kyaukphyu, cutting across the northeastern townships of Arakan and the Chin state, to Kunming in Yunnan province, China. Construction on the pipeline began in October 2010, with Daewoo International, ONGC Videsh Ltd., GAIL, KOGAS and five other contractors from India, China and South Korea involved in the project. Although a parallel pipeline for oil is still under construction, the Shwe pipeline officially began piping natural gas across the Sino-Myanmarese order on 28 July 2013. The pipeline would allow China to directly obtain oil and gas from the Middle East (via the port terminal at Kyaukphyu), thereby avoiding shipping through the rather insecure Malacca Straits. It would also serve as a crucial asset for the development of South-west China.

The government of Myanmar has hailed the pipeline project as a means of boosting export revenues and contributing to the economic growth of the country. It has also reiterated that the project is being carried out with the enhanced consultation of the local population. Notwithstanding these assurances, however, the initiation of the project met with discontent from the local communities from its inception. Over time, local discontents have been fuelled by land confiscations, allegations of unfair compensation and environmental destruction.

Meanwhile, human rights activists have also indicated abuses in the construction phase of the project, particularly in the use of forced labour. Critics have also pointed out that the trickle-down effects on revenue have not been fairly distributed, and remain confined to a narrow elite the country alongside the international investors. The Myanmar-China Pipeline Watch Committee, for instance, has launched a signature campaign to urge pipeline authorities to act transparently and to review widespread concerns about the project's safety and equitable returns. "We just want transparency for the project," said Hnin Yu Shwe from the Myanmar-China Pipeline Watch Committee. "As far as we studied, the project has no transparency and will provide no benefits to locals who live along the pipeline, nor to citizens of the country who have had to suffer the consequences of the project, such as deforestation and environmental degradation. If the project is not transparent and doesn't provide benefits to the country, just stop it."[22]

Simultaneously, the Myanmar-India Kaladan Transit Transport Project, initiated in 2010, is also under construction in Arakan. The project is designed to boost the economy of the two countries by connecting Northeast India with Southeast Asia. It aims to connect eastern Indian seaports, particularly the Kolkata seaport in east India, with the seaport in Arakan's capital, Sittwe. It will then link Sittwe, via northern Arakan, to the landlocked area of Mizoram in Northeastern India through river and road transport. The three phases of the project include: development of the Sittwe port to handle the future increase in shipping levels, dredging of the Kaladan river, and the construction of a 62-km highway en route the Arakan cities of Sittwe, Pauktaw, MyraukU and Kyauktaw.[23]

But the project has raised concerns amidst the civilians living in townships alongside the Kaladan river, many of whom are fishermen or farmers relying heavily on the river for their livelihood. Local communities have complained about a lack of consultation; some of them have been forcefully relocated while others have had their lands confiscated.[24] To date, pressure has been mounting by civil rights activists that if the negative developments entailed by the Kaladan Project are not addressed, thousands of people will be forced to drastically adapt their lives without any compensation or assistance from the authorities. The developments along the river and around the Sittwe port area will damage and block access to fishing areas along the coast. If residents are unable to access and use the river as usual, both during and after construction, the travel and transportation of goods for trade will be almost impossible, since no alternative means of transport exist. "The Kaladan river is the primary source of water and transport, irrigation and fishing for our living in the area. We will find it really difficult for our daily survival if the river is blocked with larger vessels and dredgers," said a villager living along the river. The construction is also likely to damage the self-sustaining ecosystems on which locals depend, causing greater food insecurity in the region. "We have big concerns about the construction of the port, as all of the houses, restaurants and other government buildings including Sittwe's General Hospital along the Strand Road will be removed," said a resident of Sittwe. He continued: "According to those who have previously been relocated in Rakhine (Arakan) and other parts of Burma [Myanmar] usually no compensation is given to the owners. So we expect the same thing to happen to us when these buildings are removed. Without our houses we will lose a lot of business, as we mainly rely on our houses for doing business such as trading rice with rural folks and city dwellers."[25]

With the majority of the Arakanese population being subsistence farmers, inadequate land compensation is severely damaging to their livelihood. To date, such investments have not benefited the locals, and with inadequate compensation, they have led to greater insecurity and outright land grabs. Indeed a report issued by the Transnational Institute of Burma in February 2013 cautions:

> While regional investment could potentially foster economic growth and improve people's livelihoods, the country has yet

to develop the institutional and governance capacity to manage the expected windfall […] So far, the liberal economic reforms that have been signed into law favour the urban elite and middle class entrepreneurs, despite the government's stated commitment to pro-poor policies and people-centred development to benefit the farmers who are the backbone of Burma's economy.[26]

As Myanmar stands on the cusp of economic expansion, with heavy investment in the already volatile ethnic borderlands, it is useful to heed the lessons of Cambodia, where rapid economic growth led to greater income inequality, land grabs and conflicts between local communities and foreign firms. Oxfam cautions about the associated risks of such development:

For countries emerging out of decades of poverty and under-investment, generating growth alone is not enough. The type of private sector investment that a country encourages can have a direct impact on the quality of growth, and governments have a role to play in choosing investment that leads towards high-quality, equitable growth. Governments should give clear signals to investors about the type of growth they want through clearly and consistently articulating their priorities in domestic policy, regulation and incentives to attract FDI.[27]

It is within this overall context of development with its associated displacement and discontents that the 2012-13 outbreak of violence in Arakan must be situated. Sittwe and Rathedaung, the two townships that have been overwhelmingly affected by development projects, were hit in both the June and the October violence. In October, Kyaukphu, the southernmost port of the Shwe gas pipeline, also caught the rage of violence despite being relatively removed from the northern hotbeds. Similarly, many townships hit in the violence have been affected by development projects either directly, or indirectly through the influx of relocated villagers.

The larger context of development, therefore, explains how inequalities created between the centre and the periphery shaped the pattern of political allegiances that were forged in the violence that broke out in the Arakan state. One observes, for instance, the tacit alliance between the elites of the provincial (Arakanese) and central government during and after the violence. Simultaneously, the violence was accompanied, and at times, preceded by campaigns led by local politicians and leaders to portray the Rohingya as an existential and economic threat. A pamphlet distributed by monks in Sittwe, for instance, stated that the Rohingya "who dwell on Arakanese land, drink Arakanese water, and rest under Arakanese shadows are now working for the extinction of the Arakanese." It urged the people to socially and economically isolate the Rohingya to prevent the "extinction of the Arakanese."[28] In another statement issued by monks of the Rathedaung Township, the Arakanese were

called to avoid employing Rohingya in a range of jobs, including day labourers, carpenters, masons, and in farming. It also stated that the Rohingya should not be employed in government offices or by NGOs operating in the township, and that all NGOs providing aid to the Rohingya in the township must withdraw.[29] Many of the economic grievances of the masses were thus deflected from the elite to another unworthy opponent, i.e. the Rohingya. Much like Agamben's *homo sacer*, the Rohingya were caught as scapegoats in the 'resource-curse' of Myanmar, and sacrificed unheeded at the altar of economic expansion and development.

From Race to Religion:
The discourse of violence

Although mainstream discourses associated with the violence of 2012-13 largely evoke a sense of 'communal' distrust and hatreds, the economic underpinning behind the violence is evident in the outcome it has generated: fierce land grabs, forced relocations of the Rohingya and the subsequent demographical and ethnic engineering in the mixed villages of Arakan. A recent two-child policy imposed on the Rohingya by the local government, with official blessing from the centre, once again betrays an overwhelming obsession with demographics. Amidst calls of xenophobic retribution, the *economics of hate* can be glimpsed in many of the associated policies and discourses surrounding the violence.[30]

Given their economically marginalized status, the scapegoating of the Rohingya community may appear ironic, but in fact, it is directly tied with their racial and religious liminality within the Burmese context. While many Rohingya historians have emphasized an indigenous status that can be traced back thousands of years, Arakanese and Burmese nationalists argue on the contrary. For the latter, the Rohingya fall into the domain of 'foreigners' or 'immigrants' by virtue of being direct descendants of immigrants from Chittagong (east Bangladesh) during the time of British India in the 19th century. Still, a third group of scholars puts less emphasis on the 'origin' debate, focusing rather on the particular historical and socio-political factors that have given the Rohingya, as children of arguably diverse parentage, the cohesion of an ethnic group. Martin Smith describes the Rohingya as 'Arakanese Muslims' on the basis of territoriality, while A. Salimullah Bahar notes how the colonial and post-colonial encounters have given the Rohingya people a distinct sense of identity. For the third group of scholars, 'ethnicity' — or rather the myth of a unified ethnic group — is a question of political formation; rather than existing as a primordial category, it is incumbent on the processes through which social categories are reified, politicized and momentarily realized in practice.[31]

This amorphous nature of an 'ethnic group' identity is best demonstrated in the way a single trait or frame of reference becomes politicized and representative of a much larger group in times of social unrest. Although Myanmar has a diverse Muslim population including Burman Muslims and the Kamans, with the latter two recognized as citizens, little distinction is made

between them during times of conflict. Writing on the subject, Moshe Yegar argues that many Burman nationalists who define Buddhist faith as an essential part of their identity tend to include the various groups into a monolithic category of 'foreigners.' When resentment and frustration against outsiders stoked the anti-Muslim riots of 1938, these were directed as much against the Burmese-speaking Muslims in the north as against the Indian Muslims of Yangon.[32]

In the aftermath of the Rohingya communal violence, there has been a similar upsurge of anti-Muslim and Islamophobic sentiments, catching many of the integrated Muslims in Yangon off guard. In March 2013, a Buddhist mob, provoked by a minor dispute in a Muslim-owned gold shop, tore through a town in central Myanmar, killing over 40 people, burning mosques and Muslim homes, and displacing thousands. In May, 1,200 Muslims in the country's northeast fled from their homes when throngs of armed Buddhists mobilized after unconfirmed reports that a Muslim man killed a Buddhist woman in the area. In late August, hundreds of Muslim homes were burnt by mobs in the Sagaing region of Myanmar, once again, over unconfirmed reports of a Muslim man involved in the rape of a Buddhist woman in Kanbalu.[33] A recent campaign called '969', launched by an influential Buddhist monk U Wirathu, has also been gaining ground in Myanmar. It calls for the promotion of Buddhist pride in the same breath as it advocates for the economic marginalization of Muslims in Myanmar. At the heart of the campaign is the view that Islam is threatening to 'overrun' Myanmar and that the Buddhists must stand up to 'save' their way of life.[34]

Meanwhile, Myanmar's prominent politicians and ex-generals are doing little to stem the tide of xenophobia and Islamophobia raging across the country. But the current trend is hardly an aberration within the Burmese context, where historically the conception of national security has been driven by strong nationalism, notions of self-reliance and distrust of foreigners.[35] In fact, previous regimes have often found it instrumental to reify and stoke anti-foreign or xenophobic sentiments as a means of gaining legitimacy and deflecting attention from domestic economic concerns. In 1997, for example, the regime used anti-Muslim sentiments in Mandalay to deflect criticisms of Yangon's pro-China policies and the subsequent impact on domestic economy.[36] David Steinberg writes:

> If there is one approach that would unite the peoples of Myanmar in a close authoritarian bond and justify this continuation of the garrison state it would be the threat of physical foreign intervention into Burmese affairs. There is always the danger, as we have seen in typical garrison state situations, that a regime may invoke, erroneously believe, or create the impression of external threats justifying continuity of power and repression in the interests of the national security — foreign powers aligning with minorities or opposition elements.[37]

In the wake of growing international involvement in Myanmar's political economy, with benefits reaped only by a few, such sentiments have shifted from the 'external enemy' to the 'internal enemy' in the form of the Muslims. The post-9/11 scenario is further adding to a perception of threat associated with Muslims. Aung Zaw, a Burmese journalist in exile, describes his conversations with army officers and government ministers upon return, where they expressed fears that Muslims would force their religion on Buddhists and 'steal' Buddhist women.[38] Additionally, they expressed suspicion that Saudi Arabia was secretly financing Muslim businesses and that the Bengalis from Bangladesh were joining the Rohingya community in order to claim Myanmar's resources. "If we don't deter them, the western gate will break," one senior minister said referring to Arakan state that borders Bangladesh.[39]

The unanimous rallying cry in the Muslim world in support of the Rohingya community has further accentuated perceptions of external involvement in Burmese domestic affairs. The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) has been very vocal on the issue, and is also reported to have sent a letter to the White House encouraging President Obama to raise the Rohingya issue with the leadership of Myanmar during his visit to the country. Jusuf Kalla, former vice president of Indonesia and chairman of the Indonesia Red Cross, has led Indonesia's efforts in negotiating with the Myanmar government to settle the Rohingya issue. In the past two years, there have been varying reports of non-military aid provided to Rohingya refugees by the Gulf monarchies. In 2012, Saudi Arabia labelled the conflict as 'ethnic cleansing' against the Muslim Rohingya and King Abdullah ordered $ 50 million in aid to be sent to the Rohingya community. Iran also called for swift action to stop genocide in the Arakan state.[40] But by and large, appeals from the Muslim world have fallen on deaf ears. Instead, they have merely reinforced local perception that Muslims cannot be trusted, and are allied with foreigners against Myanmar.[41]

But perhaps most detrimental to the cause of Muslims in Burma has been the advocacy of some al-Qaeda members on their behalf. There have also been periodic calls for a jihad against the military government, in response to the plight of the Burmese Muslims. For example, in the late 1970s, Abdulla Azzam, reputed to be Osama bin Laden's mentor and inspiration, published a document entitled 'Defending Muslim Territory Is The Most Important Duty.'[42] In this widely distributed pamphlet Azzam called for the expulsion of the infidels from Afghanistan to Burma/Myanmar. Meanwhile in Myanmar, a number of disparate Muslim insurgent groups have existed since independence, but they have constituted little threat for the regime and have largely petered out. One organization that still operates, albeit with limited influence, is the Arakan Rohingya National Organization (ARNO), previously known as the Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO). It was established to represent the interests of the refugees around Chittagong and Cox's Bazaar and advocate for an autonomous state along the Burmese-Bangladesh border. But despite notorious connection drawn between Burmese Muslims and terrorism by the local media,

studies have found little co-relation between them. Examining media coverage on the issue of Myanmarese Muslims and terrorism, Andrew Selth writes:

> Reports of links between Burmese Muslims and extremist Islamic groups have caused concern in official circles, but care must be taken in considering their implications. Such connections are notoriously difficult to verify. Some have been inaccurately described, some have been based on unreliable sources, whereas others may even be figments of a journalist's or academic's imagination. Even where these connections do exist, it is hard to identify their exact nature. In light of the heightened sensitivities following the September 2001 attacks in the United States, any links between Muslim groups, no matter how faint or how innocent, run the risk of being seen as somehow terrorism-related. […] There is some truth in the claim that, since 2001, the Rangoon regime has sought to use the rubric of the global war against terrorism to cloak a renewed campaign of discrimination against Burma's Muslim population.[43]

Conclusion

The irony of 'development aiding violence' in politically volatile regions is the subsequent post-conflict measures taken by the international community in 'solving' the problem through economics alone. Rather the flaw in both the pre-conflict and post-conflict stages lies in divorcing the economic from the political. The contention of this paper is not that poverty necessarily leads to violent conflict, but how inequalities caused by inequitable development and investment can serve as intervening variables for conflict in an already fragile community. Conversely, policies centred on poverty-reduction or economic rehabilitation may help the marginalized, but remain counter-productive so long as the structural causes of the conflict are left unaddressed. In fact, much of the efforts by the international community suffer in that they are restricted to treating the symptoms rather than the root causes of the issue.

Over the past decade, the international community has made small inroads of success in tackling the myriad of human rights concerns in the country. But they have yet to develop a targeted approach in addressing the systematic exclusion of the Rohingya community in Burmese society, The International Labour Organization (ILO), for instance, has been working for the eradication of forced labour; despite the government's intransigence, it has succeeded in introducing some checks and balances, including the 2000 ban on forced labour and a complaint mechanism to investigate the claims of alleged victims.[44] Nevertheless, the practice continues informally, and in the aftermath of the violence in Arakan, it has particularly drawn its pool from the many displaced Rohingya, who are left without any alternatives for survival.[45] Meanwhile, the UNHCR has been doing its part to provide for the displaced refugees in overcrowded camps, where there is lack of sanitation, health services

or education. However, with no check to the refugee flow, such efforts are but piecemeal. Part of the problem is also structural, since the UNHCR mandate disallows intervention in sovereign politics. This tends to shift the onus to the host country as opposed to the country of origin.[46]

Human rights, as Hannah Arendt once argued, are effectively rendered non-existent without membership in a state. The subsequent stateless individuals, much like Agamben's *Homo Sacer*, are left as perpetual outcasts in both societies. To date, an estimated one million Rohingya have fled Myanmar, often through tortuous agreements with smugglers and traffickers, and are living as refugees in South and Southeast Asia. Additionally, there are also a large number of unregistered illegal immigrants along the Mizoram border in Northeast India. There has been no closure to their pain, no end to the human misery of those displaced beyond their borders, and now living on bare minimum. Studies have indicated that many of the displaced Rohingya continue to face discrimination by their compatriots in refugee camps. In Malaysia, which is home to a wide range of Burmese ethnic minorities, efforts by refugees to organize coalitions to confront harsh living conditions exclude the Rohingya. Burmese opposition groups in Thailand regularly fail to include the Rohingya in their work as well. Donors who support these initiatives are reluctant to challenge these decisions out of respect for community decision-making, but as a result they reinforce the exclusion of the Rohingya.[47]

Meanwhile, Myanmar's Western and South Asian patrons have demonstrated a strong commitment to foster economic relations with Myanmar, working for mutual benefits through trade and investment. But notwithstanding any good intentions on their part, there equally lies a moral responsibility to protect. With the 'protracted displacement' that now characterizes the condition of the Rohingya refugees, the neighbouring South Asian countries also face an economic and social liability. In Bangladesh, for instance, the influx of refugee population has sparked tensions within the local community living along the border. That the Rohingya are willing to work for lower wages than Bangladeshi labourers creates hostility, leading to sporadic clashes and a general sense of unrest in the area.[48] According to S. Lee, the more prolonged the residence of refugees in the host country, the higher is the rate at which land and resources are used up, a process that in turn accelerates greater competition between natives and refugees.[49] With many refugees pushed to utter despondency and despair, there is a risk of increased involvement in criminal activities, such as drug abuse and human trafficking. Compounding the problem is Myanmar's notorious reputation as the 'Golden Triangle' for narcotics and as being the second largest producer of opium in the world.[50] The ARNO, for instance, has gained most of its finances through criminal activity, in particular the smuggling of guns and drugs between Bangladesh and Arakan state. A scenario in which an increasing number of refugees serve as carriers or traffickers in the profitable 'narco-trade' would prove equally detrimental for Myanmar as it would for the neighbouring South Asian region.

The presence of a large stateless population outside the country of

origin can often lead to an internationalization of conflict, and consequently pose a threat to regional security. Although ethnographic studies have shown that few Rohingya refugees subscribe to militancy, the potential of radicalization and militarization increases with time. That a number of militant Islamist groups in South Asia and beyond have advocated on behalf of the Rohingya also increases the risk of their recruitment into such networks, whether it is voluntary or coerced. Groups such as the Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh, and its militant student wing, the Islami Chhatra Shibir, have long supported the Rohingya refugees, and in doing so, further strained domestic and transnational political relations.[51] The consequences of militarization of refugees can be dire on the host countries, undermining its sovereignty and posing a threat to its stability. It can also present difficulties in the provision of the needy populations, and thereby obstruct international efforts for peace.[52]

Amidst the relentless pain of human suffering, compounded by the economic and social costs for the neighbouring regions, it is clear that the plight of the Rohingya is not simply a Myanmarese problem. The neighbouring region of South Asia and the larger international community, as they haste to invest in Myanmar's rich resources, are equal stakeholders in the crisis, with responsibility on their shoulders to advocate for equitable investment and a just political solution.

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EAST ASIA'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE IMMEDIATE POST-COLD WAR YEARS

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Introduction

Up to the end of the 1980s, relations among East Asian countries, like other parts of the world, were primarily determined by the Cold War. Until the Sino-Soviet split in 1960, most East Asian countries generally followed either pro-Soviet or pro-United States foreign policy. Japan's failed efforts to compromise with the Soviet Union in 1956 over the four southernmost islands of the Kurile chain in order to sign a peace treaty with the USSR due to US opposition exemplifies the strict Cold War factor in the shaping of international relations of East Asia at that time. For about a decade since the Sino-Soviet split in 1960, the People's Republic of China acted alone opposing both the Soviet Union and the US. That changed with the 1972 Nixon visit to China and the signing of the Shanghai Communiqué the same year and the establishment of Sino-US diplomatic relations in 1979. Chinese perception of growing Soviet hegemony in East Asia was exemplified by the 1969 Sino-Soviet border conflict, Soviet-Vietnam treaty in 1978, presence of Soviet bases in Vietnam and the Soviet-backed Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia that overthrew the pro-Chinese Khmer Rouge government in 1978.[1]

Since the early 1980s, China appeared to be a more cautious ally of the US in its opposition to the Soviets as the Soviet Union toned down its criticism of

China, offered normalization of relations and stepped up detente with the US. The Sino-Soviet normalization efforts got momentum under Mikhail Gorbachev and it materialized in May 1989 after the Soviet Union met all three Chinese conditions for normalization.[2]

With the somewhat sudden demise of the East European Communist states, the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact, and ultimately the Soviet Communism and the Soviet state itself in late 1991, the Cold War has ceased to be a factor in shaping relationship in East Asia as elsewhere.

The end of the Cold War and the disappearance of Soviet threat were yet to produce a stable world of international relations. Moreover, there was no overwhelmingly powerful, comprehensive hegemonic force (with both economic and military dominance) in the world as the United Kingdom was for more than a century up to World War I. Even American victories in the Cold War and "hot battles" against Iraq in 1990-91 did not result into a comprehensive US-controlled unipolar world. One may suggest that the US was able to mobilize the forces against Iraq because others paid for it and it was mainly a coalition of former Western colonial powers against a former colony which dared to be recognized as a regional power of a vital region where existed the lifeline of the industrialized West — oil — and Israel. American inability to convince the same allies two years later even to agree to impose a little tougher sanctions against Serbia for its role in Bosnia reflected both the limit of US power and major power rivalries, however implicit that might be. Widespread perception of the economic problems of the US and trade frictions with its various major trading partners — with consequent rise of protectionism and nationalist passion in both the US and its partners — also undermined the assumption of a comprehensively US-controlled unipolar world. Even if that was what we were going to see in the near future, that did not come yet. Moreover, one visible aspect of the post-Cold War international relations had become economic relations. Thus the reconciling of economic relations with the politico-security relations had made the post-Cold war international relations further complicated.[3]

Any discussion on post-Cold War international relations of East Asia must be placed into this broader context of highly uncertain and transitional phase which, however, deprived us of a clear, stable and more predictable world that could provide us with an adequate framework to be employed for this purpose. This essay will discuss the developments in East Asian international relations during the early post-Cold war years covering the period from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s. That was a very crucial time for East Asia as well as for the rest of the world. It was the time that marked the demise of most of the East European Communist states and the end of the Cold War in 1989. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) as a country itself also disintegrated during this same period (in late 1991). The essay discusses various issues of the international relations of East Asia of this period with due attention to both economic and politico-security aspects. At the end, attempts have been made to outline a probable future trend of East Asian international relations on the basis of the discussion. For the sake of clarity and focus, the discussion has been divided into various sub-regions within this vast

region. The essay will show that many of the issues that dominated the international relations of East Asia in the early post-Cold War years still remain important issues. Thus, by knowing the formative phase of the issues guiding the international relations of East Asia, we can understand the present situation and make projections about the future. Here lies the significance of this effort.

Strategic triangle (+One): The US, USSR/Russia, China, (+Japan): Sino-Soviet/Russian relationship

With the Soviet Union meeting the Chinese demands for withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan, from Mongolia and China's northern border and convincing Vietnam to withdraw its forces from Cambodia in 1989, the two countries normalized their relations in May 1989. In the meantime, however, both countries expanded their economic and cultural contacts. For China, normalization of Sino-Soviet relationship was a major victory as it took place primarily on Chinese terms. While it secured its northern border, it also moved one step forward towards strengthening its presence in Indochina.

Sino-Soviet cooperation was soon reflected in the Soviet response to China's Tiananmen Square episode, which, compared to Western response, was mild with stress on the "internal" aspect of the event. Relations expanded to economic sphere, military security and cultural affairs. As of 1990, some 20,000 Chinese workers were employed in Soviet timber, agriculture and construction jobs. The Chinese province of Heilongjiang and the Russian Republic began diplomatic and economic contacts of their own which could be considered an element of a growing trend of broader regional economic cooperation. One among them was the "Greater North East Asian Circle," comprising the Russian Far East, Japan, Korea and northeastern Chinese provinces of Heilongjian, Jilian and Liaodong. Moreover, Li Peng, China's prime minister at the time, visited Moscow in April 1990. The two sides were also able to demarcate most of their disputed borders, opened border trades and tourism. They also signed military-technology sales contracts under which China was to purchase Soviet/Russian weapons and technology to upgrade and improve its military and technological capabilities with particular interest in expanding its naval and air forces to be able to project power in the sea.[4]

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the ouster of the Communists from power in late 1991 came at a time when China was struggling hard to overcome Western sanctions and diplomatic isolation and hoped much help from its renewed relationship with the Soviet Union, shocked the Chinese at first. Soon, however, China adjusted itself to the new reality on its northern border. Both sides maintained business-like relations. Although at the beginning, Russia was putting too much emphasis on its new ties with Western countries, it lately (by the mid 1990s) appeared to have realized the value of its Eastern ties — presumably with the pushing from the "Asianists" and former Communists in the Russian foreign ministry and perhaps for attracting trade, investment and aid from East Asian countries. As recognition of that, President Boris Yeltsin of Russia visited Beijing, Seoul and Delhi in December 1992. A Russia with need for hard currency at that

time seemed to be pleased to have a buyer like China of its military resources — the resource Russia had in abundance. By late 1992, China had emerged as one of Russia's primary sources of inexpensive consumer goods.[5]

Sino-US relations

The Sino-US relations became problematic and strained since the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown. This deterioration in their relationship was, however, indicative of a contradicting reality of that complex time. It reflected, on the one hand, the fall of East European Communism, including the Soviet one, and, on the other, the continuation of the Communist regime (with economic-reform agenda) in China. Since the Cold War equation was an important reason for the Sino-US rapprochement in the 1970s and much of the 1980s, the end of the Cold War apparently left their relationship, at least for the time being, without any strong common foundation.[6]

Thus, the American imposition of economic sanctions on and suspension of high-level diplomatic contacts with China in response to the Tiananmen event was possible as well as "justifiable" since it did not see any major stake in angering, what many in the US Congress, media and policy realm viewed, the last Communist giant on the earth — China. The US also demanded China to observe human rights and missile non-proliferation regime, etc. Later on, the US raised questions about Chinese trade practice as China was charged with exporting goods to the US made by the "slave labours"; the prison labours. It got confounded with the growing trade deficit with China which according to US accounting, rose to more than $15 billion in 1992. Under pressure from the US, China agreed to look into the matter and, as a gesture to the new administration of President Bill Clinton, China bought $200 million worth of wheat and passenger jets from the US.

In its immediate response to the western position on China following the Tiananmen Square event, China, for some time, tried to demonstrate that it could not be ostracized by playing the "third world solidarity" and "socialist solidarity" cards by dispatching top officials in the capitals of various third world countries and still communist East European capitals throughout the rest of 1989 and early 1990. Chinese authorities also heightened their anti-US rhetorics accusing the US of trying to destabilize China and destroy socialism through the strategy of "peaceful evolution". It also retaliated by discontinuing some contacts with the US such as shelving plans to accept Peace Corps volunteers, jamming several channels of the Voice of America and reducing imports from the US. The futility of such efforts soon became evident with the rapid fall of East European Communist states and Soviet Union's internal troubles. The Third World countries had little to offer in China's drive for economic modernization.[7]

Thus, as Harry Harding[8] mentions, China faced its "America dilemma"; how to maximize its leverage on the US while not dismantling the relations so as to ensure success of its modernization programmes. China needed US technology, investment, aid and market. Despite the Chinese "ideological school's prescription for maintaining as little contact with the US as possible, modernization necessities obliged China to move toward normalizing relationship with the US and there was

a compromise between the "ideological" and "realist" views with a tilt towards the later. Moreover, in the internal debate of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the reformists, encouraged by Deng Xiaoping, the paramount leader of China, got the upper hand against the hardliners. While the hardliners were in favour of cautious approach to growth by setting a moderate 6 per cent growth rate for the rest of the 1991-95 Five-Year Plan, the reformers were able to carry through their proposal in the Party plenum in March 1993 for an ambitious 11 per cent growth rate which also required reconciliation with the US. The Politburo of the CCP, elected in 1993, was also dominated by economic reformists. The Chinese leadership allowed a leading dissident, Fang Ling Zhi to leave the country, and gave an assurance that it would take good care of specific political prisoners as requested by the US, and Chinese officials , at a meeting in Beijing in December 1989, with US deputy secretary of state Laurence Eagleburger and president Bush's national security adviser Brent Scowcroft, to engage it in negotiations on the transfer of missiles and missile technology. In exchange, the US agreed to continue for China its most-favoured nation (MFN) trading status, and subsequently relaxed some economic sanctions in 1990-91. In fact, in some sense, the sanctions were symbolic, and soon afterward the World Bank approved loans for China while other western countries resumed trade. The Democratic Party-dominated US Congress wanted to repeal the MFN status or, at least, to attach some stiff conditions to it but the move was vetoed by president Bush.

It is fair to suggest, however, that despite the deteriorating relationship, sanctions and public posture, the Bush administration was anxious not to sever ties with China; the reason being that the US also gave stability of the region a high priority and was apprehensive that China's isolation might lead it into unpredictable and, thus, destabilizing behaviour. It may be argued that the US needed a stable China as a check to the rise of any future Japanese militarism. It was on this assumption that the Bush administration, despite sanctions and outcry from the Congress and the media, followed the policy of keeping the line of contact open, by sending Scowcroft in July 1989, immediately after the Tiananmen crackdown, and vetoing congressional resolutions calling for an end to China's MFN status or for attaching conditions to it.[9]

On the other hand, although for the time being, "Suddenly China looked small in the world" as Nicholas Kristoff[10] put it, soon China found something to use to enhance its leverage in its dealings with the US. First such opportunity came as early as in late 1990 when, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) with veto power, its support was critical for the US in order to marshal legal basis for the use of force against Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait. Another opportunity came in the aftermath of the war as China's participation was necessary in the negotiations on curbing missile and missile-technology sale as China was an important supplier in the Middle East. China abstained from voting on the issue in the UNSC and agreed to participate in human rights negotiations and arms talks. In return, it earned diplomatic acceptability; its foreign minister Qian Qichen was received in the White House by president Bush.[11]

This measured and slow but cooperative and conciliatory approach met with a setback in September 1992 with president Bush's election-season announcement of $6 billion sale of 165 F-16 fighters to Taiwan which China considers an integral part of the country. Although the US pointed out the Chinese purchase of Russian weapons, 50 per cent increase in its defence expenditure since 1989 and Taiwan's security needs, China strongly protested the sale plan accusing the US of violating the 1982 Sino-US agreement calling for gradual reduction in American arms supply to Taiwan. It also accused the US of obstructing China's efforts for peaceful reunification of Taiwan with the mainland and vowed to retaliate if the sale went through. As part of this response, China withdrew from the human rights talks. However, it made progress in other respects, mainly in curbing missile sales in the Middle East. Moreover, China also noted with anxiety that the US made attempts to upgrade its diplomatic relations with Taiwan by sending trade representative Carla Hills to Taipei, the first ever visit of any US cabinet-level official to Taiwan since 1979.[12]

Sino-Japanese relationship in the early post-Cold War years

During this period, with a few exceptions, Sino-Japanese relationship [13] was relatively conciliatory and cooperative, mainly in the economic arena. Japan was not as critical of China as the US and other Western countries were over the Tiananmen Square crackdown. More than any other country, Japan wanted a stable China since it was perhaps Japan which had to face most of the problems stemming from instability in China. Although Japan suspended implementation of a long-term $5.2 billion loan for infrastructural development, it resumed the loan in late 1990 and in January 1991, Japan's finance minister was the first Japanese minister to visit Beijing underscoring the importance of Sino-Japanese economic cooperation.[14] Denied Western credits, China turned to Japan urging it to expedite resumption of loan in 1990. Prime minister Toshiki Kaifu of Japan visited China in 1991. Japan also argued for relaxing economic sanctions imposed on China. Speaking at the meeting of the heads of the seven industrialized countries, known as the G-7, in Houston, Texas, in July 1990, the Japanese prime minister called for allowing China to borrow money from multi-lateral financial institutions. Ultimately, long before the West relaxed the sanctions on China, Japan resumed credit for China in 1990. In exchange, China downplayed Japan's increasing defence expenditure and Chinese statements after the Tiananmen event emphasized appreciation for Tokyo's help in political rehabilitation and opening the windows of Japanese loan. Japanese traders and investors who were willing to visit China after the Tiananmen incident but could not go without the government nod, moved to China with governmental policy change to invest there. China's huge market and abundance of cheap labour made China a lucrative destination for investment and trade. Japanese investment in China in the first six months of 1992 was $830 million, twice as much as in the same period in the previous year. Two-way trade was worth $20.2 billion in 1991. In 1991, Japan announced it would go ahead with disbursement of $1.1 billion in loans as part of a $6.7 billion loan package.[15]

Beneath the cooperation, however, both had calculated interests and there are disputes and resentment causing troubles in their relations. Japanese interest in investing in China was definitely assured quick profit; it also wanted China to be economically strong enough to be able to balance the rising strength of South Korea as a rival of Japan. There was also the sense that in any post-Cold War power balance among the US, USSR/Russia and Japan, China would be a major influencing factor. It was particularly important for the Japanese in the context of gradual withdrawal of US troops and ongoing dispute with Russia. On the other hand, China's interest, for the time being, was to put contentious issues aside to keep the line of aid and investment open to cope with squeezed western aid and investment, which was essential for its modernization — a matter of highest priority with the Chinese leadership. However, China frequently complained about the Japanese inclination in investing more in hotels and construction projects and not in high-value-added manufacturing sectors.

Remove the Chinese distrust of the Japanese, a sentiment fed by bitter memories and perceptions of Japanese atrocities committed during the Japanese occupation of a large part of China in the 1930s and '40s. Out of that anti-Japanese nationalistic passion, many Chinese came to believe, rightly or wrongly, that China was experiencing the "second Japanese invasion"; this time through economic power. This sentiment was once again displayed by student demonstrations in 1990. Japan and China had long been claiming sovereignty over some small islands, 100 miles northeast of Taiwan, called Daoyuti in Chinese and Shenkaku in Japanese, which first cropped up as an issue in the 1970s and again in 1990. In both cases, the two sides put aside the issue for future settlement highlighting cooperative (economic) aspects of their relationship. But in 1990 when China was badly in need of Japanese economic cooperation, Beijing students demonstrated, demanding *Diaoyuti* not *Yen* — the Japanese currency. Similarly, during the first ever visit by any Japanese emperor to China in almost 2000 years in 1992, a large number of Chinese (90 per cent according to an opinion poll) expected Emperor Akihito to offer apology and reparations for Japan's atrocities during the occupation of China. The emperor did neither and the Chinese leadership downplayed those issues, saying that it was up to the Japanese to choose what the emperor would or would not say during his visit to China. Moreover, the Chinese authorities took steps to curb demonstrations against Emperor's visit. After all, for the Chinese leadership economic cooperation was more important than apology from a valuable guest like the Emperor of Japan—which came forward with financial help at a time when China was being pressurized by the West and needed money badly.[16]

Japan-US relationship in the early post-cold war years

While the end of the Cold War removed one rationale for strong US-Japan ties, there remained other important reasons such as economic and regional stability for the two to maintain strong ties. Despite their shared interests, they faced a

difficult test of transforming an unequal relationship into a relationship between two equals.

Many in the US, either in academia or in the administration, viewed Japan as inherently incapable of having equal relationship and thus it wanted either to be subordinate or superior. They said that whenever Japan tried to create a "Japan-Centric" world, it brought disastrous consequences for itself as well as for others as happened in the 1930s and during WWII when it tried to create the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Drawing from Fukuzawa, a late 19th century Japanese thinker, some scholars, both Japanese and western, known as the followers of the "Casting off of Asia" thesis, viewed Japan as being safe when belonged to the west and not to Asia; while others, mostly Japanese, who drew their inspiration from another 19th century thinker, Areo Sei, known as the "Asianists," believed that Japan was first and foremost an Asian nation and must return to where it ultimately belonged; — Asia — as the West would shut its door on Japan when the West would find it necessary which it did in the 1930s and 40s. These debates and perceptions also largely shaped the US-Japanese relationship in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[17] With the Cold War over, the economic factor became a strong indicator of national strength. But while the Japanese had shown superiority in the economic arena, the US was very slow in appreciating that and adjusting its relations with Japan accordingly. Instead, for long, the US had blamed Japan for its own economic difficulties. Citing increasing Japanese trade surplus with the US, America would blame it on Japan's alleged unfair trade practices. They forced Japan to buy more US goods and implement Structural Impediment Initiative (SII) in order to stimulate the Japanese market. For long, Japan mostly complied. The situation was going to get worse when the incoming Clinton administration attempted with threats of retaliation, to have "managed trade" by placing condition on Japan to buy a certain amount of American goods. Some people had even cautioned that in case of unilateral US retaliation, Japan also had plenty of retaliation options.[18]

Already, more and more Japanese were feeling irritated for getting blamed for American economy's inherent problems such as less efficient workforce, lack of quality control, poor school system and, most importantly, its chronic budget deficit and poor savings.[19]

In 1990-91, Japanese position came into conflict with the US on its war efforts against Iraq. An overwhelming majority of the Japanese opposed any participation in that war while the US was insisting upon Japanese peacekeeping role. Finally, Japan sent a minesweeper team to the Gulf when the war ended. Then came the US demand that Japan pay several billion dollars for the war effort, which most Japanese opposed in the first place. Ultimately, Japan paid $13 billion taxing each Japanese $100. However, the decision to pay the $13 billion came after a heated national debate over the justification of the huge demand. Actually, doubts about the justification of the war itself informed Japanese opposition as a majority of the people — albeit a slim one — were vehemently opposed to it. On the other hand, the US viewed Japan's move as being very slow and criticized it for that. It

was in this context that terms like *kenbei,* a fundamental dislike for America, a phenomenon explicitly expressed in the Japanese media, for the first time, got popular. American heavy-handedness also caused a surge of anti-Americanism in the country, a sentiment captured in the titles of books like, *The Japan That Can Say No*, by conservative nationalist writer Sintaro Ishihara. However, it had its counterpart in the US such as *The Coming War With Japan*, by George Friedman and Mederith LeBard.[20]

The relationship worsened further when George Bush led a trade mission to Japan which most Japanese saw as a tactic to scapegoat Japan for America's own troubles. Particularly, the Japanese were resentful about the attitude of US auto industry executives and the secretary of commerce, Mosbaschar. The more the US tried to coerce Japan, the more that aroused nationalist (anti-American) sentiment there. The growing trade imbalance and formation of the European Community (EC), among other reasons, had led the US to form a "Free Trade Bloc" — the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of three Pacific countries; Canada, Mexico and the US. These trends, which the Japanese considered protectionist, made many Japanese wonder if Japan was going to be barred from the North American-Pacific markets.[21]

It was in this context that, the "Asianists" in Japan were arguing for Japan's return to where it should have been — Asia. It was no coincidence that though Japan did not endorse Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Muhammad's call for the formation of a non-White East Asian Economic Group (EAEG) excluding the US, neither did it criticize the proposal as strongly as the US, particularly vice president Dan Quayle, did. In fact, Japan showed ambivalence towards the EAEG proposal. On the other hand, the issue also indicated that although there were differences between the two, the prosperity and well-being of the two sides required close cooperation between them instead of protectionism and trade war. After all, the two economies were so integrated that any disruption of relations would have created catastrophic global economic dislocations. At least for that moment, enlightened self-interest pressed the leadership of both countries into keeping that cooperative relationship.[22]

Japan-Soviet Union/Russia relationship

Unlike some other instances, post-Cold War changes were not so visible in Japan-USSR/Russia relationship by the mid-1990s. Apparently abandoning its long-held policy of separation of politics from economics, in its relations with the USSR/Russia, Japan took a principled position, giving politics priority over economics. Despite the prospect of economic benefits, Japan until then had been reluctant to invest in the Soviet Far East. A very small amount of Japanese money was invested in that region although Japan could be benefited from the development of the region's timber and other natural resources. And even though Japan pledged to lend $2.65 billion to Russia in 1992 as a part of the $24 billion aid package by the G-7 to help Russia meet its debt obligations and restructure its economy, a small fraction of that ($100 million) was actually disbursed by Japan. Before that pledge, Gorbachev attempted to cut a deal with Japan in 1990 in the

hope that normalized relations with Japan would attract Japanese aid, trade and investment to the ailing Soviet economy. After hours of talks during Gorbachev's 1990 visit to Tokyo, the two sides failed to reach any agreement. The issue blocking the normalization of relations was the transfer of four southernmost islands of the Kurile chain, namely, Etorofu, Kunashiri, Habomai and Shikotan which the Soviets captured in the last days of WWII.[23]

Japan considers the issue a matter of national prestige and was not interested in economic cooperation unless the other side (the Soviet Union/Russia) recognized Japanese sovereignty over these islands. Although it was a nationalistic position, some people argued that the islands were of strategic importance: they gave Russia a window into northern Japan and Russian military leaders were among those who were most resistant to returning the islands. But possession of them would have little effect on the strategic balance in the region for Japan. They would not give Japan the ability to block any major straits or project their naval power further northward. Similarly, the benefits for Russia were not irreplaceable, because it had other islands nearby from which it could conduct electronic surveillance and project its naval power. But Gorbachev's efforts came at a time when he was weak at home and was opposed on the issue not only by the rising nationalist tides but also by the Yeltsin-led Russian Federation and the military. Ironically, there was a repeat of the same thing in September 1992 when the Japanese side in the preparatory talks pushed for the return of the islands. Sensing the sensitivity of the issue and political risk involved in the handing over of the islands to Japan at a time of rising anti-Japan nationalistic sentiment in Russia, Yeltsin abruptly cancelled his planned trip just four days before the visit scheduled for 16 September 1992. While this sudden cancellation sent a shock wave through Japan, it damaged Russian credibility with the Japanese. The Japanese made it clear that they had no intention to ask for the resolution of the issue and signing of a peace treaty with Russia in the near future, indicating a stalemate in their relationship.[24]

Western media and governments, concerned at the time about the survival of Yeltsin and Russian "reform" and recovery, had generally blamed Japan for its "barren diplomacy" and "stepping ahead" of its Western allies. That might have sounded justified from the Western perspective, but from the Japanese perspective, its behaviour was quite understandable: it simply wanted to settle a long overdue score with its century-old rival from a position of strength. If a weak Russia showed no interest in giving up the islands, who would guarantee that a stronger Russia — partly with Japanese help — would give them up? Still, some Western powers, particularly France, were forcing Japan to be more forthcoming in its help to Russia. Under pressure from them, Japan had reluctantly agreed to invite Russian deputy prime minister Fyodorov to the meeting in March 1993 in Hong Kong for preparatory talks for the G-7 summit in Tokyo in the summer of 1993 while Japan wanted to invite Yeltsin to the Tokyo Summit.[25]

South-East Asia: Indochina and ASEAN:
Indochina: Changes in power equation

During the first four years of the 1990s, Indochinese nations went through relational changes with each other and with the rest of East Asia which became visible first in 1989 with the Vietnamese decision to withdraw its forces from Cambodia by September of that year. This happened due to Soviet pressure on Vietnam, partly in order to satisfy Chinese condition for normalizing relations with the USSR and, partly, to stop costly assistance to Vietnamese invasions and occupation without which Vietnam could never have maintained its occupation of Cambodia. Moreover, by that time, the Soviet Union gave up its superpower role in Asia. Furthermore, the USSR also first reduced and finally stopped giving Vietnam aid and forced it to pay for imports in hard currency. These factors, and the no-win situation in Cambodia, and the collapse of East European Communist states made the Vietnamese vulnerable and without any foreign source of aid and support as they had already antagonized China and were, virtually, totally dependent on the USSR. Vietnam, thus, had to give up its hegemonic ambition in Indochina. Instead, it had to make peace with its giant neighbour — China — an option Vietnam found no alternative to, given its isolation and vulnerability. Moreover, this "truce" with China helped release some tensions along its northern border, where China frequently made incursions inside Vietnamese territories. Vietnam had to make this peace with China, however, almost entirely on China's terms. Vietnam even had to remove its "Sinophobe" foreign minister, Nguen Co Thac, from all party positions. A process of rapprochement since the late 1980s culminated on 10 November 1991 with a meeting of party and state leaders in Beijing where agreements were signed on trade and border cooperation including border trade. In 1991, the border trade just between China's Guangxi province and Vietnam accounted for about $165 million.[26]

This improved Sino-Vietnam relationship was not, however, totally devoid of disagreements and disputes. Besides some border disputes, the two have overlapping claims, along with Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Taiwan, over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea — believed to be rich in oil, gas and phosphorous. In February 1992, China's People's Congress had adopted a law claiming them as its own. At the same time, China was calling for joint development of the islands, putting aside the sovereignty issue for the time being. Under the law, China can enforce its claim over the islands. Between 1991 and 1995, there were, at least, 15 clashes over these islands. China established control over some of them claimed by Vietnam and had built a runway on one of them. It is very important to note that despite the announcement of this law, China did not capture any of the Spratlys claimed by countries other than Vietnam while it signed a contract with Denver-based Crestone Energy Corporation to explore oil and natural gas in 25,000 square kilometres of what Vietnam claims as its Tu Chinh bank on its territorial shelf.[27]

On its part, although Vietnam came to realize that it would have to live with China on its north, it was, however, trying hard to reach out to other capitals in

the region and beyond to diversify its relationship in an effort to minimize the danger of being manipulated by the Chinese. It tried to befriend the ASEAN and Japan. Importantly, since Vietnam had embarked on economic reform policies — called Doi Moi — designed after the Chinese reforms, it needed technological support, capital and investment, trade and aid which the ASEAN, and Japan could provide better than China. In fact, Vietnam, invited as a dialogue-partner at the July 1992 meeting of the ASEAN foreign ministers in Manila, had agreed to the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. Though China did not endorse the treaty up to the mid-1990s, it does not consider the treaty incompatible with its principles. Japan and others began investing in and giving aid to Vietnam. Vietnam had already signed a joint venture agreement with Malaysia, and Singapore had become the second largest investor there. Thailand was also investing in Vietnam.[28]

For sometime, Vietnam was trying to normalize relations with the US and there was a favourable mood in US Congress. In 1990, the then US secretary of state James Baker announced US willingness to enter into dialogue with Vietnam over the Cambodian issue. In fact, by that time preventing the Khmer Rouge from returning to power in Cambodia became more important for the US which was reflected in the softening of US attitude towards Vietnam. US Congress also adopted resolutions to make sure that US military aid to the Cambodian resistance would not go to the Khmer Rouge. In January 1991, the US opened a missing in action (MIA) office in Hanoi and, in turn, Vietnam began to show increased interest in the search for MIAs. In April the same year, Richard Solomon, then assistant secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific affairs, set out a "road-map" according to which normalization of relations with Vietnam would take place after the resolution of the MIA issue and the holding of elections and inauguration of a new assembly in Cambodia. Vietnam had shown a great deal of forthcoming attitude in clearing the highly emotional MIA/POW issue during the visit of factfinding mission of US senators in October 1992. Later, the US ambassador to the UN had a farewell meeting with Vietnam's outgoing representative to the UN, which was construed as a softened US attitude. It is worth noting that because of its economic embargo the US used its veto against any aid proposal from any multilateral international financial institutions which was essential for Vietnam's infrastructural and other developmental activities. In the mid — 1990s, there was talk of letting multilateral institutions lend money to Vietnam although repeal of the US-imposed economic embargo on Vietnam was not on American agenda at the time. For both security and economic considerations, normalization of relations with Vietnam was beneficial for the US as it was only Vietnam that could play a positive role in any future South-East Asian security arrangement and its untapped market of 70 million people and natural resources might benefit American businesses.[29]

Another change was that Laos and Cambodia no longer remained a part of the Vietnamese-dominated Indochina as Vietnam withdrew its forces from Laos in 1988 and from Cambodia in 1989. Sino-Lao relationship improved significantly afterwards. Lao Communist Party secretary visited Beijing in October 1989 for the first summit since the 1970s and prime minister Li Peng visited Laos in December 1990. The two sides signed an interim border agreement and agreed to cooperate in

the development of an airfield in the 1990s. Laos was being economically courted by Thailand. It was likely that once the crisis was over, Cambodia would also improve economic ties with Thailand. There was a possibility of Thailand-centred continental South-East Asian economic zone.[30]

As for Cambodia, following the Vietnamese withdrawal, a treaty was signed in Paris in 1991 (the Paris Treaty) which assigned the sovereignty of Cambodia to a unique body — the Supreme National Council (SNC) — composed of all four factions (Khmer Rouge led by Kheiu Shampan, Vietnamese-installed government of Hun Sen, the Sihanouk group, and the ultra-nationalist anti-communist Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party, led by former prime minister Son San). Day-to-day administrative job was assigned to the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) with the responsibility of demobilizing all Cambodian factions, holding elections in May 1993 with the participation of all four factions and transferring power to the winning party. Although China did not get what it would have liked, that is the Khmer Rouge back in power, it was quite content that the Soviet-backed Vietnamese dominance in Indochina was over, and the Khmer Rouge was part of the SNC. It also set up relations with the Hun Sen government and was on good terms with Prince Norodom Sihanouk.[31]

The chances of peace in Cambodia, in the mid-1990s, however, appeared cloudy with the Khmer Rouge and Son San group's anti-Vietnamese campaign and claim about the presence of Vietnamese military personnel and about two million Vietnamese "settlers" in Cambodia and, in particular, the Khmer Rouge's refusal to demobilize its forces and participate in the elections scheduled to be held in May 1993. It is important to note that Cambodia's weakness and smaller population relative to Vietnam had pushed some sections of its leadership to raise the fear of Vietnamese "demographic" penetration in Cambodia. In their verification, the UNTAC, however, found only three Vietnamese personnel in the Cambodian army who the UNTAC termed to be involved in "lowly" capacity.[32]

Meetings in October and November 1992 failed to resolve the issue. Despite the UNSC's imposition of economic sanctions on the Khmer Rouge-held areas (15 per cent of Cambodia) and Sihanouk's and the UN's calls for holding elections as scheduled in May 1993 even without the Khmer Rouge participation, it was not certain if that would have brought peace to Cambodia. Killing of 33 ethnic Vietnamese, allegedly by the Khmer Rouge guerrillas, that provoked criticism from most East Asian besides American and Chinese capitals, further worsened the situation. Thus, despite change and hope for stability in the region, there continued to remain the antagonism and distrust that went back centuries. Another new phenomenon regarding Cambodia was that for the first time since WWII, the Japanese Diet adopted the peacekeeping Operation Bill in June 1992 enabling Japan to send 80 observers and 500 peacekeepers in Cambodia for non-combat services which drew little criticism in Phnom Penh and other capitals of the region, except for Singapore whose leader Lee Kuan Yew formulated the "chain reaction" thesis suggesting that Japanese peacekeeping role might lead to renewed militarism in Japan.[33]

The ASEAN: Challenge of a new environment

The ASEAN member states pursue their own foreign policies in accordance with their own national interests. Despite their differences, the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, for the first time, enabled the ASEAN to come up with more or less a coherent response. Basically, most ASEAN states' threat perception used to be centred around the internal regime legitimacy, which was constantly being threatened mainly by the pro-Chinese guerrillas and/or ethnic Chinese minorities.[34]

With the 1989 Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia and the 1991 Paris Peace Treaty, the situation had changed and the ASEAN states shifted their attention elsewhere. The major emphasis was being given to the economic sector. Both Malaysia and Indonesia were attracting huge investments from both Japan and other East Asian Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs). Malaysia and Thailand were about to join the rank of the NICs. Singapore's new leader, Goh, had suggested the formation of a "growth triangle" comprising Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia and the ASEAN had accepted the idea. Thailand, as mentioned earlier, was expanding economic ties with the rest of the continental South-East Asia including Laos and Cambodia.[35]

Relations between ASEAN countries and Japan had been generally cooperative although some had expressed concern over Japan's ferrying of plutonium through the Straits of Malacca. Many ASEAN members, mainly Malaysia and Indonesia (along with Vietnam), were pleased to see a limited role of Japan in the regional affairs (under UNTAC in Cambodia) as a counter to China's growing military power. This issue was also shaped by their own threat perception and national interest. Malaysia and Indonesia — both with influential and sizable Chinese minorities, and past experience of pro-Chinese guerrilla activities — view the Chinese power as a greater threat than the Japanese one though Mahathir Muhammad thought that Japan might replace the Soviet Union as a threat to the region. Both Malaysia and Vietnam had overlapping territorial claims with China which made the situation more complicated. Interestingly, although Indonesia is the farthest of all ASEAN countries from China and has no territorial dispute with it, its Suharto regime opposed Chinese influence most vehemently. It came from their past experience of alleged Chinese meddling in Indonesia's domestic politics by using the local Chinese Communists. Besides, Indonesia perceived China as a threat to its aspiration for leadership of South-East Asia. On the other hand, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines were not as worried about the Chinese as they were about the Japanese influence even though the Philippines has territorial dispute with China over the Spratlys. Philippines, however, was uncertain as to how China would deal with it in future.[36]

ASEAN states' relationship with the US had been in transition since the end of the Cold War. The Filipino senate, in 1992, voted against the renewal of US military base facilities ending a long presence in that former US colony. However, the US had come to an understanding with Singapore which offered to host base facilities. But a dramatic development took place when Mahathir Muhammad,

suggested in 1990, formation of an exclusively non-white EAEG, partly, in response to the growing bloc-building and protectionist trend in Europe and North America, exemplified by the formation of the EC and NAFTA. The proposal did not get much support from other ASEAN capitals, for there was no prior consultation. In particular, the Indonesians thought that if the proposal materialized it might undermine the regional leadership ambition of its leader, Suharto. Singapore did not support it out of concern that it might isolate the US. There was also a feeling that it was a repetition of other East Asian economic organizations like the Asia Pacific Economic Council (APEC) and Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC). Although Japan refused to endorse the proposal for the exclusion of the US, it did not criticize the move. In fact, Japan took an ambivalent position. The strongest opposition came from the US. Although the EAEG proposal could not earn endorsement from others in the region, it certainly highlighted a slow but growing trend of the necessity of a separate regional trading/economic arrangement. It happened at a time when the share of East Asian countries' total export to the US was dropping, while the total US exports to the region had been on the rise, indicating more US dependence on East Asian market than the other way round. Thus, it is now in the US interest to remain involved in East Asian economic arrangement more than it is East Asian countries interest, due, mainly, to increasing intraregional economic interactions.

As mentioned earlier, Vietnam had got observer status in the ASEAN meetings and it had acceded to the 1976 ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. There was an agreement in principle to give Vietnam ASEAN membership after it implemented the required economic reforms to be eligible for membership. Despite suspicions of China's intentions in the region, there were some improvements in relationship between China and ASEAN members. Indonesia, the most anti-Chinese ASEAN country, and Singapore resumed and established diplomatic relations with China in 1990. Malaysia's relations with China improved following the surrender of pro-Chinese Malay guerrillas. Thailand's relationship with the Chinese had been improving since the 1978 Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. Even after the end of the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia, Thailand was maintaining good relations with China and was purchasing arms from China at a price lower than the market price. In exchange, China hoped Thailand to express China's concerns and perspective on the ASEAN forums.[37]

However, China's relationship with those member states of ASEAN which had overlapping claims over the Spratlys, had become troublesome and complicated. The islands were important for their economic as well as strategic value since these islands could provide a country with an important foothold to establish dominance over the sea lanes of communications (SLOCs) in the South China Sea. The Spratlys straddle strategic sealines through which 50 per cent of Asia's oil (70 per cent of Japan's) and 80 per cent of its strategic materials passed. For the Chinese, in addition to natural resources, they were important because the control of these islands in South China Sea would give China a belt surrounding its seashores. China's adoption of a law, mentioned above, claiming sovereignty over these islands, and expressing determination to use force to enforce its sovereignty

had further compounded the situation and heightened tension between China and other claimants. Thus, despite China's call for joint development of the islands putting the question of sovereignty aside for the time being, did not get any warm reception from other South-East Asian claimants. In fact, this suited China's long-term strategy of not creating instability in the region, at least in the rest of the decade which China needed to modernize itself and continued with its peaceful rise. Chinese claim on the Spratlys prevented other claimants from exploring the islands and benefiting from them since the Chinese did not have the capability of exploring them at that time while the others had.[38]

In the meantime, China was building and expanding its naval and air forces and procuring modern technology for catching up with the modern weapon systems and building power projection capabilities with aircraft carriers, submarines, etc. This build-up alarmed the ASEAN states. Now that the Cold War was over, the ASEAN had been focusing on economic cooperation and regional security arrangements which would have given them increasing deterrent power and negotiating capabilities vis-a-vis other major regional powers. As a result, the ASEAN states increased their defence expenditures considerably. Most of these countries had concentrated on upgrading and improving their naval and air power given the dispute over the Spratly islands, to ensure the security of fishing zone and maintain security of the SLOCs. Japan sent troops to Taiwan and Brunei for joint exercises and, in 1991, Indonesia and Singapore began joint air exercises over Indonesian territory. Singapore had increased its defence budget by 40 per cent in the early 1990s. What was troubling for China was that the disputes over the Spratlys had come up at a time when China was in a position to provide either Vietnam or any other ASEAN countries with what they needed — economic assistance. They found Japan, the NICs and the US better able as provider of such aid. It certainly put limits on the Chinese influence in the region at least for the moment.[39]

One explanation of the increasing defence expenditures by the countries of the region might be found in the assumed phased reduction of US military presence in the region and the shift in US role from a leading to a supporting one in the region. In a dramatic shift from the Bush administration policy of not allowing the ASEAN countries to form any security arrangement of their own, the Clinton administration hinted its eagerness not only to accept but encourage such a security arrangement with which the US would be involved. Another explanation might be their worry over the rearming of Japan and China's military build-up which went up 50 per cent since 1989 while there remains dispute over the Spratlys in the South China Sea which it considered its natural sphere of influence. China's claim on the Spratlys came from its need to consolidate the country's borders in the modern era and promote the integration of Hong Kong and Taiwan with the mainland. China attended the Bandung Conference on the South China Sea in 1991, with the ASEAN member states together with Vietnam, and Taiwan. China, however, made it clear that its participation did not mean any change in its claim of sovereignty over the islands. Importantly, both Taiwan and China opposed inclusion of Japan in the conference.[40]

On the other hand, the ASEAN wanted to engage in security dialogue with Japan which might get concerned about SLOC's security in the prospect of US withdrawal of forward deployment from the region and China's growing military build-up in the region. But there were worries about too much Japanese involvement in the regional affairs manifested in the "chain reaction thesis" of Mahathir Muhammad as mentioned earlier.

The PRC, Taiwan and Hong Kong

Economic interaction between Taiwan and the PRC had increased dramatically in the early 1990s. Taiwanese businessmen and investors had particularly filled in the vacuum created by the departure of some western investors following the Tiananmen event and consequent western sanctions. In 1991 about a million people from Taiwan visited mainland China. Taiwanese athletic team participated in the 1990 Beijing Asian Games under the banner of Taipei-China. The two-way trade — still unofficial and indirect — had gone up from $2 billion in 1989 to $4 billion in 1990. In 1991, it reached nearly $6 billion, 43.26 per cent increase over the previous year. Taiwanese investment in the mainland also went up during this time. At the end of 1989, Taiwan's cumulative investment in China was about $1 billion, out of Taiwan's total $20 billion foreign investment. By 1991 about 3,000 Taiwanese companies invested around $1.5 billion in China. In fact, an invisible economic zone had been formed with Taiwan, Hong Kong and two Chinese provinces — of Fujian and Guangdong. By 1992, China became Taiwan's second largest trading partner.[41]

China had been calling for some time for extended contacts between the people and authorities of the two sides which would be useful for the ultimate "reunification" and dropped the idea of "liberating" Taiwan. It had also been calling for "three contacts" — mail, trade and air shipping services — to this end. The Chinese government frequently invited intellectuals and journalists from Taiwan to cultivate relations and disseminate its own views on unification. It had also been urging reunification on the basis of "one country, two systems."[42]

Taiwan's position had long been one of strong opposition to the "three contacts" proposal and "no talks with the Communist regime" though it continued to claim the mainland as "a part of China," which needed to be freed from the Communists. But in the light of the reality of increasing unofficial and indirect contacts across the Taiwan Strait, Taiwan's "no contact" policy became untenable. This brought about some changes in Taiwan's policy towards China by the mid-1990s. It recognized the reality of de facto contacts between the two sides and allowed indirect trade as already seen earlier. In May 1990, the new Taiwanese president, Lee Teng-Hui, announced his desire to establish channels of communication on an equal basis and opening up academic, cultural and economic exchanges completely. In fact, it accepted the idea of "three contacts" on certain conditions. In October 1990, the Lee Teng Hui government established three important institutions — the National Unification Council, the Straits Exchanges Foundation, and the Mainland Affairs Council — to handle relations between the two sides. In 1991, it formulated the National Unification Programme in which it

agreed to establish direct correspondence, air and shipping services and trade, and to promote the exchange of visits of high-ranking officials. On 1 May 1991, it terminated the anachronistic 42-year-old declaration of the "period of suppression of the Communist rebellion". Despite these positive developments their relationship was fraught with dispute and by the mid-1990s it was getting more complicated in the political and diplomatic arena for several reasons. By the mid-1990s, air and shipping services were yet to open. Moreover, though China did not impose restrictions on Taiwanese coming to the PRC, the Taiwanese had imposed a strict restriction regime on people coming from the other side. Despite being happy with positive Taiwanese moves, the Chinese leaders were frustrated with the unofficial nature of contacts, slow pace of unification and continued ban on air and shipping services. Moreover, the Chinese found the conditions put forward by Taiwan for unification such as the democratization of the Chinese political system and Taiwan's continuation of the "dual recognition" policy by establishing diplomatic relations with Liberia, Belize and Grenada unacceptable and counterproductive.[43]

A worry for China was the fast disappearance of the older generation nationalists from the political scene and the gradual loss of the Kuo Min-Tang (KMT) dominance in the Taiwanese politics. Although the KMT won the last elections, the share of its vote dropped significantly in that elections from the previous one. Importantly, the new KMT president and Prime Minister were "native" Taiwanese who had no personal attachment to the mainland China. Another ominous sign for the PRC was the increasing voice of the "pro-independence" forces; especially growing strength of the Democratic People's Party (DPP) and the "Taiwanization" of the island's politics and identity. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the DPP and other "pro-Taiwanese-independence" groups had speeded up Taiwan's independence activities and begun lobbying seriously in the US. A growing number of native Taiwanese were becoming convinced and confident of Taiwanese independence despite the KMT government's announcement to continue with the previous policy of the "reunification" of the two sides of China. The PRC was, no doubt, troubled by this trend, particularly, because of what it viewed as Taiwan authorities' acquiescence of pro-independence activities of the DPP. The Chinese leadership had, however, made it clear that while it now preferred peaceful reunification, it would be obliged to use force should Taiwan decide to declare independence.[44]

In September 1992, China-Taiwan (the PRC-ROC) and China-United States (PRC-US) relations took another downturn resulting from America's seemingly changed policy towards the region, manifested in as mentioned above, George Bush's announcement of the sale of F-16 fighters worth $ 6 billion to Taiwan and sending of Carla Hills, the US trade representative, to Taiwan. Understandably, an angry China retaliated by withdrawing from the human rights talks and warning of further retaliatory measures if the sale went through. In this regard, China blamed the US for obstructing its efforts for peaceful unification by arming Taiwan in violation of the 1982 Sino-US agreement — under which Washington agreed to reduce its arms supply to Taiwan — and by upgrading diplomatic relations with Taiwan with cabinet-level official's visit. Moreover,

China's suspicion grew further by observing pro-independence activities of important former US officials such as James Lilley Natale Bellochi and Ramsey Clerk. Despite that threat, China sent a conciliatory signal to the in-coming Clinton administration by purchasing $200 million worth of US agricultural goods and passenger jets from the US.[45]

China and Hong Kong had been found to be more and more economically integrated in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Attracted by cheap labour more Hong Kong concerns had moved into the mainland whose exports to America explained the huge Chinese trade surplus vis-a-vis the US. Virtually, around Hong Kong and southern Chinese provinces of Fujian and Guangdong had formed a "zone of development." China had received nearly 30 per cent of its annual foreign exchange from exports to and through Hong Kong and investments from there.[46]

Despite such economic integration and cooperation, tensions arose between the two over the internal democratic movement in China and many Hong Kong residents' response to that, the pace and scope of democratization in Hong Kong by Christopher Patten, the new and last British colonial governor in Hong Kong, transfer of authority to the PRC and the multi-billion dollar ($16 to $23 billion) airport construction project in Hong Kong. The tension arose in 1989 when many Hong Kong residents supported the pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square and protested against the crackdown on them in June 1989. Such developments in Hong Kong alarmed the Chinese leadership about the effect of a "different" Hong Kong on China's own political situation. China even replaced the chief of the CCP-controlled newspaper, Wen Wei Po, for his soft attitude to political liberalization in the PRC. While Chinese efforts were well under way to court the Hong Kong intellectuals and others, the situation seemed to have become more complicated with the vigorous democratization efforts by governor Christopher Patten, and by his push for the construction of the airport. Despite support for democratization from many Hong Kong residents, for obvious reasons, the Chinese authority did not like the ideas of both democratization and airport construction. After the Tiananmen crackdown, China put pressure on Hong Kong's colonial authorities to disband a number of pro-democracy organizations and to arrest or repatriate Chinese dissidents for they provided the dissidents with shelters and smuggled them out of China. On colonial authorities refusal, the Chinese Authority for Hong Kong suspended Sjeto and Lee Martin, leaders of the "Hong Kong Alliance In Support of The Patriotic Democratic Movement In China", from the Basic Law Drafting Committee in October 1989 for raising money for the dissidents and smuggling them out. Such a situation had caused apprehension among many Hong Kong residents about its future in view of flight of capital and brain drain. About 45,000 Hong Kong residents left the territory annually from 1988 to 1990. China resented the British moves, saying that they were in violation of the 1984 Sino-British agreement and the Basic Laws guiding the policies regarding Hong Kong during the transitional phase. According to the Basic Law, formulated in June 1990, elected members to the Hong Kong legislature during the transfer of authority would be 18 out of 60 and would increase to 30 in the year 2003. The Chinese side also argued that if the UK could run Hong Kong without

democracy for about 150 years, there was no reason to rush to democratize Hong Kong now as it would no longer remain a British territory after 1997 and get transferred to China. As for the construction of the airport, while the Chinese authority acknowledged the necessity of an airport, they just did not see any reason to start building such a huge airport at a time of British departure. They suspected that the project was designed to benefit British contractors and tighten the screw around the post-transfer Hong Kong economy. Thus, China had refused to accept the responsibility of contracts for the construction. It also rejected Patten's democratization efforts coinciding with British departure as being aimed at sowing the seeds of tension between the Hong Kong residents and the Chinese government. Raising stakes in Hong Kong over the democratization issue, China threatened to retaliate against Britain economically. Simultaneously, China speeded up its transition activities in Hong Kong by announcing the setting up of "a new kitchen", a rival or shadow authority in Hong Kong which China was previously expected to set up in 1996. This decision alone indicated the seriousness with which China had taken the matters regarding Hong Kong.[47]

The Korean Peninsula: Uneasy stalemate

A gradual shift in the region began to be detected since the mid-1980s with the Soviet Union's intention to come closer to the Republic of Korea (RoK — South Korea). This was consistent with Gorbachev's "new thinking" in foreign policy; dismantling of the Cold War and coming close to the West. Moreover, he also saw the prospects of South Korean investment and trade in an ailing Soviet economy. Also, more importantly, the domestic economic problems were not allowing the Soviet Union to carry the "burden" of maintaining "friendly" relationship with the "Stalinist" Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK — or North Korea). In 1990, DPRK's imports from the Soviet Union fell by 14.6 per cent. Nonetheless, during his visit to Pyong Yong in September 1990, Sheverdnadze, the Soviet foreign minister, reiterated support for the DPRK's position on peaceful reunification of Korea, a nuclear-free zone and the withdrawal of foreign forces, i.e, the US troops deployed in South Korea. Even up to January 1991, the Soviet Union continued to supply arms of "defensive nature" to North Korea. Change in their relationship was manifested in various Soviet pressures on the DPRK regime of president Kim Il Sung, ultimately terminating Soviet econo-military aid and asking for trade through hard currency. There was no visit by Gorbachev to the DPRK since 1989 while he visited the RoK and met its president Roh Tae Woo several times. While the two-way Soviet-RoK trade doubled in 1990 to $889 million that between the Soviet Union and DPRK dropped considerably. Economic cooperation committees were established on both sides, the Soviet Union and South Korea, to promote mutually beneficial projects. In January 1991, Seoul agreed to give Moscow $3 billion in loans. On the other hand, the DPRK criticized Gorbachev's political reforms and foreign policy agenda as something that undermined the "communist systems." In this context of deteriorating Soviet-DPRK relations and Soviet Union's domestic economic troubles, president Roh formulated his well-known "Nord Politic" policy toward South Korea's northern countries such as China, the Soviet Union and the DPRK. The main target of the

policy was to establish direct contacts with DPRK's two giant allies to persuade it to accept the idea of simultaneous entry of both the Koreas into the UN and to accept RoK's approach to gradual reunification of the Korean peninsula. When the issue of entry in to the UN came up in 1991, China made it clear to the DPRK that it would not veto RoK's request for joining the UN against the will of the other permanent members of the UNSC. The primary goal of the "Nord Politik" of Roh was, however, to maximize RoK's diplomatic leverage vis-a-vis on the DPRK by isolating it from its two longtime benefactors. Thus, the DPRK had no other choice but to accept simultaneous entry when the two Koreas entered the UN on 28 May 1991.[48]

After disbursement of a portion of its $3 billion loan package to the Soviet Union, the RoK stopped disbursing money when the Soviet Union itself disintegrated in late 1991. Moreover, the Soviet Union and its inheritor, the Russian federation, failed to pay interests on the already disbursed loan. The South Koreans also did not invest that much money in the Soviet Union/Russia considering political uncertainty, economic chaos and dislocation as also Japanese reluctance to invest there. Though the RoK resumed disbursement of the rest of the $3 billion aid package after Russia's payment of $40 million as interest, and Russian acceptance of responsibility for the aid utilized in other republics of the former Soviet Union. There arose, however, questions about the usefulness of the heavy cost of president Roh's "Nord Politik." After all, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, there was virtually very little influence of Russia on the DPRK. Interestingly, it was the USSR/Russia which ignored the necessity of maintaining ties to the DPRK assuming that the Kim regime in North Korea was about to collapse. History, however, proved it otherwise.[49]

In this connection, China seemed to have managed the inter-Korean relations more skilfully by following a "dual track" policy separating politics from economics. It had no doubt that its relations with the RoK were vital to its drive for economic modernization. It understood, however, the value of keeping influence on the DPRK as its immediate neighbour which shared some of its ideological traits. Moreover, maintaining stability in the peninsula was vital to China's economic modernization. Thus, instead of pushing the DPRK hard, China took a measured policy of persuading the Kim regime to gradually open up and reform its economy after the Chinese model, which the DPRK had done to a limited extent. China also persuaded the DPRK to accept simultaneous entry of both Koreas into the UN. More importantly, China encouraged both Koreas to increase their bilateral contacts which was perhaps the most positive aspect of the inter-Korean relations up to the mid-1990s. China's dealing with South Korea was motivated primarily by economic necessity and stability of the region. Apparently, both China and the RoK had acknowledged that sudden collapse of the DPRK or unification of the peninsula would not be in the best interest of either side. China thus waited full one year to recognize the RoK then did it only after the Soviets recognized the RoK though it did not reduce Sino-RoK economic interaction. In 1991, total Sino-South Korean trade was $5.6 billion and by 1992, China became South Korea's fifth largest trading partner and the total trade amounted to about $19 billion. A "Yellow Sea

Economic Zone" comprising the west coast of Korea and two Chinese provinces — Liaodong and Shandong — was being contemplated. The RoK also mediated the entry of China in the Asia Pacific Economic Forum (APEC), along with Taiwan and Hong Kong in 1991. China's diplomatic relationship with the RoK, on the one hand, increased the diplomatic vulnerability of Taiwan in the region and, on the other, provided a check on future Japanese dominance in North-East Asia.[50]

The prime ministers of both the Koreas met several times during the late 1980s and early 1990s. They signed two important documents in December 1991. The first, at the fifth round of their talks on 13 December 1991, adopting the "Agreement On Reconciliation, Non-aggression and Exchanges and Cooperation", known as, the "Basic Agreement." The second, the same day (31 December 1991), adopting the "Joint Declaration of the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" under which both sides agreed to mutual inspection of each other's nuclear sites and not to possess nuclear arms. While the DPRK demanded inspection of US bases in the RoK, the US let the RoK announce the removal of American nuclear weapons from its bases in South Korea. These talks, despite the signing of these agreements, achieved very little tangible improvement in their relationship. The two sides were yet on agree even to allowing the families separated by the border to meet. But these agreements and the meetings themselves were indicative of movement in the somewhat positive direction. Out of concern for the stability of the region, both Japan and the US speeded up their relations with the DPRK in the late 1980s.[51]

By the mid-1990s, the situation got further complicated and strained. First, the US intelligence reports suggested that the DPRK was secretly engaged in developing nuclear weapons and was very close to build bomb(s) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) demanded "special" inspection to two nuclear waste centres to determine the amount of fuel, necessary for making a bomb, the DPRK was able to acquire. The DPRK responded to these demands rhetorically, citing the acquisition of a huge amount of plutonium by Japan which could be used to make hundreds of nuclear weapons. In its response to the IAEA's demand for special inspection, however, the DPRK altogether withdrew from the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) in March 1993 which it had signed in 1985. It also asked the US to stop the joint military exercises with the South Koreans, codenamed "Team Spirit," to open its bases for inspection, and to begin direct talks with North Korea. Some American opinion-makers urged the US government to consider these demands. Interestingly, while the West was inclined to take tough measures, as US secretary of state at the time, Christopher Warren, had suggested to deprive the DPRK of "oil and food" and Japan had expressed its willingness to go along with the West, it was the RoK (and, of course, China) which urged all concerned forces (US, Japan and others) to act cautiously in dealing with the DPRK and expressed its opposition to the idea of economic sanctions on North Korea. Instead, both China and South Korea had urged others to persuade and entice the North Koreans through economic incentives out of fear of North's unpredictable response to the sanctions, lashing out against the South and/or the disastrous consequences of the sudden collapse of the North Korean regime,

particularly, after seeing the economic consequences of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the reunification of East and West Germany. Some opinion-makers in the US also suggested that the US stop the "team spirit" exercises to avoid provoking the North and to start direct talks with North Koreans. Moreover, given the Chinese objective of keeping its independence in the region, it was highly unlikely that China would allow the west-dominated UN to get involved again in the affairs of the DPRK where it fought a deadly war to keep the West at bay. It is no co-incidence that China had already vetoed a resolution designed to take tougher measures against the DPRK for its failure to allow the IAEA inspectors to give "special" inspection right in two of North Korea's nuclear waste sites.[52]

Future: What next?

The discussion above has dealt with the relational situation among East Asian nations in a very uncertain and transitional period. Any clear "world order" was yet to shape up following the end of the Cold War structure of international relations and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in this region. Hence, it was difficult to predict with greater confidence about what would happen in the future. For instance, what is the prospect of Japan becoming militarized again should the US reduce its involvement significantly in the region? At the moment, the answer would be: we believe, that we do not know exactly what would happen. That does not, however, allow us to escape the search for the answer to this question altogether.

First, it can be said that in the short term, the move toward economic integration and stability would be the dominant trend in relations among East Asian nations. That is because the economic systems of all these nations, and thus their boom or bust, are interconnected through aid, investment, market, etc. Increased trade and investment within the region and possibility of emergence of a number of economic zones indicated that. It is, therefore, likely that these countries would put aside military or irredentist claims at least for the time being in the interest of economic cooperation and regional stability. This has been reflected in China's calls for peaceful settlement of the disputes over the Spratly Islands and putting aside the question of sovereignty for the time being. Sino-Japanese agreement to put aside the Diayouti/Shenkaku dispute for the time being, virtual end of Malaysia-Philippines dispute over Sabah and the South Korea, and Chinese concern over North Korea, and Japanese concern over China's stability bring home that point. In fact, the "Flying Geese" theory of the chain of economic development in the region, which suggested that while Japan had helped develop the NICs, the NICs would help develop the ASEAN (minus Singapore, for Singapore itself is an NIC, and Brunei) countries and China and they would, in turn, help develop the Indochinese economies, itself discouraged political instability and hostility. This required a stable environment where capital as well as goods could flow without any fear of political disruption and instability.[53]

Moreover, still there was substantial US presence in the region which was enough to keep the key East Asian powers in check. It is also expected that the US withdrawal if ever happened would be slow and gradual providing enough time and

space for the Asians to develop their own multilateral security arrangement and power balance. The Clinton administration's hint at allowing the South-East Asian countries to form a multilateral overarching security arrangement of their own was indicative of that. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, it was difficult to ponder how effective such a security arrangement would be given the divergence of interests and powers of East Asian countries. But it would definitely increase the ASEAN's deterrent power and negotiating capabilities.

This did not mean that there was no danger of instability in the region. That might come from three sources. One would be the declaration of independence by Taiwanese and western attempt to upgrade diplomatic relations with Taiwan forcing China to do something about that as China has already threatened to attack Taiwan should it decide to declare independence. This might provoke US participation in Taiwan's favour, which was obliged to maintain Taiwan's security under the 1978 Taiwan Relations Act. The second danger of instability would be the mishandling of the North Korean situation. If the UNSC or the West tried to push the DPRK hard, China and the RoK would oppose that out of fear of North Korean lashing out against South Korea and/or the disastrous consequences of the collapse of the DPRK regime resulting from the UN sanctions. Moreover, there was no incentive for China to let the West under UN authorization or any other pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of North Korea. On the other hand, if the DPRK went nuclear, it would leave Japan extremely vulnerable. Maybe it would then be a matter of time that Japan might also be left with the choice of either to go nuclear or not given the nationalistic antagonism between the Japanese and Koreans. If Japan decides to go nuclear that would certainly arouse anti-Japan sentiment all over the region reviving the memories of Japanese atrocities during WWII. So, much would depend on how the North Korean nuclear issue was going to be handled.

There was a fear that the Cambodian agony would linger and elections without Khmer Rouge participation might not bring a lasting peace there. It was unlikely, however, that that would create any region-wide instability. Even if the nationalistic antagonism between the Vietnamese and Cambodians had festered and continued, neither would Vietnam be willing to get embroiled again in the affairs of Cambodia nor would the Cambodians (particularly, the Khmer Rouge and the Son San group) have the will and/or ability to spread it beyond their territory. Even if Vietnam did something, this time without any (Soviet)/Russian support, it would not get as much attention as its Soviet-backed invasion did in the past. In any case, reaction of others to renewed crises and/or fighting there would be one of resignation, letting the situation deteriorate there in that "box."

Importantly, despite increasing military spending by most East Asian countries, no particular country was yet to emerge as a comprehensive hegemonic power in the region. Although China was militarily more powerful than other countries in South-East Asia, certainly, its economic power was not that great in the late 1980s and early 1990s so as to make it a comprehensive power. While it was able to disrupt the stability, it was not yet able (or one can say willing) to impose its will on others; especially, outside Indochina. Almost in the same manner, while

Japan's economic power was beyond any doubt, domestic anti-war mood in Japan, serious resentment in the region about Japan's militarization and defensive nature of Japan's weapons system, put a limit, at least for the moment, on Japan's ability to become a comprehensive hegemonic power from a uni-dimensional (economic) power, though Japan could achieve offensive military capabilities on a short order. At best, Japan would be concerned with the security of the SLOCs through which it imported almost half its petroleum and exported its goods.

Moreover, the increasing defence expenditures by the ASEAN member states signal the urgency for providing an overarching multilateral security arrangement with US involvement, and would make ASEAN (with Vietnam) an effective deterrent to any regional power's attempt to establish hegemony in the region.

Thus, in the near future, with still considerable presence of US forces, possibility of the rise of any comprehensive hegemonic power was limited. Disputes over irredentist claims and islands in the South China sea and East China Sea or the Cambodian agony, the Kurile Islands stalemate might continue for some time. They were, however, not likely to disrupt the regional stability. Moreover, the disappearance of military dictators from the RoK and the disappearance of Kim Il Sung from DPRK's political scene, would, hopefully, give rise to the pragmatic new-generation leadership which might work out some compromise and gradual reunification of the peninsula. The DPRK might be lured through the offer of economic benefits and by the ascendancy of the economic reformist leaders in China. A similar situation can be expected in PRC-Taiwan relationship.

In the medium-to-long-run, however, with the substantial withdrawal of US forces (while it still remained involved with the ASEAN security arrangements and other engagements), there would emerge a group of powers balancing each other. Russia's eventual return, to a certain extent, to the East, as it had already realized the lopsidedness of its "Atlantic-centric" policy in the "Pacific Century", would make it a major player in this power equation. Russian foreign minister's request to the Vietnamese foreign minister after the July 1992 ASEAN meeting to allow Russia to use the Cam Rahn Bay for its Far Eastern fleet showed Russia's interest in the region. In this scheme, in North-East Asia, any three or two powers — China, Japan, South Korea and Russia (with US) — would keep the other one or two powers in check. Similarly, in South-East Asia and in the South China Sea, while China, South Korea and the emerging South-East Asian security arrangement (with the US) would keep Japanese military ambitions in check, and Korea, Japan and South-East Asian security arrangement (with the US) would check any Chinese hegemonic aspirations in the region. Also, China, South Korea and Japan (with the US) would act together to ensure the security of the SLOCs in case of any attempt by the South-East Asian security arrangement to block the SLOCs. In any equation, US involvement would be a key factor in maintaining stability in the region.[54]

This group of balancing actors would provide a structure for stability which, in turn, would provide the regional countries the scope for continuous economic growth, with Japan, the US (to a lesser degree), the NICs and the

"Greater China" and ASEAN states becoming key players and Russia with a marginal role (depending upon its recovery) in economic relations.

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