

INDIA FOUNDATION JOURNAL

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- Svaraj and the Nation
- Revisiting Ambedkar's Idea of Nationalism
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Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

India-US relations is emerging as one of the defining relations of the 21st century, a stabilising force in a region where the old order is under severe challenge, which is why this issue of the Journal explores its myriad facets in considerable detail. It is to Prime Minister Modi's credit that he has not let the unfair treatment meted out to him personally in the past get in the way of deeper engagement with the USA as part of his government efforts to raise the quality of life of the people of India. And to obtain for India its rightful place on the global high table. India and the US have managed to overcome a number of lingering issues like the nuclear liability one while there are still important ones e.g., intellectual property rights. There is a good case for India to continue its economic reforms so that it can take full advantage of global trading opportunities; the risk of being left out of new trading arrangements like TTP has to be mitigated pro-actively since the stakes involved are huge. The two countries have also taken their defence relations to a new level but there are still many shoals to be navigated going ahead.

India Foundation continued its regular activities, particularly its flagship events – India Ideas Conclave, Counter-Terrorism Conference, International Dharma-Dhamma Conference and the India Economic Convention. Other activities included the periodic India Foundation Dialogues, the Megacity Security Conference, bilateral friendship dialogue with Bangladesh, Infrastructure Development in India's Northeast, an interaction with the US India Business Council and a lecture on the Asian Renaissance. The basic purpose of these dialogues and conferences is to improve bilateral understandings, identify problem areas and explore different policy options. There is a need to develop alternative politico-economic narratives so that the India story moves up onto a higher plane that the country deserves.



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India – US relations at a Cusp: Will they seize the moment?

*Shakti Sinha

Most political commentators, on the eve of and immediately after Narendra Modi's assumption of office as Prime Minister were convinced that India-US ties would suffer. The key assumption was that the US denial of visa to Mr Modi in 2005, and refusal to engage with him almost till the last, would weigh heavily on him. This view was not limited to Indians only but quite widespread globally. For example, on the eve of Modi's imminent victory, the hard-line Chinese Communist party outlet Global Times prophesied that the West, which had got used to a weak central government in India, was 'afraid that a strongman like Vladimir Putin will make India really strong and build the country into a challenger to the West economically and politically.' Two years down the road as Modi travels to the US for what would be the last State Visit of the Obama presidency, critics attack Modi as abandoning India's non-alignment and 'strategic autonomy' and of becoming a junior partner in efforts to confront China. If the earlier fears, and hopes, of Indo-US relations nose-diving were completely misplaced, the criticism of India becoming anybody's junior partner are equally off the mark.

A close study of how relations between India and the USA, what Denis Kux in the context of

the Cold War termed 'estranged democracies' have lately evolved would explain why commentators and critics are so often caught flat-footed. A mature country's policies are not driven by emotions or personal idiosyncrasies – it would be extremely absurd that a staunch believer in India's destiny as Modi is would let the treatment, however unfair, given to him personally dictate how he as the Prime Minister of a potential super-power would interact with the US. What a country perceives its interests to be guides its policies and behaviour. Modi's entire campaign was about accelerating India's national development and harnessing the potential of the Indian people so that the country would take its rightful place on the global high table. The second point to note is that interests do change with time, and external developments also impact on policy formulation. It is this placing of a country's interests in a changing external environment that determines how a country responds to a given situation.

Since the 1980s, India was attempting to reset its relations with the US, with varying success. At different times, Prime Ministers including Rajiv Gandhi, Narasimha Rao, Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh and US Presidents Reagan, Clinton and Obama brought new thinking and forward

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movement; however the momentum could not be sustained and had hit a plateau since 2009, with the Devyani Khobargade episode representing a nadir. There was general disappointment that the potential partnership between the two countries promised would remain a 'promise' only. It is not easy for countries to move away from historically-held positions, with bureaucracies particularly wary of straying from the fixed path. It must also be remembered that the generation of the 1960's-70's came of age in an India that was desperately poor, dependent of food aid and deeply suspicious of the world which they held as responsible for India's poverty. While this view was not incorrect, it failed to take into account that India had grown substantially and that it need not worry between being diffident on the one hand, and obstructionist on the other. International trade is presently around half of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and continued economic growth would need sustained flow of foreign investment. And in the changed circumstances, whether it was trade, climate change, intellectual property rights or defence procurement, the country would have to reassess its positions, and try and find common ground with others to become a rule-maker and not a rule-taker. A policy which works at a given level of development may well prove to be counter-productive at another level, and it would hardly be patriotic to hold on to outdated ideologies and attitudes that has prevented India from growing to its potential, in the bargain depriving its citizens of the quality of life they rightfully aspire to.

It is this practical thinking that over the past two years has rescued India-USA relations from the morass it found itself in. And as this paper would show, once one party in a relationship is ready to move, the other would respond. Very specifically this can be seen in the sorting out the nuclear supplier liability issue, but more generally in the whole changed atmospherics of '*chalen saath saath*' articulated in the Modi-Obama joint statement of September 2014.

India's interests are very clear – build a strong economy, ensure regional peace and take its place as a leading power. India's economic resurgence would require both Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and transfer of technology. For that India would have to become an attractive investment destination. Both, Act East and Make in India would fall within this framework. And while the uni-polar moment of USA's complete hegemony has gone, it is still by far the biggest economy and best source of cutting edge technology. In the bargain, India is being forced to improve its investment climate, the ease of doing business is being continuously monitored, a development that would only spur growth in the economy.

One may ask what economic interest does the USA have that would motivate it to partner India? In a paper¹, Ashley Tellis and Raja Mohan list three such interests, viz. access to India's lower-costs exports, its relatively cheap labour, vast domestic market. These would help the US improve its international competitiveness and capabilities, important factors that would help that country

‘reinforce its global primacy and balance China’s rise.’ The line when economic interests merge into geostrategic is basically imaginary though this does not mean that where countries have differing or divergent strategic interests, they cannot have thriving economic relations, e.g., the China - Japan and China - Taiwan trade and investment flows come to mind though the best example would be the US – China economic ties.

For India, besides the advantages of deeper economic ties with the US, a further reason is the reality of the Chanakyan dictum about balancing the ‘near’ and the ‘far’ to ensure adequate space for a kingdom (country in today’s terms) to economically prosper. India has an old and festering border dispute with China but whose irritant value has got somewhat surpassed by the deep, all-weather defence ties and nuclear cooperation between China and Pakistan. The deleterious impact of this relationship was brought home very recently by China putting a hold on India’s effort to sanction Masood Azhar under UN Security Council resolution 1267.

The India – US strategic convergence has a substantial element of dealing with the rise of China. China’s aggressive pushing of its One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative, particularly in the countries in India’s neighbourhood has created substantial disquiet as it has domestic (as in host country) political implications. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would pass over territory that is legitimately India’s but in unlawful occupation of Pakistan; a departure from China’s

stand at multilateral financial institutions where it objects to any project in any territory over which it lays claim e.g. Arunachal Pradesh. It is Pakistan’s own case that Gilgit-Baltistan or the Northern Areas of the undivided State of Jammu & Kashmir is disputed territory. China’s deepening relations with Pakistan that adversely affect India has been referred to. One should add China’s putting India’s membership of the Nuclear Supplier’s Group (NSG) on hold, and the announcement of first two and then another two, nuclear power plants in Pakistan in violation of its commitments when it joined the NSG.

As international trade becomes more important to India, it has a growing stake in the open navigation, in keeping free the sea lanes of communications (SLOCs), and in maintaining a rules-based regime. China, by upping the ante in its dispute with Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei and Indonesia threatens to destabilise this. Specifically the aggressive land reclamation in the South China Seas, construction of runways and now the stationing of defence assets, and in the East China Sea, the unilateral declaration of Aircraft Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) and provocative action against Japanese coast guard vessels. This demonstration of muscle power is intended to convey China’s ability to disrupt the free flow of navigation in international waters.

A substantial portion of India’s trade flows are routed through the South China Seas so it has a stake in keeping SLOCs open and free from destabilising actions. It is therefore not surprising,

but not entirely expected, that in their first joint statement issued when Prime Minister Modi visited President Obama, his first visit to the US after assuming office in September 2014, the two leaders declared their support for freedom of navigation in the South China Seas. But it is not as if the relationship is China-centric, or that there are no other important drivers.

The largest democracy and the oldest democracy share many values and interests. Faith in democracy, in dispute resolution through dialogue and in maintaining a rule-based international regime is at its core. Economically, the two economies are largely complementary and though at times there are seeming completion in the supply of services, the reality is that the higher-order design is America's strength and code-writing, data-compilation, computation etc are India's strengths. Business collaboration and partnership, benefits both economies and make them more productive. The sad part is that the level of trade in goods and services is barely around US\$ 100 billion and concerted efforts are required to take this up to much higher levels. Fortunately, recent developments portend well for the future.

Prime Minister Modi and President Obama have met thrice bilaterally besides at various multilateral forums, with the US President being the Chief Guest at the Republic day parade in January 2015. This was the first time that a US President had been so invited, an invitation Obama accepted at relatively short notice. Obama also became the first US President to visit India twice.

In his congratulatory call to Modi soon after he assumed office, Obama invited the former to visit the US, which was promptly accepted. Modi was quite clear that blockages in the economic ties had to be cleared up so that India could obtain greater US investment and access to technologies. FDI limits were relaxed to 49% in insurance and in defence production, important to Modi's Make in India but in the overall scheme of things an indicator that India was serious about improved economic openness.

There was widespread disconnect among US policy circles, shared in other developed economies, that India had failed to build on the landmark US – India Nuclear deal that came into affect late 2008.² The passing of the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010 was identified as the single action that prevented nuclear suppliers entering into the Indian market despite obtaining a specific waiver from the NSG. The Indian law, which came into effect in November 2011, brought in suppliers' legal liability quite broadly by allowing operators the Right of Recourse (ROR) under Section 17. There are three international conventions governing liability in the case of damages resulting from nuclear accidents, one of which India has signed but not ratified. According to them, the operator has strict and total liability, and ROR can be resorted to only in the narrowest of cases where it can be shown that the supplier had acted with the intent of causing damage. (The Convention is clear that once in force, it would override domestic law). Indian law lays down a

maximum liability for any nuclear accident at Rs 2,600 crores, and the maximum liability for any operator at Rs 1,500 crores. The open-ended provisions of Section 17, including in terms of time period, has inhibited suppliers from the US, France, UK etc entering the Indian market. (The Russians have not had issues yet with regard to the Kudankulam project since that agreement came into effect before the new legislation was enacted). In fact, in addition to Section 17, supplier could face tort action in terms of section 45. India has only one nuclear operator, Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd, a public sector entity, so one can imagine this sense of extra-caution on the part of drafters of this legislation. In fact, these provisions would hit Indian suppliers like L & T also.

Once it became clear in the post-Fukushima scenario that amending the Act would be extremely difficult, the two countries went about devising a solution that would allow India to access latest nuclear technology – India has been under sanction since the 1974 Pokharan blasts – without diluting the compensation limits laid down by law. The two countries had a series of meeting with a view to finding a way out since the Prime Minister made it clear that he wanted the nuclear agreement implemented. Following the US and French experience, the solution came in the form of an insurance pool.

Nuclear insurance is highly technical so globally, insurance companies come together and form a special purpose vehicle (pools) into which

all premiums flow in so that it would be able to make the extremely large pay-outs in the unlikely event of a nuclear power plant accident. The advantage of this pool is that it limits the exposure of any one company, and also insulates its other businesses from liability claims from nuclear accidents. Over time, in view of the track record of the nuclear industry, the pool has substantial surpluses. Indian insurance companies lack both the expertise to insure nuclear plants and the capital base to underwrite the insurance liability potential claims. A further complication is that reinsurance by foreign entities is not an option since they cannot access Indian nuclear power plants. Bringing the four public sector insurance companies on one platform would allow them to hire the requisite expertise and also pool the capital required to meet the minimum insurance cover. It is estimated that an initial pool of Rs 1500 crores would be set up with the insurance companies contributing between Rs750 crores – 900 crores, with the balance coming from the consolidated fund of India. With time as insurance premiums are collected, the need for recourse to public funds would decrease and ultimately not be required. A similar pool of Rs 1500 crores for terrorism-related claims has already been set up. The USA on its part has agreed to drop its requirement of re-processing spent fuel in US-built reactors; instead it would accept IAEA's monitoring and safeguards. Going ahead, India would need to have a fresh look at the Rules made under the Nuclear Damage Act as they have considerable ambiguities.

Moving on to defence, the US has emerged a major source of India's defence imports with a number of big ticket items. During the last year and a half, US Defence Secretaries have visited India thrice; and Manohar Parrikar, India's Defence Minister unlike his predecessor also visited the US. Secretary Ashton Carter has also been driving the Defence Technology Trade Initiative (DTTI) that seeks to move from a buyer-seller relationship to one of co-production and co-development. As of now, India is mainly interested in transfer of technology but that must be replaced by co-development so that India's specific needs are better met and the adoption of newer platforms is much easier. As of now, this has been limited to some minor items but needs to move on to aircraft carriers etc.

The main hurdle holding up closer collaboration has been the issue of the foundation agreements. India has indicated its willingness to sign the Logistical Exchange Memorandum of Agreement, which when operationalised would allow both countries to access each other's supplies, spare parts and services from military bases and ports. Dozens of countries have signed such agreements with the US including those outside NATO or other treaty obligations. In fact, the standard template of the Logistics Supply Agreement has been tweaked to take care of Indian concerns. Ultimately, the US would require India to sign the other two foundation agreements, the Security Memorandum of Agreement and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement before it

commits to transfer of advanced technology and co-production and co-development of new technologies and platforms. Whether India would sign these two agreements is far from certain, with many questioning their utility and perceived loss of autonomy/ national sovereignty.

Armed forces of India and the US now exercise more with each other than with any other country. Bringing back Japan into the Malabar exercises and revival of the Quad (US, Japan, Australia and India) are acts that would help stabilise the Indo-Pacific. Parrikar and Carter announced a new bilateral maritime dialogue, enhanced military engagement and exercises at a more advanced level. While India declined the US offer of joint patrols, presumably in the South China Seas since it could go beyond demonstrating credible deterrence, the trilateral meeting of Foreign Ministers of India, Japan and the US was held late last year.

Going forward, it is clear that India-USA relations would be the defining one for the Indo-Pacific over the next two decades. While there has been a meeting of minds on many issues like civil nuclear deal, climate change, counter-terrorism cooperation, there are still many areas of differences, e.g. on totalisation (social security contributions of Indians on short-stays under H1-B), IPR, trade facilitation, domestic content in solar panels etc., the two countries have set up around 40 dialogue platforms, some of which have simply not delivered. Others have done so when pressurised by the top leadership. The US has

publicly committed to support India's rise as the latter is seen a responsible, not revisionist, power. India on its part has to contend with a rising China close at hand which it has to contend politically and economically. Confrontation with China is not an option but neither is India prepared to be squeezed in the Indian Ocean region nor would it like to see a destabilised South China Seas. On the other hand, greater economic engagement with China is a necessity. So, presently while the US would like to contain China, India's more limited

agenda is to manage its rise in India's best interest.

Normally, after bilateral meetings, countries issue a joint statement. However, when Modi and Obama issued a Joint Strategic Vision in January 2015 – the two countries has so much to gain from each other across sectors, failure to do so would risk degrading the relationship to a transactional one. The leadership of both countries must ensure that the 'potential' gets converted into the 'real' in the interests of not just the two countries but of international peace and stability.

References:

¹*Strategic Rationale for Deeper US – India Economic Ties, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*

²*This section on nuclear liability draws extensively from R. Ramchandran, 'Hurdles Ahead', in The Frontline, February 20, 2015*



India-US Relations: The IPR Conundrum

*N. K. Singh

Broadly speaking, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) refers to “the general term for the assignment of property rights through patents, copyrights and trademarks. These property rights allow the holder to exercise a monopoly on the use of the item for a specified period” (OECD). There are varied interpretations but the key components need to harmonize the incentive for innovation, exploiting frontiers of knowledge with the need to harness these applications for the wider benefit of users, particularly in enhancing human welfare. The broad features of this harmonizing process are embedded in the WTO agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

India and the USA are two of the largest democracies in the world. As a result, the shared values of democracy have contributed to strong bilateral relations between the two countries. The bilateral Global Strategic Partnership between the countries got a boost through the India-US Delhi *Declaration of Friendship* released in January 2015. The declaration states that each step taken to strengthen bilateral ties shall shape international security along with regional and global peace. Further, India’s *Act East Policy* and USA’s *Pivot to Asia Policy* together provide immense

opportunities for both countries as well as Asia-Pacific countries to strengthen regional ties. Therefore, there exists immense scope and ground for further mutual co-operation and stronger bilateral ties between India and the USA.

The Indo-US relationship has undergone tectonic shifts, both in deepening and diversifying its engagements. This is reflected in the significantly higher levels of trade flows (bilateral trade between India and USA stands at around \$100 billion), direct foreign investment, collaboration in the field of intellectual attainments between educational institutions, Research & Development, improvements in competitiveness of manufacturing and enhancing agricultural outcomes. The US leadership in the cutting-edge of knowledge and innovation has unique attributes. In recent years, the strategic partnership between India and the US has broadened from defence, collaboration, purchases and partnerships in multiple ways. It is the endeavour of the Modi government to deepen this relationship and ameliorate persistent and subsisting constraints. One area which the US perceives as a continued dampener, if not an irritation, are issues connected with protection of IPR.

In the area of Intellectual Property Rights

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(IPR), both India and the United States are compliant with the WTO TRIPS Agreement. India amended its Indian Patents Act 1970, in order to better align its laws in line with the TRIPS Agreement; the most important amendment is related to the introduction of product patents for 20 years, including the pharmaceutical products. On the other hand, the United States also amended its Patent Act in several respects for compliance with its obligations under TRIPS. The most important among them related to determining the first to invent in priority disputes.

Despite the compliance of their individual patent laws with the TRIPS rules, differences arise on account of their differing views on the approach to IPR protection. In 2014, India remained on the Priority Watch List of the “**Special 301**” annual report released by the office of the US Trade Representative (USTR). Inadequate IPR protection and enforcement in several areas, including pharmaceuticals, IT and publishing, were alleged as the reasons for this. In a development that disappointed India, even in its 2015 Special 301 Report, the US once again put India on the ‘Priority Watch List’. According to the USTR, India and China are major sources of counterfeit pharmaceuticals shipped to the US. Its 2014 report alleged that up to 20% of the drugs sold in the Indian market are counterfeit, putting patient health and safety at high risk. As India is one of the largest sources of generic drugs globally (exporting pharma products worth \$15 billion annually to over 200 countries), such allegations could adversely affect the country’s image globally. The report highlighted

issues with India’s patent regime, trade secrets protection, digital and physical copyright piracy as well as IPR protection. To address these issues, the USTR also announced plans to undertake “out-of-cycle” review of India in 2014.¹ However, the report also acknowledged significant improvements in India’s IPR legal framework and enforcement system. Further, despite having been put on the priority list India was not designated a *priority watch country*. Being declared a priority watch country could have propelled penal action against India. On the other hand, the 2015 report has noted India’s recent conscious efforts to create new channels of engagement. It expects these efforts to bring about “substantive and measurable improvements” in the country’s IPR regime in order to benefit multiple benefits for creative and innovative industries.

Following the first amendment of its patent law in 2005, India reintroduced product patents for pharmaceuticals, food and chemicals. Patent disputes between India and the United States are most pronounced in the Pharmaceuticals sector. From 2012 onwards, India has either denied or revoked patents for certain foreign drugs which failed to meet its “enhanced efficiency” requirement for patentability. As per India, this requirement is crucial for protecting against the companies that seek to extend the life of their patents by making minor modifications of their patented products (called “evergreening”). In addition to this, compulsory licenses for pharmaceuticals, patented products and other products have been either issued or promoted

(under its National Manufacturing Policy) by Indian government. The United States, on the other hand, believes that the requirement of “enhanced efficiency” is likely to have the effect of limiting the “patentability of potentially beneficial innovations...”. This could include drugs with “fewer side effects, decreased toxicity, improved delivery systems, or temperature or storage stability.” Section 3(d) of India’s Patent Law (which denies patents for incremental innovations to avoid ‘ever-greening of patents) is thus a contentious bilateral IPR issue.

In 2012, India’s patent office allowed Hyderabad-based Natco Pharma to make generic version of German pharmaceutical company Bayer’s cancer drug Nexavar. Bayer lost its appeal in the Supreme Court in December in 2013. Also, in the same year, the Supreme Court denied a patent to Swiss MNC Novartis for its cancer drug Glivec. It is worth noting here that in an editorial, the Boston Globe found the Supreme Court correct in being skeptical of the “evergreening” of the patent. It went so far as to suggest that the US needs to tighten its rules concerning patenting changes to drugs. Another US drug giant, Pfizer, is also involved in patent-related disputes in India.

Apart from pharmaceuticals, other areas of dispute relate to copyright violations in publishing and cinema and software piracy. A report by Business Software Alliance (BSA) estimates that India’s piracy level stood at 60%, as the country recorded installation of \$2.9 billion worth of unlicensed software in 2013. The revenues of companies get adversely affected as a result of

such volumes of piracy. These issues have been discussed several times between the two countries. The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) has repeatedly claimed that India’s IPR laws do not comply with TRIPS Agreement. However, India repeatedly and rightly asserted that it is TRIPS compliant.

India has highlighted the fact that several MNCs operational in the country have been found to be guilty of ‘patent squatting’. Consequently, they refrain from marketing patented drugs and deny access of patents to life saving drugs. This is detrimental to the interests of consumers and adverse impact on their health and social well being. Moreover, data on patents granted in several fields (including pharmaceuticals) between January 2005 and October 2014 reveals that 82% of patents were granted to foreign companies. This belies the argument that Indian patent regime discriminates against foreign companies.

Another issue raised by the US concerns a trend in India towards localization barriers to trade and indigenous innovation policies. India’s National Manufacturing Policy 2011 called for increased local content requirements in government procurement in certain sectors. These sectors included information and communications technology and clean energy. Based on this policy is India’s Preferential Market Access mandate, which imposes local content requirements for government procurement related to electronic products. Another localization measure includes the Indian National Security Council proposal (2014) to store electronic communications between

users in India locally on Indian servers. These measures have been a source of immense friction between the US and India.

In 2013, the United States challenged India's local content requirements and government subsidies for solar panel production by requesting formal consultations in the WTO. It contended that these measures greatly restricted US market access in India. India has also repeatedly raised the issue of copyright piracy and misappropriation of traditional knowledge with the US.

A global index that maps the IP environment in 30 countries worldwide, namely the GIPC Index, India ranked 29 amongst all 30 countries in 2015. However, there has been an improvement in the overall score relative to the previous editions. According to Global IP Center (GIPC), the Indian IP system has the following strengths:

- Basic IP framework introduced in mid-2000s, including 20-year patent protection
- Ex-officio powers introduced in 2007 for the deputy and assistant commissioners of customs

In addition, GIPC cites the key areas of weakness of India's IP system as:

- Regulatory data protection not available
- Patent term extension not available
- Use of compulsory and non-compulsory licensing for commercial and non-emergency situations
- Limited Digital Rights Management (DRM) legislation
- High levels of software piracy, music piracy, and counterfeit goods

- Poor application and enforcement of civil remedies and criminal penalties
- No civil statutory damages available for copyright infringement
- Not a contracting party to any of the major international treaties referenced in the GIPC Index.

It is worth noting here that this index has been largely developed by the *US Chamber of Commerce*, with significant inherent biases which overlook the strengths of the Indian system and the systemic efforts being made to further improve the IP regime as well as perceptions connected with our laws.

There is no doubt, that there are issues on which further work needs to be undertaken but there is no doubt that our IPR regime is fully compliant and consistent with the international standards and obligations under the WTO framework. According to a senior Indian official, "...our laws are drafted in a way so as to protect both our consumer and industry's interest. The new IPR policy that we are coming out with will take care of any anomalies or vagueness in our existing regime and make it tight and also fast-track clearances of patent applications."

The IPR issues between India and the United States have been identified as most crucial for their bilateral trade relations. Accordingly, several discussions and dialogues have been organized on this, over the years. Under the Trade Policy Forum (TPF), India and the US have set up a high-level working group on Intellectual Property. This body has emerged as the principal trade dialogue body

between the two countries. The five areas covered under the forum primarily comprise of the following: Agriculture, Investment, Innovation and Creativity, Services and Tariff and Non-Tariff Barriers.

Underscoring its commitment to making its National IPR policy more internationally aligned, the Indian government is working on a *draft National IPR Policy (2014)*. The policy seeks to “harness the full benefits of creation and innovation in the larger interest of society and citizens...The policy will aim to foster predictability, clarity and transparency in the entire IP regime in order to provide a secure and stable climate for stimulating inventions and creations, and augmenting research, trade, technology transfer and investment.”

In addition to this policy measure, the Indian government has already constituted an IPR think tank under the auspices of the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP). This body oversees the formulation of a National IPR Policy through stakeholder consultation. Also, a joint committee has been set up between India and the US to discuss and resolve key IPR issues.

India recognizes the need for a policy aligned with global standards, as has been re-iterated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, “India should align its IPR laws with global standards”. At the same time, the integrated policy also needs to protect special strengths of the country. Efforts in this direction have already been initiated in the past. These include:

(1) Trademark law brought at par with international practices- For this the Trade and Merchandise

Marks Act 1958 was replaced by the Trade Marks Act 1999.

(2) Protection to Geographical Indications provided- This was done through enactment of the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act 1999.

(3) Copyright law modified- The law was amended in 2012 to make Indian copyright law compliant with the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) and WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty.

(4) Patent law more aligned with TRIPS

The country and the present Government’s will to bring greater harmony in the US-India bilateral relations is strong. This has been indicated on various fronts by the several joint dialogues and co-operation forums organized towards this objective, especially in the last year and a half. The IPR issue, being one of the key strains on the evolving bilateral ties, has been assigned high priority by India. India’s focus on IPR and related issues is reflected in the following statement made by President Pranab Mukherjee on May 11, 2013: “Innovation is increasingly recognized as the currency of the future...India’s innovation bottom line is not very encouraging as the number of patent applications filed annually in leading countries like US and China is roughly 12 times more than that of India... We should step up our expenditure on research to pursue innovation in a big way. The private sector should also increase their share of spending to levels prevalent in countries such as Japan, US and South Korea.”

There is no doubt that given the renewed emphasis on economic growth, Make in India, Start-up India and multiple other policy changes, we need to:

- (1) Improve our domain knowledge, particularly negotiating skills and deepening the training and understanding of India's personnel on IPR related issues. Unfortunately, pedagogic skills and university curriculum need to be broadened to include IPR related issues as part of the teaching program. The number of domain experts and lawyers on IPR related issues is limited. However, inarguably this issue will be significant as India aligns itself even more with the changing norms of globalisation. These problems will become even more complex, as in addition to multilateral institutions there will be pressure from Preferential Trading partners. Therefore, we must equip and prepare ourselves for these evolving trends.
- (2) The total number of filing of patent applications by individuals, institutions and companies remain rather small. The DIPP pointed out that "Even though there are improvements in the number of total filings by Indians, still it is fact that filing of patent applications by individuals by Indians are just around 20 per cent which is

in sharp contrast with many developed countries, despite our country having a vast pool of scientists and technologists and being worldwide recognised as a hub for research... We lack in creation of sufficient IP based knowledge assets... The low patent portfolio of the country is seen as a stumbling block for achieving competitive edge in the domestic as well as global markets." Creating awareness, deepening domain knowledge and improving the filing of patents is an area where we need to redouble our efforts. Patent filing and acceptance need much higher priority than ever before.

The dialogue on IPR between India and the US is an ongoing one. Both sides need to appreciate each other's point of view.

There are no quick fixes. India cannot accept discriminatory and unfair imputations, nor act in disregard of its overriding national interests. Ameliorating the IPR irritants is an aspirational goal but must be consistent with India's over-riding national interests and priorities. Deepening the engagement between India and the US will help dispel misunderstanding and secure acceptance of what we genuinely believe is both responsible and reasonable.



India's Rise: A Strategy for Trade-led Growth*

C. Fred Bergsten

The Indian economy is now growing at about 7 percent, faster than any other large country in the world. Its growth rate needs to accelerate to 8 to 10 percent, however, to employ its rapidly rising population and to eliminate its sizeable pockets of remaining poverty. Doing so would win the admiration of the world and mark India as a global leader.

The government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which took office in May 2014, has proposed a series of sweeping reforms to reach these goals. But even this ambitious program will not be enough. India must also greatly expand its engagement in global markets to both meet its economic objectives and establish its leadership role in the world economy.

In particular, India must sharply increase its exports of both manufactured goods and services to achieve its target growth rate with the corresponding job creation and poverty reduction. No country, including India during its growth spurt of the past decade, has achieved such expansion without deepening its interdependence with the world economy.

But India's international competitiveness is

lagging badly. The shares of both manufactured and services exports in the economy have stagnated for over three years. The responsiveness of Indian imports to global growth has declined sharply. The merchandise trade deficit has hit record highs in the last two years.

India's competitiveness problem is compounded by its absence from the world's new megaregional trade agreements, especially the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) but also the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). If China and the rest of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum join a second stage of the TPP that continues to exclude India, India's annual export losses will approach \$50 billion. India is being left behind by the world trading system.

By contrast, India could experience huge export gains of more than \$500 billion per year (a 60 percent increase, more than any other country) from joining an expanded TPP or participating in a comprehensive Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP), now being considered by APEC. Indian national income would expand by a whopping 4 percent (over \$200 billion) as a result. India could

**This is the executive summary of the report of Peterson Institute for International Economics published in September 2015. Reproduced with permission from the Peterson Institute of International Economics and the U.S.-India Business Council.*

further increase its exports by participating in the major plurilateral negotiations on services, environmental goods, and government procurement that are now taking place in and around the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Numerous sectors of the Indian economy would gain substantially from such trade expansion. Cheaper imports would help fight inflation. Productivity and competitiveness would be substantially enhanced. The opening of both export and import markets would permit much greater Indian participation in global value chains. Larger export markets would bring new economies of scale to textile and many other manufacturing firms. High-technology companies, especially in pharmaceuticals and entertainment, would benefit from more robust protection of intellectual property rights (IPRs). Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in particular would gain from the breakdown of monopolistic practices that keep domestic as well as foreign competition at bay.

To qualify for these bonanzas, and enable Indian firms and workers to strengthen their competitiveness and take full advantage of newly available foreign markets, India will need to adopt the comprehensive economic reforms proposed by Prime Minister Modi: a nationwide goods and services tax, changes in land and labor laws, massive infrastructure investment, and sharp cutbacks in numerous government subsidies. It will also need to substantially open its trade and investment regime, to further enhance its competitiveness and to convince India's trading

partners that it is ready to join the liberalization process.

Indian trade policy, however, has failed to pursue these opportunities. The country has been unwilling to put its own sensitive sectors on the table and has thus been unable to persuade other countries to open markets that would be meaningful to India. It has negotiated low-quality agreements and currently seems poised for more of the same, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) with a number of Asian countries.

There is an intimate relationship between external and internal reform. Domestic liberalization would permit ambitious international negotiations that would create new markets for India's most dynamic sectors. Conversely, the promise of increased foreign markets can support and even catalyze domestic reform—as countries from China to Korea to Mexico have demonstrated so dramatically in recent decades. China in particular used liberalization of its trade and investment policies, required by its entry into the WTO, to broaden and deepen the internal economic reforms that sustained its dramatic double-digit growth.

There is also an intimate relationship between trade policy and overall foreign policy. A more positive trade policy would enable India to enhance its global status and play a much more active international role.

In particular, new economic cooperation between India and the United States would reinforce the efforts of both to forge cooperative

responses to the challenges posed by the rise of China.

The United States can help support a new trade policy in India. President Barack Obama indicated a willingness to consider India's interest in joining APEC when he visited New Delhi in January 2015. The United States plays a central role in all the plurilateral negotiations and could facilitate Indian entry to them if it were convinced that India wanted to participate seriously. Such cooperation between the two countries would represent a tangible, and very valuable, payoff from the close personal ties that have developed between their two leaders.

India should immediately accept Obama's offer and seek membership in APEC. It should apply for participation in the TPP as soon as that group begins to contemplate expansion. It could then also join the discussion concerning the creation of an FTAAP, which will presumably begin at the APEC summit in late 2016.

Indian participation in these initiatives would move it substantially toward free trade and investment with the United States. There are additional economic issues between the two countries, however, that are not likely to be covered by the TPP or an FTAAP. Among numerous examples are US visa policies and Indian local content policies. Hence India and the United States will probably need to negotiate a bilateral "TPP plus" agreement in parallel with Indian accession to the TPP or an FTAAP (as Japan and the United States did vis-à-vis the initial TPP).

If the preferred TPP or FTAAP strategy fails

to eventuate, India and the United States could pursue a bilateral free trade agreement. Such a compact could follow the traditional mode of negotiating all issues together.

Alternatively, it could proceed step-by-step, perhaps starting with investment concerns via the bilateral investment treaty (BIT) now under consideration. The United States could agree to "count" Indian participation in major plurilateral agreements, such as those addressing government procurement and tariffs on information technology and environmental products, toward the bilateral arrangement. As major services economies and exporters, the two countries could negotiate a services-only agreement en route to comprehensive free trade.

The United States has strong economic and foreign policy interests in pursuing such a course with India. As the soon-to-be third largest economy in the world, India can provide strong support for global prosperity and enhance regional stability and balance throughout Asia.

Under free trade with India, the United States could double its services exports to that country and increase its merchandise exports by 50 to 60 percent. A number of US sectors would benefit: Exports of agricultural and energy products could expand sharply, and sales of textiles, steel, chemicals, electronics, and paper products would increase markedly. Particular services gains would accrue to banking and insurance.

The crucial starting point for enhanced Indian trade must be the reform program proposed by

Prime Minister Modi. Its success, coupled with new policies toward international trade and investment, can propel India to a new “growth miracle” with enormous gains for both its people and its place in the world. Its failure would forego the huge opportunities that are available and condemn India to disappointing economic and foreign policy outcomes.

Modi’s reform policies, if they can successfully address such long-standing problems as intellectual property rights and preferential market access, can convince the United States and India’s other trading

partners that India has embraced a new economic philosophy and strategy. Doing so should then enable it to participate actively in a world of expanding trade and international economic rewards. Any of these initiatives will take considerable time to reach fruition. Both the domestic reforms in India and the international negotiations involved are complex and highly political processes. It is thus urgent to begin the process in both India and the United States to enable the earliest possible payoff for both countries.



Challenges to Democracies in the Region

*Ram Madhav

We are living in a world which is increasingly turning democratic. Since the end of the Cold War, an unprecedented number of countries have chosen democracy as their preferred form of government.

It is a matter of pride that in our immediate neighbourhood two new democracies have taken birth in the last one decade. Royal Kingdom of Bhutan has turned into Democratic Republic of Bhutan in 2008 with the active support of the Prince himself who has taken upon himself the new role of constitutional monarch.

Last year the much awaited eventuality has finally happened in Myanmar.

After five decades of military rule, the opposition, Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD), won a landslide victory in elections that most observers declared free and relatively fair. More than 80 percent of registered voters cast their vote which is more than 32 million people. Myanmar's democracy has taken birth. This achievement is significant because it was preceded by a peaceful struggle of five decades.

Yet it is also a fact – rather a saddening one – that some 2.6 bn people – more than one-third of the world's population – still live under authoritarian

and non-democratic regimes. It is even more saddening because a good number of those authoritarian regimes exist in our region. They pose the first major challenge to democracy.

Democracy is a result of people's constant endeavour for liberty and fight against tyranny in whatever form. "Liberty led to democracy and not the other way around", says Fareed Zakaria in his book 'The Future of Freedom'.

When India secured independence after a long struggle for liberty it opted for democracy as the form of government. Mahatma Gandhi, leader of India's freedom struggle, justified the decision saying: "Democracy was something that would give the weak the same chance as the strong".

Democracy no doubt has many positives. A study of Albright Foundation concludes that:

- Democratic states are less likely to breed terrorists or to be state sponsors of terrorism (with some not-so-hoo? urbane exceptions in our neighbourhood)
- Democratic states are less likely to go to war with one another or to create or tolerate humanitarian crises that produce refugee flows and demands for international action
- Democratic states are also more likely to be active participants in the global economy

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But as someone commented ‘democracy is the second best available form of governance’. It is not completely flawless. Then what is the best one? Yet to be invented.

Democracy is at one level the rule by the majority; at another level it is rule of law. Singapore has been ruled by the People’s Action Party since independence, and under the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew between 1959 and 1990. Singapore model is described as a “consencracy“.

Mankind’s surge for more liberty and more freedom continues. It poses major challenges to democracies all over the world. Democracy brings in absolute political equality through One Man – One Vote system. But will it suffice? What about social and economic inequalities. One of the founding figures of India’s Constitution Dr. B.R. Ambedkar warned in 1950: “On the 26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall, by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril.

We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political

democracy which is this Assembly has to laboriously built up.”

Historically this urge for more liberty has led to evolution of democracy into a better form of governance. But the urge continues. The second challenge thus is to manage that urge for more liberty – social, economic – in a manner that would lead to better democracy. If we fail in that it will result in anarchy.

In this context the biggest threat comes from the Left-Liberal discourse. The danger of this group hijacking the liberty discourse and leading it in the direction of destruction of democratic institutions and values is not imaginary; it is real. We in India witness it on a daily basis.

Left-Liberal discourse is essentially anarchist. Yet they camouflage their agenda in a language that is deceptive. In leading the communists to power Mao incorporated the word ‘democracy’ into party-speak to gain popular support. But what Mao actually meant in 1949 became clear when he declared that China would be ruled by a ‘people’s democratic dictatorship’. Mao’s was one of the bloodiest dictators in the world.

Liberalism and freedom are the slogans that are being used today to destroy existing democratic and state institutions. The poor and the socially disadvantaged sections are becoming the tools in this destructive agenda. Democracies become mobocracies in the process.

The Conservatives sometimes tend to swing their pendulum too much in the direction of free markets and capitalism. Fighting poverty, inequality and discrimination should Also be the priority of

the Conservatives. That is the second major challenge for democracies.

Columnist and author Fareed Zakaria coined the phrase – ‘Liberal Constitutionalism’ to find a meeting ground between liberty and freedom on one side and democracy and constitutionalism on the other. It is important in the interest of protecting our democratic values and institutions to be more open and accommodative to the urgings of greater liberty and freedom.

Democracies face an inherent challenge of authoritarianism by virtue of being politics based on numerical superiority. The urge to get greater numbers in order to have greater control over the government is natural. But we should strive for a government system that is less pervasive and non-intrusive. Eminent Indian political thinker and philosopher Kautilya had warned in his treatise Arthashastra against laws and punishments which are excessive as these make the king lose popular support. In India Prime Minister Modi follows the dictum ‘Minimum Government – Maximum Governance’. In the last 24 months the Indian government has repealed more than 1100 laws that have become archaic and obsolete.

Of late, demographics is posing a new challenge to democracies. This problem is not new in our region. India has a major illegal migrant population from neighboring Bangladesh. But the present situation in Europe is making the larger world understand the challenges posed by such

migrations. They effect demographics of the region leading to affecting socio-economic indicators adversely. Migrants and their refusal to integrate with the local cultural and democratic institutions and ethos pose a major challenge to democracies.

Terrorism – religious or otherwise – too is a challenge that many countries in the region face today. It is no longer any local problem. No country can claim immunity from it; nor can any community. India has been a victim of terror for last several decades. Romanticising terror using cliches like ‘One man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter’ is the danger the open democratic societies face. This line of argument positions violence and terror as an alternative to democracy and constitutionalism. We need to ruthlessly curb this menace unitedly. Democracies face certain internal challenges too, like Dynastic Politics, Communal Politics, Caste and class based Politics etc.

Maintaining democracy, even for countries with long-standing democratic traditions, requires education, sustained vigilance, and active support of the masses. An Israeli philosopher had described democracy as an arrangement in which ‘Institutions don’t humiliate individuals and individuals don’t humiliate each other’.

Together we must move in that direction for our democracies to flourish.

[The article is the gist of Shri Ram Madhav’s address at the International Democratic Union executive in Colombo on 25th February, 2016]



Svaraj and the Nation¹

*Prof. Makarand R. Paranjape

In 1909, Mahatma Gandhi wrote *Hind Swaraj* or *Indian Home Rule*. Not only was this his first major book, it was also the only book of his that Gandhi himself translated into English. Written originally in Gujarati between 13 and 22 November on board the S. S. Kildonan Castle journeying from England to South Africa, it appeared in two instalments in the 11 and 19 December issues of *Indian Opinion*, a journal Gandhi used to bring out. In January 1910, it was published as an independent booklet by Gandhi's own International Printing Press from Phoenix Farm, Natal, with an English version appearing two months later in March.

Hind Swaraj was an imaginary dialogue between a Reader and the Editor, the latter presumably standing for Gandhi himself. This dialogue covers a range of topics including the Congress Party and its officials, the state of India, the reasons for India's colonization, the meaning of *svaraj* (self-rule), the best means to attain it, Gandhi's vision of an ideal society, the definition and practice of *satyagraha* ('truth-force'), the qualities required to be a *satyagrahi*, Hindu-Muslim unity, railways, lawyers and doctors, and English education in India. The book became notorious for

its attack on machinery and modern, Western civilization. Yet, more than that, it contained the earliest, most comprehensive, exposition of Gandhi's philosophy. Extremely influential politically, *Hind Swaraj* was soon banned in India. However, it was reissued many times during Gandhi's life and remained close to his heart; though his own thinking changed with time, he never disowned its key tenets. It still remains one of the most important documents of India's freedom struggle and the discourse of decolonization the world over, besides being the handbook of nonviolent revolution.

I begin with this bringing to mind of Gandhi's book only because the Gandhian project is central to what India means to me today. I wrote about this earlier in my book *Altered Destinations* (2009), the orthographic depiction of the title highlighting how nation is foregrounding in "destination." A nation, I suggested, is also a destination, a goal, an objective, an ultimate aim. Many forget what the destination of India is. They think it is economic or social advancement, freedom, democracy, justice and so on. These words, while resonant of the directive principles set forth in the Preamble of

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¹*An earlier version was published as the Preface to author's book, *Altered Destinations: Self, Society, and Nation in India* (London: Anthem, 2009).*

the Constitution of India, still do not express the underlying purpose for which this nation was imagined into being.

For several years, I, too, was somewhat unclear if not confused about the meaning of India. In many seminars and conferences, so much time is spent trying to understand what we mean by 'nation'. Is India a nation? Or is it a civilization? Or is it both? A civilization-state? If India is a nation, are Pakistan and Bangladesh nations, too? If Bangladesh is a nation are the Bengalis a nation? Are the Tamils a nation? Are Hindus a nation? So are we a nation of nations? What is the difference between the Indian nation and the Indian state? Is the former an abstraction, an idea, while the latter the actual institutional apparatus? How does Indian nationalism differ from Western nationalisms? Is communalism different from nationalism or is it in itself a type of nationalism? Is Indian nationalism actually a camouflage for Hindu nationalism? Is Hindutva a form of ethnic nationalism or is it a religious ideology? How is cultural nationalism different from Hindutva? Is pan-Islamism also a type of nationalism or is it a politics of identity? Are sub-nationalisms anti-national or are they also legitimate expressions of nationalism? Of the competing Indian nationalisms, which are more authentic and how can we distinguish one from the other? Does the nationstate that is India have a stable or successful future? Will it survive in its present shape and form? Or would the splitting of India into many smaller states be desirable? Is nationalism a flawed and outdated ideology? Are

all nationalisms parochial, even murderous, or are some nationalisms better than others?

These, and a bewildering array of similar, questions assail us when we focus on the issue of the Indian nation. That is why I have found it much better to focus on an indigenous word such as *svaraj* instead of the nation. This came to me in a flash in a seminar at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies several years ago. While several learned speakers spoke on the idea of the nation and its pitfalls, almost none bothered to think of something much more vital and immediate—*svaraj*. Surely, all talk of the nation is futile if it does not, in some way, lead to *svaraj*. Our *svaraj*, the country's *svaraj*, the *svaraj* of millions, and ultimately, the *svaraj* of non-Indians as much as Indians—surely, all these are interconnected. While words like 'the nation' may confuse us, *svaraj* is immediate and crystal clear. It concerns our autonomy, empowerment, dignity and selfhood; not just our rights, but our responsibilities and commitments to one another and to our highest selves. How is the nation doing? This question may be confusing, but if we ask, 'Do we have *svaraj*?' the answer will be much clearer. Do all Indians have *svaraj*? Is our society organized to maximize the *svaraj* of all or does it favour the few, the rich, and the powerful? What should we do to reinstall *svaraj* as a principle of governance if not as a national ideal?

The idea of *svaraj* is very powerful and meaningful in India. Originating in the Vedas and the Upanishads, *svaraj* found a new, largely political

expression in the late nineteenth century. Deployed for political purposes by stalwarts like Dadabhai Naoroji, Lokmanya Tilak, Sri Aurobindo, and Mahatma Gandhi, it soon became synonymous with India's demand for independence. Etymologically, the word is a modern variation of the Sanskrit svarajya, a compound made up of sva + raj; sva means self and raj means to shine. Hence, the word means both the shining of the self and the self that shines. While the word raj gives us many terms associated with power including Raja, Rex and Regina, svarajis much more than just that. We might actually say that svaraj is another word for enlightenment in addition to signifying self-rule.

It is in India that political independence was expressed in terms of enlightenment and self-illumination; it is here that temporal power was considered only the material basis for higher consciousness rather than an end in itself. For us, no political independence was conceivable without a concomitant spiritual and moral liberation. Svarajya, then, is the principle of perfection, of perfect governmentality, because illumination comes from internal order, not from oppression or rule over others. Originally, svarajya referred to the internal government of a person, the government of the limbs, of the senses, of the organs and of all the different physical and psychological constituents of the individual. When all these could be well-governed, a person could

rule himself, be svarat. Hence svarajya is the state of self-mastery; the master of senses is svarat. The opposite of svarat, anyarat, means someone ruled by anya, by others. The Upanishad clearly says that those who are anyarat perish; they go to the worlds of the doomed.

Combining spiritual liberation with political independence, svaraj also suggests a host of possibilities for inner illumination and self-realization. Svaraj is thus opposed both to imperialism and to totalitarian forms of government that crush the liberty of individuals and collectives. That is why the word svaraj might be preferable to decolonization, because svaraj is not tied up with the colonizer as decolonization is. In fact, one's own svaraj can only help and contribute to the svaraj of others. The personal and the political are neither contradictory nor discontinuous; they merge, one leading to the other, the other leading back to the one. Svaraj is always both singular and collective; we cannot be free unless all our brothers and sisters are free and they cannot be free unless we are free. Svaraj allows us to resist oppression without hatred and violent opposition. It was on these grounds that Gandhi developed the praxis of satyagraha, or insistence on truth and truth-force, to fight for the rights of the disarmed and impoverished people of India.

Originally, svarat described a person who had good government of his own body and mind, or

²As opposed to what Bhikhu Parekh (1999, 295–326) termed “The Incoherence of Nationalism” in the concluding chapter of Ronald Beiner’s *Theorizing Nationalism*

good self-mastery. Gandhi and the others applied it to the body politic. Simply speaking, they meant that just as we do not want to be ruled by others, we must eschew ruling over others. Svaraj thus implies self-restraint, self-regulation. If we are all self-governing, the state as we know it will have very little to do. For Gandhi, an ideal society consisted of highly evolved, self-regulating individuals, who respected themselves and others. Such a society did not need policemen, law enforcers, or a huge bureaucratic apparatus because each citizen would look out for the welfare of others.

Of course, there is the question of who rules over whom, just as it is usually not clear which part of oneself is in charge of the others. But such a question arises because of a confusion in understanding raj not as shining but as powerful. The power, originally, was secondary, the visible manifestation of the self-illuminated person. So, svaraj is more about expression than control; when the inner being expresses itself fully—and that can happen only when the senses and other organs of action are in harmony and internal order—then its power becomes visible and evident. For Gandhi, too, svaraj was less about ruling others or being ruled by them than about being oneself as fully and fruitfully as possible. That is why he devoted a good deal of his text to understanding the native genius of Indian civilization. If only we could be true to that, we would both be free and responsible, that is neither ruled by others nor interested in ruling others. In that sense, Hind Swaraj is a blueprint

not only of a different destination, but of a destination, a nation that is true to its own soil and spirit rather than a borrowed or imported nation, in sum a vernacular rather than metropolitan nation.

The idea of svaraj had large-scale ramifications in many areas of Indian thought and culture. In 1928, Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya, one of India's leading philosophers, delivered a lecture called 'svaraj in Ideas'. He raised the pertinent question of whether we had achieved autonomy in thought and ideas along with the quest for political independence. Bhattacharya was of the view that Indian intellectuals would have to work a lot harder if such an emancipation of consciousness had to be accomplished. Several years later, his essay was reprinted in a special number of the *Indian Philosophical Quarterly* (October–December 1984) also entitled 'Swaraj in Ideas'. Many outstanding philosophers and thinkers debated this topic and their responses were also published in the same journal on the content and means of decolonizing the Indian mind.

Perhaps, much of my own work is about svaraj. Evidently, its significance has exercised me for over two decades. I first tried to come to terms with it in *Decolonization and Development: Hind Swaraj Revisited* (New Delhi and London: Sage, 1993). That book is also fashioned as a dialogue, not between an Editor and Reader as in Gandhi's original, but between a student and a teacher. It tries to take stock of where we were as a nation in the 1980s. I continue to use the spelling svaraj instead of swaraj not only because it is a closer

transliteration, but also to suggest that we must each struggle to find our own meaning of the word, rather than simply assuming that it means what our predecessors have thought. More recently, in *Altered Destinations*, I continued my explorations of the meaning of svaraj. I realise that svaraj is an unfinished quest; to that extent, we still seek it and will continue to do so.

In retrospect, however, the 1980s seem to have been more innocent times. The country was smaller, more circumscribed, even simpler. Today, our basic condition is much more complex, as are our problems. We have to deal not only with the scourge of terrorism, but also with the powerful forces of globalization. In the domestic sphere, the Nehruvian ideology of socialist secularism failed, but in its place no alternative as yet occupies the centre stage. On the other hand, various forces of “anti-nationalism” seem to have a field run. Young people are restive, even if some of their discontent appears “manufactured.” Several organisations and ideologies are hell-bent on dividing us on the lines of caste and religion. Much of the dissension is between Hindus themselves, giving the impression that we are in the midst of a protracted uncivil war, with competing and escalating intolerances ranged against each other in the public sphere.

Can the idea of svaraj help reorient our body politic from division to unity? Clearly, we need to extend the discussion on svaraj to today’s context, even if we don’t actually use the word overmuch. That is because it is not the word but the underlying

orientation that is important. I think one way forward is to depoliticize public discourse away from party politics and the struggle for power, whether at the centre or the states. Instead, we could concentrate, broadly speaking, on the field of culture to see how ideas of autonomy, selfhood and cultural independence have been expressed, depicted and studied in India. This would bring into our ambit contentious issues such as Western appropriations or representations of our past, especially its rich cultural and literary heritage. We would have to grapple not only with the issue of Sanskrit, but also sanskriti, which is much broader and encompassing. We would have to contend with the real dangers both of desacralisation of the former and the secularization of the latter.

Understood thus, svaraj may be seen as a struggle for academic freedom and autonomy, an attempt to free ourselves from both Western and Indian forms of colonization. In this struggle, our main adversaries are not so much groups in the West, but the native elites, who continue to be selfish, slavish and seemingly incapable of independent thought. Their main concern is to belong with the dominant, to be considered on par with or a part of the dominant. But that is an unrealizable, if pious, pipe dream. Our elites continue to be seen as subservient and second-rate by the West and as disloyal by many Indians. Naturally, debates over nativism, cultural self-assertion or critiques thereof may also be viewed as a part of the continuing redefinitions of svaraj. The fight for svaraj, for certain, does not end with

political independence, but must go on until every single citizen feels free of oppression and injustice. That is why *svaraj* is also tied up with ideas of identity and selfhood. That is why *svaraj* is closely implicated in questions of language, identity, and culture. Especially in beleaguered or endangered languages, *svaraj* in literary texts means the preservation or assertion of cultural identities. All told, cultural *svaraj* can be a fertile field of inquiry and discussion.

I started this short reflection with Gandhi and I shall end with him. Indeed, I keep coming back to Gandhi, even though he is one Indian, one self-proclaimed “*sanatani*” Hindu, whom we love to hate or hate to love. To me, he still remains the touchstone to measure what has happened to India. Gandhi not only provides a moral centre to our efforts, but actually makes our daily life more meaningful. I am not suggesting that we follow him blindly, unquestioningly. Indeed, I believe it is of fundamental importance to dwell on his limits and limitations. Speaking for myself, even when I seem to depart from him, I am struggling to go closer to him—at least this is how I see my own journey. As far as India is concerned, a dharmic, plural, value-oriented idea of the nation is what we may derive from him.

Ultimately, when we speak of *svaraj*, we must also contend with the coherence² and continuing relevance of nationalism, at least in the Indian context. By nationalism I do not mean the view that one’s own country or culture is superior to that of others, nor an excessive patriotism

amounting to chauvinism. Instead, I tend to use the word in a somewhat old-fashioned way as suggestive not just of a national spirit, but the sense of belonging, which gives us the feeling of being part of a collectivity that is bigger than our linguistic, regional, or religious identities. If we consider this sense of belonging as nationalism, then nationalism, despite its discontents, has neither broken down nor become obsolete. But if nationalism is both relevant and valuable, this does not mean that it is unitary or entirely harmonious. Indian nationalism, on the contrary, exhibits multiple tendencies and aspirations, each trying to re-fashion the nation according to its own programme. If Indian nationalism is still coherent, it still holds together and makes sense, then the methodology that we need is somewhat more plural and open-minded than any straightforward argument to such effect.

One of the underlying preoccupations of our search for *svaraj* will, therefore, be how to resolve the tension between civic nationalism and dharmic nationalism. Clearly, the latter ought not to be theological or exclusive, favouring one religion or community over others. Yet, it should be in tune with Indian civilizational values. The latter are what we need to re-examine. We must accept that Western values are not necessarily universal or neutral, nor are “Hindu”/Indic values, such as dharma or karma, necessarily parochial or narrow-minded. Instead, the perennial values of India, which we may call *sanatana*, also embody a universality. They are not special to any one

community or people, even if they have been articulated most persuasively over millennia in this subcontinent. To subscribe to these values and to seek to orient our nation according to them is not automatically to endorse some sort of illiberal or ‘communal’ ideology. I have tried to show in my work that these are competing, not necessarily oppositional, universalisms. The crisis of secularism

has given us, once again, the challenge to articulate such values afresh. The result is not necessarily an automatic or uncritical endorsement of ‘Hindutva’, but the exploration of new kind of nationalism that is culturally and civilizationaly grounded in India, at the same time as being modern, liberal, and plural. A coherent statement of such a national ethos is still awaited.

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Revisiting Ambedkar's Idea of Nationalism

*Swadesh Singh

Ambedkar stood with the most downtrodden and deprived sections of the Indian society; the sections which had no voice in public life. The social mobilization of these sections by Ambedkar helped in the national freedom movement. As the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Ambedkar advocated a strong nation-state.

Introduction

Over thousands of years, human civilization organized itself first in the form of family, then as religion and today we are organized as nation-state. It makes you wonder which institution would the future generations be living in? I posed this question to a well-known social scientist during a discussion on globalization. He weighed several ideas but concluded that in the present context nation-state is still the most enduring institution and likely to be the organisational unit for the coming generations too.

Today we live within this institution of nation-state. Foremost of our thoughts and actions, it serves as a centre of gravity, obvious at some time and obscure at others. It is one of the most organised, well designed institutions which has an organic relationship with mankind and where universal ideas like freedom, equality and democracy have a good chance to flourish. Western thinkers like Gellner, Anderson and Hobsbawm dealt with the idea of nation, nationalism and nationhood which developed in the region over

the last 400 years after the Treaty of Westfalia in 1648.

The *Bhartiya* concept of *Rashtra* could be considered a parallel to the western term 'Nation' but both are also different on several counts. The primary difference between the two stems from the fact that *Rashtra* is more of an ethic-spiritual concept while Nation is a cultural concept.¹

Many Indian leaders like Sri Aurobindo, Gandhi, Nehru, Tilak, Tagore and Deen Dayal Upadhyay delved into the idea of Indian nation and nationalism. Their ideas are either spiritual, meta-physical or statist. In this article we will try to trace Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar's ideas and reflections on Nationalism. He is the most celebrated Indian leader, thinker and social philosopher of the 21st century who contributed in the 20th century. Large-scale celebrations marking his 125th birth anniversary were concluded recently. Observers felt that these celebrations were more wide-spread than those in his centenary year. One of the leading mainstream magazines termed him as the greatest leader of Modern India. Over the

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years, ideas of Ambedkar have become stronger and more relevant to the contemporary discourse.

Ambedkar and his Narrative of Freedom

At any given point of time, several parallel narratives can coexist. However, only one grand narrative at a time can push the discourse forward. Before the Indian independence, the grand narrative was the freedom of India while several other narratives did exist. One such narrative was prescribed by the Congress party. It emphasized on freedom from the British colonisers. It can be said that this was the dominating narrative of the time. There were also other, though weaker or marginalized in comparison. One such narrative was that of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) which saw India as a glorious nation since time immemorial and targeted reconstruction of the Indian nation by strengthening its socio-cultural institutions. It wanted to arouse the national consciousness of every common Indian. The core belief in this case was that once the society becomes strong no one could enslave it.

Another narrative of the time was given by Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar. He talked about freedom of India from social inequality and untouchability. This could be understood as a subaltern narrative about the upliftment of downtrodden, deprived and marginalised sections of the society; the sections that did not have any participation in public life of colonial India. Dr. Ambedkar became the voice of these 60 million deprived sections known as Scheduled Castes (the term Dalit evolved later).

Without emancipation of these deprived people, Indian freedom struggle was not deemed to be complete. The Indian national struggle in the first half of the century was not merely a struggle to wrest political power from foreign rule but also a struggle to lay the foundation of a modern India by purging the society of outmoded social institutions, beliefs and attitudes. Ambedkar's struggle constituted a part of the internal struggle, one of the divergent and sometimes conflicting currents all of which helped to secure 'freedom' from external and internal oppression and enslavement. Without Ambedkar's opposition to mainstream nationalism, the process of internal consolidation of the nation would not have been carried out sufficiently enough to strengthen and broaden the social base of Indian nationalism.²

Ambedkar's Idea of Nationalism

Ambedkar elaborated on the idea of Nationality and Nationalism in his book *Pakistan or the Partition of India*. He describes nationality as a, "consciousness of kind, awareness of the existence of that tie of kinship" and nationalism as "the desire for a separate national existence for those who are bound by this tie of kinship." It is true that there cannot be nationalism without the feeling of nationality. But, it is important to bear in mind that the converse is not always true. The feeling of nationality may be present and yet the feeling of nationalism may be quite absent. That is to say, nationality does not in all cases produce nationalism. For nationality to flame into nationalism two conditions must exist. First, there

must arise the will to live as a nation. Nationalism is the dynamic expression of that desire. Secondly, there must be a territory which nationalism could occupy and make it a state, as well as a cultural home of the nation. Without such a territory, nationalism, to use Lord Acton's phrase, would be a soul as it were wandering in search of a body in which to begin life over again and dies out finding none.³

Expanding Social Base of Nationalism

Ambedkar had immense faith in the bright future and evolution of this country. Even when he spoke of attaining freedom for India, his ultimate goal was to unite the people. He said, "So far as the ultimate goal is concerned, none of us have any apprehension or doubt. Our difficulty was not about the ultimate thing but how to unite the heterogeneous mass that we are today to take a decision in common and march in a cooperative way on that road, which is bound to lead us to unity."⁴

Ambedkar clearly spoke in a felicitation program of his 55th birth anniversary, "I have loyalty to our people inhabiting this country. I have also loyalty to this country. I have no doubt that you have the same. All of us want this country to be free. So far as I am concerned my conduct has been guided by the consideration that we shall place no great difficulties in the way of this country achieving its freedom."⁵

Ambedkar was not against the idea of nationalism but against the Congress's version which entailed freedom of India from British

colonialism but not from Brahminical imperialism under which millions of Scheduled Castes had been yoked for hundreds of years. It was Ambedkar's political challenge which compelled the Congress to appreciate the national significance of the problem of castes and to adopt measures which significantly contributed towards broadening and strengthening the social base of Indian nationalism.

Ambedkar's Challenge to 'Congress Nationalism'

Indian nationalism in its initial stages, by the very nature of its historical development, was an upper class (upper castes) phenomenon, reflecting the interests and aspirations of its members. Naturally when nationalists spoke in terms of national interest they certainly meant their own (class) interests. The evocation of 'nation' was a necessary ritual to ensure the much needed popular support for an essentially partisan cause. This sectarian approach to nationalism could be seen in the writings of none other than Pt. Nehru who later singled out as an example of a 'left liberal' view. He writes in his seminal work *Discovery of India* that mixture of religion and philosophy, history and tradition, custom and social structure, which in its wide fold included almost every aspect of the life of India, and which might be called Brahminism or (to use a later word) Hinduism, became the symbol of nationalism. It was indeed a national religion.

The sectarian character of Indian nationalism persisted even after the nascent upper castes' movement developed into a truly mass-supported

anti-imperialist national liberation movement enlisting the support of millions of people cutting across the traditional social divisions. And, it is this failure to change its basically pro-upper class/ castes orientation despite a basic shift in its underlying social base that Indian national movement in due course helped the rise of new sectarian socio-political currents, running parallel to the mainstream national movement. Ambedkar's emergence on the Indian political scene in 1920s, commencing the advent of Dalit (the scheduled castes) politics, was simply the manifestation of the same process.⁶

Ambedkar's Dalit politics posed no really significant threat to the overall domination of the traditional ruling class, yet it certainly exposed the hollowness of the Congress's nationalist claim to represent the whole nation. Finally, the unwillingness of the nationalist leadership to attack the long unresolved social contradictions at the base of the Hindu social order propelled people like Ambedkar to contest the claim of the Indian National Congress to represent the scheduled castes.⁷

It was in the backdrop of this escapist attitude of the Congress brand of nationalism that an alternative subaltern nationalism was born through Ambedkar. Ambedkar took up this question from social below and elevated it to a political high by linking this social question of caste with the political question of democracy and nationalism. Such an effort to prioritize society over polity and then linking them together was unprecedented in India before Ambedkar. Gandhi can be said to have made

such an effort but his approach was obscure and primitive. According to Ambedkar, "Without social union, political unity is difficult to be achieved. If achieved, it would be as precarious as a summer sapling, liable to be uprooted by the gust of a hostile wind. With mere political unity, India may be a State. But to be a State is not to be a nation and a State, which is not a nation, has small prospects of survival in the struggle for existence."⁸

Ambedkar's Faith in 'Bharat'

Ambedkar had faith in ancient Indian institutions and texts except caste. He was convinced with the spiritual aspect of Indian texts and codes but not with its ritualistic aspects which had developed in last 1200 years. He talked about *Annihilation of Caste* not *Dharma*. He understood the importance of *Dharma* in India and when the time of conversion came as he had declared earlier, he chose Buddhism and not any other Abrahamic religion. He also had the option of declaring him as an *Atheist* but his rootedness in Indian ethos compelled him to choose Buddhism.

Dr Ambedkar pointed out that historic roots of democracy in India go back to pre-Buddhist India. A study of the Buddhist Bhikshu Sanghas discloses that the Sanghas were nothing but Parliaments and knew all the rules of Parliamentary procedure known to modern times. Although these rules of Parliamentary procedure were applied by the Buddha to the meetings of the Sanghas, he must have borrowed them from the rules of the political assemblies functioning in the country in his time.

Dr Ambedkar emphasized that Hindus need not ‘borrow from foreign sources’ concepts to build a society on the principles of equality, fraternity and liberty. They “could draw for such principles on the Upanishads.” Even in *Riddles in Hinduism*, he points out that Hinduism has the potential to become the spiritual basis of social democracy.

Strengthening Nationalism through Constitution

Ambedkar opposed insertion of Article 370 which gives special status to the state of Jammu & Kashmir but Nehru still went ahead with it to appease Sheikh Abdullah. Ambedkar wrote to Sheikh Abdullah on Article 370, “You wish India should protect your borders, she should build roads in your area, she should supply you food grains, and Kashmir should get equal status as India. But Government of India should have only limited powers and Indian people should have no rights in Kashmir. To give consent to this proposal would be a treacherous thing against the Interest of India and I, as the Law Minister of India, will never do it.”⁹

Justice K. Ramaswamy while probing into the legal aspects of nationalism likes to call Ambedkar a true democrat, a nationalist to the core and a patriot of highest order on various grounds.¹⁰ He was the author and principal actor to make the ‘Directive Principles’ as part of the constitutional scheme. When it was criticized that the directive principles could not be enforced in a court of law, Ambedkar answered that though they were not

enforceable, the succeeding majority political party in Parliament or Legislative Assembly would be bound by them as an inbuilt part of their economic program in the governance, despite their policy in its manifesto and are bound by the Constitution. Ambedkar, in his Constitutional schema of nationalism, undertook the task of strengthening the Executive in particular and the notion of ‘Integrated Bharat’ in general.

Rising above the regional, linguistic and communal barriers in a true republican spirit, Ambedkar invented a democratic nationalism consisting of Uniform Civil Code for India. His views of Uniform Civil Code were radically different from his contemporaries including Nehru who in principles accepted Hindu Code Bill and Uniform Civil Code but in practice, failed to get the Bill passed in one go, in spite of being in Government with majority. Ambedkar on the other hand made it a point to add the word ‘fraternity’ in the Preamble to the Constitution in order to inculcate the sense of common brotherhood of all Indians, of Indians being one people; it is the principle which gives unity and solidarity to social life.

He was also critical of Muslim Personal Law and tried his best to abolish it in favour of Uniform Civil Code. Ambedkar did not agree to the fact that Muslims had any immutable and uniform laws in India up to 1935. Ambedkar emphasized that in a secular state religion should not be allowed to govern all human activities and that Personal Laws should be divorced from religion.¹¹

Dr. Ambedkar in his very first speech in the Constituent Assembly on 17 December 1946 had emphasized the need to create a strong Centre in order to ensure that India's freedom was not jeopardized as had happened in the past on account of a weak central administration. His view was hailed by the Assembly and came later to be reflected in the Emergency Provisions of the Constitution. Undoubtedly the states are sovereign in normal times but by virtue of these provisions, the Centre becomes all-powerful and assumes control over all affairs of the nation whenever a situation arises which poses a danger to the security of the state.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Ambedkar was vehemently opposed to the unjust social stratification in India, but to say that he was against the nation is wholly wrong. He was definitely against the Congress version of Nationalism. Ambedkar says, "I know my position has not been understood properly in the country. I say that whenever there has been a conflict between my personal interests of the country as a whole, I have always placed the claims of the country above my personal claims. I have never pursued the path of private gain... so far as the demands of the country are concerned, I have never lagged behind".¹²

Last year, in a seminar organised in New Delhi, Dr. Krishna Gopal (Jt. General Secretary, RSS) claimed, "Besides being a champion of the untouchables, Ambedkar was, first and foremost, a nationalist, a virulent anti-Communist and had

immense faith in Hinduism; he was against Brahminical structures but some of his closest friends were from upper castes, while Brahmins provided him vital help at key moments in his life; he dismissed the historical theory of the Aryan invasion of the Indian subcontinent. He apparently also promised "shuddhikaran" or purification for those Dalits who had converted to Islam in Hyderabad state in 1947-48."¹³

It is evident from the above discussion that Ambedkar was neither an anti-national nor just a leader of the Scheduled Castes. He was a national leader who understood the problems of the most exploited communities and tried to bring them into the main stream. He expanded the social base of Indian nationalism which helped first to attain freedom and later to put the country on path of progress. Today, when all thought converges around inclusive politics, Ambedkar has become more relevant than ever.

Nationalism is a dynamic process of social assimilation and therefore nationalism is to receive its perfect harmony in the realization of social brotherhood of men irrespective of caste, colour and creed. Nationalism is not antithetical to humanism or individualism. One can enjoy complete individual freedom within a nationalist framework. Everyone needs a space to think, to grow and liberate. In the present point in time, nation is the best institution we have to fulfil this purpose. We do need a grand narrative which includes the last woman in the queue. Dr. Ambedkar did give us a grand-narrative of "equality in socio-economic life along with political equality".

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Assam – A Microcosm of India

*Shubhrastha

Gateway to the seven sisters of India and an integral part of the northeast imagination of India, Assam also shares international boundaries with Bangladesh and Bhutan. Connected with the Indian mainland through a chicken-neck corridor, immediately linked with West Bengal, Assam is home to more than 50 tribes and communities. Distinguished from each other by conspicuously stark cultures, traditions, sartorial choices, cuisines, languages, consciousness and, therefore, identities, Assam is marked by cultural, national, poetic and political complexities of a unique order; which is why many scholars have described the state as the microcosm of India.

Geopolitically and culturally, Assam has to be studied as three distinct and separate, yet connected entities. The Upper Assam and Lower Assam in the Brahmaputra valley and the Barak valley are identified with unique set of issues commensurate with distinctive geographical components and demographic concerns. The intricate relationships between the multiethnic, polyglottic, and different socio-cultural commitments of the tribes like the Mishings, the Bodos, the Deoris, the Rabhas, the Tiwas, the Ahoms, the Khamtis, the SonowalKacharis, the Phakials, the DimasaKacharis, the Karbis, the

Koch Rajbangshis, the Barmans, the Hmars, the Kukis, the Rengma Nagas, the Zeme Nagas, the Hajongs, the Garos, the Khasis, the Jaintias, the Mechs, the Motoks and the Morans among the many other demographic groups like the Bengalis, the Marwaris, the tea plantation laborers, indigenous Muslims, Christians etc. have given a complex comity to the idea of identity for and in Assam.

On the one hand, there is a constant need to engage with the question ‘who is an *Axomiya* (Assamese)’ – punctuated by which the state has seen various articulations reverberating throughout the length and breadth of Assam. On the other hand, there is a thread of a quite strong regional, or in the words of scholars, ‘subnational’, sentiment running deep into the veins and sinews of Assam. Additionally, as if to legitimize and contain what Kramer and Nicolescu call the ‘historical-contemporary’ and ‘conflictive-cooperative’ relations between communities in Assam, the Indian constitution stands out as a distinct consciousness of the political reality in Assam. It is necessary, therefore, that in order to contextualize Assam as a subtext of the Indian national consciousness, one negotiates with the twin realities of conflict and identity in the state.

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Conflict and Identity in Assam

The Battle of Saraighat in 1671 and the Battle of Itakhuli in 1682 alongside the other battles beginning 1615, fought between the Mughals and the Ahoms were decisive battles that are etched in the historical and national consciousness of Assam. The historical legend of Lachit Borphukan, for instance, defines the heritage of Assamese pride and identity. The legend carries on to this day and is used in explaining many of the contemporary political idioms and historical phenomena against the backdrop of indigenous pride overcoming external aggression.

The Peace Treaty of Yandaboo signed between the British General Sir Archibald Campbell and the Governor of Legaing from the Burmese side, Maha Min Hla Kyaw Htin, in 1826, ended the First Anglo-Burmese War – the most expensive war in the British Indian history and initiated the British rule in Assam. Thereby, not even two years passed, when in 1828, the first revolt against this external aggression by the British was initiated by the duo Dhananjay Borgohain and Gunadhar Konwar. Thereafter, many local leaders like Maniram Dewan, Piyoli Baruah, Anandaram Dhekial Phukan, Hem Chandra Baruah, Gunabhiram Baruah, Kanak Lata Baruah, Kushal Konwar, Kamala Miri, Bhogeshwari Phukanani among many others carried on their constant struggle for freedom, contributing a significant sacrifice in the national movement, till India achieved independence in 1947. The pride and glory of Assam's contribution in building the Indian nation state carried on the rich legacy of the state.

In contrast, during the Sino-India war, in 1962, following the fall of Bomdila, Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India, as if in a gesture of fatigue and helplessness, announced, “my heart goes out to the people of Assam.” The hurt and pain it caused the people of Assam pulsates even to this day and festers the wound the episode inflicted upon the Assamese pride.

As if in continuation of the solidarity with the people of Assam against the feeling of dejection, hurt and pain by this dereliction and negligence in preserving and protecting what is the homeland of many an Assamese population, the Assam Agitation between 1979 and 1985, till this date, stands as a representation of the reason behind the inimical discontent Assam feels with respect to the rest of the country.

United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) in its ideological justification, interprets the Treaty of Yandabo as an understanding between the British India and Burma that dissolved the independence of Assam. The militant and radical stream of this consciousness integral to the ULFA seeks to restore that ‘lost independence.’

If one were to put these historical frames as a backdrop for the larger picture Assam paints for the rest of the world, one might find the deconstruction of the identity of Assam interesting. Drawing from what Jacques Lacan articulates in his psychoanalytic reference to a ‘mirror stage’, borrowing heavily from Sigmund Freud, one may infer that the identity of the Assamese self has been built as a result of the conflict between its visual appearance, as it came down to the

imagination via mythical legends and articulations, and one's emotional experience, as the temporal realities and episodes of history unfolded. This conflictual relationship of the dual relationship with the 'imagined community', in the words of Benedict Anderson, and the circumstantial realization is what punctuates Assam's selfhood. As if to summarize the situation of identity with respect to Assam, one can use the words of Richard D Parker who says, "The need to assert an identity is mediated by a history of conflict and aspersion."

Ethnic Aspirations and National Politics

Pierre Bourdieu defines reality as the site where a permanent struggle to define reality takes place. He says that struggles for nationhood are 'struggles over classification' and articulates that political realpolitik with long term articulation of politics, therefore, must include in its notion the "the struggle over representations." This theoretical premise might help to observe Assam's aspirational subnational consciousness in the overall context of Indian nationalism.

Benedict Anderson argues that nation states have been insufficiently imagined giving most nations a restive situation. The colonists – British, Portuguese, French – all left their colonies at the mercy of the still forming definition of nation state and nationalism. More than 545 smaller entities with unique imaginations, aspirations and goals were tactfully, politically, negotiably and/or through direct action stitched together to build a politically unified nation as it stands today.

In his book 'India Against Itself – Assam and the Politics of Nationality', Sanjib Baruah says, "...subnational movements, and the exacerbation of these conflicts has often been the result of political mismanagement by those acting with the authority of the state."

In the process of consolidating the national identity and form, the many subnational questions were either buried or ignored for the time being. The many subnational undercurrents fueled by subliminal faiths, questions, concerns, aspirations, unease, temporary arrangements and suppressed articulations merely muted themselves till the time the discontent was strategically prudent and communicatively consistent. The articulations of the ULFA and the NDBF are cases in point.

However, it is prudent to see that all the regional parties or factions or groups or political constitutions in Assam, today, are but a more realistic portrayal of what the national super text provides to its subnations. In that respect, whatever the 'Imagined Community' of these countercurrents, the subnational political mobilization in Assam is inspired, animated and mediated by the Indian constitution, laws, public philosophy and political processes. The fact also is that the pattern of politicization and mobilization that meets some of the criteria of nationalism is not committed to the idea of a separate statehood. In fact, these subnationalisms stand in a dialogical relationship with pan-Indian politics.

The state elections in Assam this time, in April 2016, saw more than 82 per cent turn out of voters. In fact, over the last few decades, the voter turn

out in Assam has been, by far, the best record in the country. If one were to seriously consider the subnational narratives of self determination, as articulated by the so called ethnic wings and factions, the consensus seem to emerge on identifying the nation over any other concern.

It is interesting to read Ernest Gellner here who opines that nationalism and subnationalisms are “the crystallization of new units...admittedly using as their raw material the cultural, historical, and other inheritances from the pre-nationalist past.” Almost similar is Antonio Gramsci’s articulation that the politics of subnationalism is absorbed in the theoretical space of civil rather than political society.

Therefore, one can believe in Robert Fossaert, when he says that civil society is not a set of institutions but as a “society in its relation with the state...in so far as it is in confrontation with the State”, a society which resists and counteracts the “simultaneous totalization unleashed by the State”, to the extent where we agree to simultaneously understand that the theoretical comprehension and exegesis of these subnational texts are dependent on and dedicated to the overarching concept of a national super text.

Margins to Mainstreaming Assam

The current government in India draws from the ideological premise of ‘India First’ and symbolically recognizes the Indian Constitution as the ‘religious text of the nation’. Assam is the prime focus area within the government’s stated and emphasized ‘Act East Policy’ because of its geo-

political significance and strategic location. However, it is also true that going by the statistical and developmental analyses of the state, the past few decades have not been quite assuring.

Out of the 69 years post independence, Congress ruled Assam for more than 50 years. For the first time, Congress was ousted from Dispur when the AGP formed the government in 1985. Subsequently, AGP also ruled the state for another term from 1996 to 2001. Therefore, from 1980s onwards, politics in Assam revolved primarily around these two parties. The Communists and the vestiges of the Janata Party remained only marginal players in Assamese politics.

For the first time in 1991, BJP rose in Assam with a slim representation of 10 seats mostly in the Barak Valley - the victory attributed to ‘Ram Mandir wave’ by some political analysts. In 2001 and 2006, the BJP spread gradually in Upper Assam and the north bank of the Brahmaputra. In 2011, BJP was ousted from the Barak Valley but spread to lower and central Assam. In 2014, seven out of the 14 Loksabha seats were picked up the BJP, riding on the Modi wave.

It is interesting to observe this trajectory because in the political statements that the people of Assam have been pronouncing since 1991, the *Axomiya* sentiment in Assam, though, reverberates on the surface but the larger pan-India issues like poverty, unemployment and development have gradually gained primacy. It is within this super text that Assam politics has redefined and reconstructed itself.

The gradual but definite move from regional

issues to national aspirations is a movement towards relying on a larger developmental agenda and coopting governance concerns for better livelihoods. With this movement of an *Axamiya* articulation of mere cultural mores to a more universal negotiation with common problems like poverty, malnutrition, equality, uneven development, Assam has made a definite stride towards achieving the national targets.

According to Sanjib Baruah, “Today we need a different kind of morality to accommodate a historical understanding of the nation state system and the logic of new nationalisms in some areas of the world and of subnational politics in many more or less stable ‘nation states’.” The politics of Assam, like most other politics of identity, lie in the real or imagined homelands of the articulators.

Pan-Indian political community – an Indic community - is in fact a poetic construction of a homeland – a sole repository of collective memories and dreams of all Indians. Primal, homelike, or a sacred space that transforms people into a collective with shared origins and kinship, this Indic articulation of a united, organic whole is what perhaps Hegel theorized on. Through the lens

of Hegel’s idea of ‘totality’, which preserves within it each of the various stages and ideas that it has overcome or subsumed, one can look at the Indic nation state as a more organic phenomenon of coopting subnational divisions into the national Indic consciousness.

Therefore, what is unique is that while the subnational movement in Assam, like the rest of India, was inspired by the Western concept of nationalism, it was in practice, efforts to construct a state that was, by and large, the opposite of “ethnically and linguistically homogenous entities” – cohering and making sense of the larger ideas of development, health, education among many others.

The leitmotif of identity politics has always been empowerment. In a post liberalized, postmodern Indian consciousness, Assam, like many other Indian states, is grappling with issues of conflict. Hinging on the super text of an ideology that is committed to the sole concerns of swift and all round development, the empowered national rhetoric of unity in diversity is very succinctly reflected in Assam at the cultural cusp of Shankar-Azan’s teachings.



The Future of Asian Renaissance

Interaction with former Foreign Minister of Singapore Mr. George Yeo

India Foundation hosted Mr. George Yeo, Former Foreign Minister of Govt. of Singapore and Chancellor of Nalanda University on 14th April, 2016. Mr. Yeo spoke on “The Future of Asian Renaissance”. Shri MJ Akbar, MP (Rajya Sabha) & Director, India Foundation in his welcome said that he was glad that Mr. Yeo was the Chancellor of Nalanda University and hoped that under his stewardship the institution would grow into one of the great institutions of the world.

Mr. George Yeo thanked India Foundation for inviting him for the interaction. He started by saying

that Singapore’s future was between India and China and therefore relations between China and India matter a lot for Singapore. He said that China was expected to be the biggest economy in the world and that the USA or India would hold the second position. He saw a great future for Singapore and ASEAN in the growth of China. He spoke positively about the One Belt One Road (OBOR) policy being pursued by China. He felt that China was the power station of Asia and that if triggered, could give one hell of a shock. He said that the 1962 war between India and China



was seen in India as a scar which was yet to heal whereas in China it was almost forgotten. He said that China's relations with Pakistan were definitely a matter of concern for India. He said that Myanmar would never take a stand against China but would want to serve their own interest through their relations with China in matters of trade, investment etc. He said that all South East Asian countries wanted to develop good relations with the two powerful South Asian Countries – China and India.

Mr. Yeo talked about the importance of ASEAN and how ASEAN could be used to turn the individual weaknesses of the South East Asian countries into their collective strength. He said that friendly relations between India and China would lead to a powerful South East Asia. He said that Buddhism in China was seen as a native religion i.e., a Chinese religion even though the people of china were aware of the fact that Buddhism originated in India. He opined that Buddhism softened Chinese civilization. He reminded the audience that the Indian PM Narendra Modi during

his China visit in May 2015, made it a point to visit Wild Goose Pagoda, which was built in recognition of the seventeen year long journey of Xuanzang (Hsuan-tsang in the old spelling) to India in the 7th Century CE and his efforts to popularize Buddhism in China. He was of the opinion that the presence of India's past in China's present would hold a lot of significance for both the countries.

Mr. Rajiv Sikri, former Ambassador observed that Chinese one belt one road policy is not a benign one. Referring to Chinese extra-territorial claim, he said that if historical reasons could be used as excuses, Turkey should be claiming whole of Arab world. He felt that there would be competition between China and India in ASEAN region. Mr. Manvendra Singh, BJP Leader and Mr. P. Stobdan, former ambassador also spoke. Mr. M.J. Akbar, MP (Rajya Sabha) summed up by saying India and China are mature enough as nations and confident enough to deal with and sort out outstanding issues. Prof. Lokesh Chandra, Chairman, ICCR presented a memento to George Yeo.



Bilateral Discussion with USIBC

India Foundation and the US India Business Council held bilateral discussions on 7th April 2016 at Villa Medici, Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi.

Welcoming the USIBC delegation on behalf of India Foundation, Shri Shakti Sinha, Director, said that in the context of an uncertain global economy that shows no signs of recovery, India looks towards foreign investment to help it step up its GDP growth rates to around 10% that it requires to achieve its national development goals. In this context while the present government has made improving the investment climate, or what is

popularly known as ‘the ease of doing business’, and taken many steps in that directions, clearly much more has to be done. He requested the USIBC delegation to give specific suggestions on the obstacles or bureaucratic snafus their members faced when doing business in India, so that the quantum of FDI flows for the US increased substantially.

Ambassador Frank Wisner, who led the USIBC delegation said that the economic success of India is extremely important for USA and that the Indian growth rate which is at present above 7% can go up to 10%. He observed that only





opening markets and driving them to competitiveness and bringing in best practices from around the world would ensure accelerated economic growth. Copies of a document titled “India’s Rise: A strategy for trade-led growth” prepared by C. Fred Bergsten of Peterson Institute for International Economics were circulated and Ambassador Frank Wisner remarked that they could only give analysis of how America looks towards India, but India must design its own package of ideas. He expressed a wish that India must join APEC and added that he had indication from Finance Minister of India that govt. of India would look at the prospect positively. He wished that India would grow better, stronger and more influential and be a global player. He said that USIBC values relationship with India Foundation and looks towards intensifying things both organizations can do together. Ambassador Teresita Schafer, Senior Advisor, McLarty Associates said that USA would certainly not throw away all trade barriers and therefore cannot ask

India to throw them away. He also said that USA was trying to be friendlier to India’s exports. Mr. Kenneth I. Juster, Partner & Managing Director, Warburg Pincus said that their member companies are making investments in India in a big way. He said that they expect a greater clarity in policy making in India. He said that though FDI limit in insurance sector had increased from 26% to 49% in India, not a single US Company took advantage of it and increased its investment from 26% to 49% because they wanted management control of their capital which was not permissible.

Shri Ram Madhav appreciated USIBC’s desire to host an event in US when the Indian PM to visits US in the middle of this year. He said that India’s admission to the membership of an expanded APEC and of NSG, strengthening co-operation on solar energy front and collaboration in defence sector would go a long way in strengthening bilateral relations between India and US. F-16 manufacture in India would be a big thing to happen and Indian government would have the

domestic political challenge of answering harsh criticism and clearing misinformation. He said that US must understand and appreciate India's growing interest and ambition in Indian Ocean. He said while trade and investment is important, it is not exclusive but part of a larger vision. India has strategic goals and larger diplomatic objectives to be achieved and the present government had taken a conscious decision to move ahead on a direction which though difficult, is clearly defined.

Ambassador Ranjan Mathai emphasized the need for driving lot of technology into solar energy field and the role USA can play in this. Ambassador Ashok Kantha suggested that since global trade was flat, trailing growth in global GDP, India may not have the option to look at trade-led growth; instead it would have to rely on investment-led growth. He also suggested that USA should fast-track and facilitate the mechanism of India joining APEC. Dr Shamika Ravi, Senior Fellow, Brookings India, said that India would be able to sustain growth above 7.5% as it is laying foundational structure for growth. She also spoke of the need to rethink about the existing world order of trade and that India was open to lot of experimentation. She added that poverty eradication would have to remain the primary focus of the Indian agenda.

Shri Binod Bawri, Chairman, Bawri Group, Kolkata said that we should also look beyond GDP growth rates; programmes like Swatch Bharat would improve quality of lives of people. He also spoke of the need to focus on brining in best practices in the running of the economy. Ambassador Rajiv Sikri said that it would have to

be seen whether the US Congress would approve Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). If the TPP were to come into effect, it would change the rules of the game. He said countries like India had to go through considerable sacrifices in joining WTO and now it seems that WTO+ was likely to come. He said India would have to judge the efficacy of any proposed reform measures in terms of how it would help create jobs in India. He said that India wanted more freedom with regard to movement of labour whereas for the USA, the priority was more freedom with regard to movement of capital. The two countries would have to find a balance between both so that there would be growing convergence of long term goals of both India and USA.

Shri Shaurya Doval said that when India and USA are strategic partners, an element of strategic partnership was to understand at what stage of economic evolution the other partner was. He said India's growth had to be employment-led; ensuring job creation was a political compulsion as about a million people join workforce every month. He said India needs lot of capital to generate employment and USA needs to deploy its capital. It is a biggest opportunity to marry both. He also requested intellectual inputs from USIBC to enable India to look at and improve its own systems in order to attract capital.

Shri Shakti Sinha, Director, India Foundation who led the delegation from India Foundation presented a memento to Ambassador Frank Wisner and warmly thanked the entire delegation from USIBC for the valuable interaction and looked forward to future collaboration.



India-Bangladesh Friendship Dialogue – 7th Round

The 7th round of the India-Bangladesh Friendship Dialogue titled, “Bangladesh-India Relations: Ground Rules of a New Paradigm” was held on 4th-5th March, 2016 in Dhaka, jointly organized by the Bangladesh Foundation, India Foundation, Friends of Bangladesh and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh and witnessed high levels of participation from the political, media, executive and academic circles of both countries.

On the first day of the event, the Inaugural Session began with the welcome remarks by H.E. Mr. Harsh Vardhan Shringla, High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh and Introductory Remarks

by Mr. Satyam Roy Chowdhury, Vice President, Friends of Bangladesh (India Chapter). The Dialogue was graced by the Chief Guest, Mr. Abul Hasan Mahmood Ali, Hon’ble Foreign Minister of Bangladesh. The Key Note speeches were delivered by H.E. Mr. Shahriar Alam, Honorable State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh; Shri Ram Madhav, National General Secretary of BJP and Director, India Foundation.

Mr. Shahriar Alam, Hon’ble State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh addressed the relationship between Bangladesh-India based on a multitude of commonalities—historical, cultural, linguistic, religious, ethnic and social. He highly



appreciated the ratification by India of the long awaited Land Boundary Agreement that has been an epitome of goodwill of the BJP-led government towards Bangladesh. He also highlighted that apart from traditional sectors, new areas of cooperation have also opened up - collaboration in nuclear energy, blue economy, maritime affairs, satellite launching just a few to name.

In his Keynote remarks, Shri Ram Madhav mentioned that the relation of India with Bangladesh is not of a big brother but rather as a partner - partners in progress, partners in peace, partners in prosperity. He emphasized on both countries' democratic Constitutions and praised the Hon'ble PM, Sheikh Hasina for her stand to protect the democratic constitution of Bangladesh. In case of trade issues with India he said that no injustice would be done to Bangladesh. He also applauded the Indian High Commissioner's involvement to take the land Boundary Agreement to a logical conclusion.

In his address, the Chief Guest for the Inaugural Session, Mr. Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh spoke about the new prospering dimensions of India-Bangladesh relations. He also mentioned that the foreign policy of both the nations should be the one which promotes secularism; human rights, social justice, and non-violent inter-cultural progress to stop religious intolerance.

The 2nd Day of the event began with the much awaited Special Address by Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, Mr. Md. Shahidul Haque. In his

remarks, he emphasized on particular issues that need to be worked upon to enhance the bilateral relationship between India and Bangladesh. These issues include water, terrorism, cyber security, energy security, oil transportation, power trading, nuclear power and electricity generation.

Securing Borders, Securing People

The session on "Securing Borders, Securing People" was chaired by Shri MJ Akbar and the Keynote papers were presented by Ms. Sripriya Ranganatham and Major General (Retd.) Abdur Rashid.

In his Keynote paper titled "Radicalization & Terrorism", Major General (Retd.) Abdur Rashid said, radicalization is a process by which individual or group comes to adopt violent ideology as a legitimate means. Terrorism is the use of violence and intimidation in the pursuit of political aims. He raised his concern about the fact that radicalization leads to terrorism because of poverty, disparity in charity world, absence of rule of law & justice, deficit in democracy, lack of good governance, presence of social inequality and violation of human rights.

In her Keynote Address, Ms. Sripriya Ranganathan, Joint Secretary (Bangladesh & Myanmar), MEA, Government of India, talked about the good state of relationship between Bangladesh & India. She mentioned that ongoing projects like rail-road connectivity, telecom, energy, science & technology, power, culture have lead to a positive momentum, which is extended by political

partnership and the coordination among the agencies of both sides.

The panelists for the session were Capt Alok Bansal, Shri Swapan Dasgupta, Dr. Syed Manzurul Islam, Prof. Delwar Hossain. They discussed about the growing radicalization and the need to develop a comprehensive deradicalization strategy; the need for maritime boundary agreement; the need for Bangladesh to make an economic and financial relation with India; the problem of illegal currency and the issue of local security.

Creating the Access of Prosperity and Growth Leverages

The session on “Creating the Access of Prosperity and Growth Leverages” was chaired by Mr. Shahriar Alam and Keynote papers were presented by Shri Shakti Sinha and Dr. Gowher Rizvi.

Shri Shakti Sinha, Director, South Asian Institute for Strategic Affairs, New Delhi, stated that Bangladesh could be the centre of manufacturing industries and that there were a lot of investment opportunities. He also emphasized on the need for a comprehensive water and energy framework in South Asia.

Dr. Gowher Rizvi, Foreign Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh expressed that the award of the much talked about Teesta water sharing agreement would make positive development. He stressed that harnessing the Himalayan water resources has a huge potential and remains untapped in the region especially in Nepal and Bhutan. India-Bangladesh relations are

currently billed as being ‘at their best’ though there are issues of the water sharing and border management sectors. He also said that the border killings have been reduced drastically now than what it was during the BNP regime.

The panelists included Shri Binod Bawri, Director, India Foundation; Ms. Sripriya Ranganathan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs; Dr. Qazi Khaliquzzaman Ahmed, Governing Chairman and Prof. Mustafizur Rahman, CPD Executive Director.

Architecture of Connectivity: Resource, Transport and Power

Session on “Architecture of Connectivity: Resource, Transport and Power” was chaired by Shri Shakti Siniha and Keynote papers were presented by Dr. Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury and Smt. Veena Sikri.

The Chair of the session Shri Shakti Sinha, Director, South Asian Institute for Strategic Affairs, New Delhi, stated that Bangladesh and India were striving to establish greater connectivity. Solution beneficial for both countries and solution that is politically determinate was the main focus of this session.

The first Keynote paper was presented by Dr. Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, Energy Adviser to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. He stated that, “Resources, Power & Transport are the architecture of connectivity between two countries”. He also spoke about challenges in power connectivity and emphasized that energy trade cooperation is the way out of energy poverty.

Smt. Veena Sikri, former Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, highlighted all the potentials India and Bangladesh hold in establishing connectivity but laid importance on shifting to multimodal transport-based linkages in a new paradigm shift in regional and sub-regional cooperation. She also stressed for safe financial transactions and that the region boasts of huge potential in air connectivity. The Indian diplomat also suggested enhancing the connectivity between India and Bangladesh through rail to establish link under Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) deal. She stated “We have to look at new paradigm, we really have to move multimodal way of transportation for the shift”.

The group of panelists including Shri Prafulla Ketkar, Editor, Organiser, Capt. Alok Bansal, Director, India Foundation, Mr. Munshi Faiz Ahmad and Mr. Abdul Mutlub Ahmed, President of BIIS also shared their thoughts about the future architecture of connectivity.

Valedictory Session

At the end of the two day dialogue between Bangladesh and India, the ‘Dhaka Declaration’ was presented by Shri Shakti Sinha. He stated that the Dialogue was nurtured to answer many of the frequently asked questions and is expected to render a reality check about the future that the two countries, Bangladesh and India, may hope to be heading into.

He further added that the Dialogue has put

emphasis to reinforce cooperation between Bangladesh and India in the field of maritime security, developing further shared interests in the preservation of the natural resources, improving security in the Indian Ocean and evoking the historical bonds that exist between the two countries. He was of the view that both the countries may keep the Blue Economy at the center of maritime cooperation, whereby much emphasis would be laid on seabed exploration for hydrocarbons; marine services; seafood processing and aquaculture; fishing; deep ocean water application; seaport related activities; marine renewable energies, exchange of expertise and ocean knowledge. The Dhaka Declaration recommended that Bangladesh and India may exchange, develop and improve jointly quality of literary and artistic creation; confirm and commend values of the true, the good and the beautiful, and combat anti-progress manifestations.

In the continuation of this last session along with the Dhaka Declaration the whole program was summed up with recommendations from the chief guests and panelists. The point was raised on how Bangladesh can take advantage of India as one of the largest growing economies and in turn how Bangladesh could be integral to India’s national and international security and concluded with the hope that the Dialogue will reconvene in Delhi, India, towards the end of 2016 or early 2017 for its Eighth Round to conclusively discuss three more of the identified intervention areas.

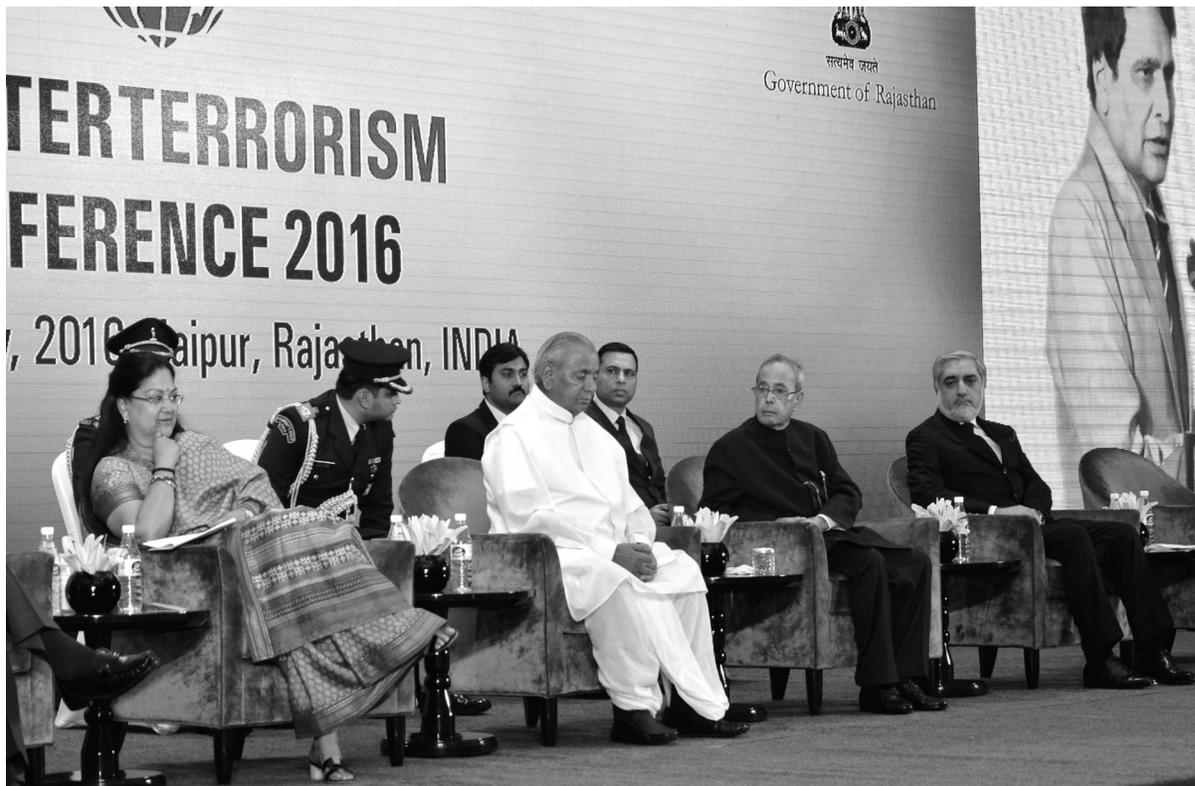


Counterterrorism Conference 2016 : Architecture of Response to Global Terror Outfits

Today's world is enormously challenged by transnational terrorist outfits including the global jihadist movement that draw their strength and sustenance from the geography and theology of their regions. It is also believed that some of them enjoy state sponsorship. Counterterrorism, in this context, has to be operationalized by the utilization of multifaceted techniques, which would include joint intelligence between states, superior intelligence assessment skills, locating the

financial flows of terrorist financing, joint operations, cyber vigilance and addressing the virtual base of terrorism, the internet, which is being increasingly used by terrorist groups.

India Foundation, in collaboration with the Government of Rajasthan organized the Counterterrorism Conference 2016 (CTC 2016) at Hotel Crowne Plaza, Jaipur, Rajasthan on 2-3 February 2016. The theme for this year's conference was "Tackling Global Terror Outfits".





COUNTERTERRORISM CONFERENCE 2016

02- 03 February, 2016; Jaipur, Rajasthan, INDIA



Over 250 eminent intellectuals, academics and scholars from India and all over the world attended the conference which was addressed by over 35 speakers. This conference brought together field operatives, senior officials from security agencies, policy makers, scholars and government leaders involved in counterterrorism operations, planning and sensitization.

The CTC 2016 emphasized on understanding the phenomenon of the mushrooming terror outfits in the Middle East and its neighbourhood, their methodology, motivation and resources. The first session explored the liaison between technology, terror and terror financing at length. The

discussions also covered how the operation of these forces in tandem gives birth to the idea of “global terrorism” that transcends national borders and serves the limited interests of the terrorists.

The second workshop focused on terror infrastructure and financing. Panelists discussed in great detail the funding patterns of ISIS and Al Qaeda and the role of state actors and international banking institutions in providing financial support in some cases. This happens when a terrorist organization ingratiates itself to the people by creating a separate welfare state in a way that JeM did in Pakistan. ISIS, on the other hand, is not a self-sustaining organization. It manages its



everyday expenses by supplying oil to the Middle East and beyond.

Resilient funding chains meshed with the synergy among competitive terrorist organizations working by rotational seasons of attacks makes it very important that we take the leap to think ahead of terrorists. Methods like hawala don't involve transfer of physical money or movement but a transfer of value adding to the already resilient finance networks of terror organizations. The inherent flexibility of terror organizations and their finances debilitates monitoring mechanisms. Thus, the only solution is comprehensive cooperation and coordination. The broad spectrum of funding,

however, also makes these big organizations vulnerable than the ones that are decentralized. This is where we can tap in and make a move. Smaller limited funding attacks such as the Charlie Hebdo killings pose a unique challenge where pre-paid credit cards were used to raise the money required. The fact that they have less networks makes them harder to combat.

The third workshop discussed Terror Networks- Cooperation and Rivalries. The session extensively analyzed the nexus among terrorist networks. It explained the transition of militant groups that work for money, individual benefits and other deeds that unite together and transform into

terrorist organizations when the state act against them. The ally of different terrorist organizations has raised disturbing levels of security concerns, especially over South Asia. This broad global network can be destructed by eradicating the local regimes and forces. Each state fighting terrorism should be careful in the repercussions and state must be really prepared to fight the advanced technology that aids the terrorist network.

The inaugural session was honoured with the presence of the President of India, His Excellency Shri Pranab Mukherjee. In his inaugural address he pointed out that the optimism that was achieved in the field of science and technology in the second

half of last century has faded in the first 15 years; the importance of standing strong and tall against the attempts to tarnish the image of Islam in the world.

The second plenary session on Regional and International Response to Global Terror brought in experiences from different parts of the world in dealing with the threat of terrorism. To tackle terrorism, it is important to understand the fundamental reasons that trigger terrorist activities and then check them at the source. Targeting a single organization alone cannot yield the desired results. We have to work towards the common aim of uprooting terrorism. Multi-lateral





cooperation is very important in achieving this.

The third plenary session on Global Terror and Impact on South Asia discussed how, out of the major variants of terror seen in South Asia, religious fundamentalism is the most prominent one. With most of the countries having a highly understaffed police, South Asian countries are finding it hard to tackle this menace. But South Asian countries are mostly resilient towards this threat as they are democratic and well governed. The efforts of the Sri Lankan government to defeat LTTE was discussed in detail later where it was said that fighting a just war becomes important to ensure all sections of society gets equal set of opportunities within a nation.

Valedictory session was graced by Home Minister Rajnath Singh where he spoke about how world is still grappling with a definition of terrorism,

but the terrorists are gaining considerable ground during this time. In his valedictory address, H.E. Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Malaysia spoke about how Malaysia has improved its terrorism fighting capabilities over the last few years and expressed its willingness to engage with other nations in fighting terrorism. He condemned the use of Islam as a tool to inflict violence upon people. Terrorism has got nothing to do with religion as every religion talks about peace. The session ended with Shri Kalyan Singh, Hon'ble Governor of Rajasthan who talked about how terrorism is like a cancer for humanity that will destroy it if it is not controlled and the importance of increasing the peace and happiness of the world so that we can have a better future. The program concluded with Capt. Alok Bansal, Director, India Foundation delivering the vote of thanks.



Workshop on “India-Japan Partnership Towards Meeting the Challenge of Infrastructure Development in India’s Northeast”

The workshop “India-Japan Partnership towards Meeting the Challenge of Infrastructure Development in India’s Northeast” was organized on 19 – 20th January 2016 at Dimapur, Nagaland by the India Foundation and Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) with the support of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and the Toshiba International Foundation (TIFO). The objective of this initiative

was to foster meaningful policy oriented discussion between experts from both India and Japan in an area of bilateral cooperation that is relatively new but to which both governments attach a great deal of importance.

The context for this workshop was the Tokyo Declaration for Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership, issued after the meeting in Tokyo on 1 September 2014, between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Prime Minister Narendra



Modi, which places special emphasis on Japan's cooperation for enhanced connectivity and development in Northeast India and linking the region to other economic corridors in India and to Southeast Asia. The Joint statement released during Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's recent visit to New Delhi has further underlined this stating – Seeking the synergy between India's "Act East" policy and Japan's "Partnership for Quality Infrastructure", the two Prime Ministers decided to develop and strengthen reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructures that augment connectivity within India and between India and other countries in the region. The two Prime Ministers pledged to advance industrial networks and regional value chains with open, fair and transparent business environment in the region.

The Inaugural Address was delivered by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Nagaland Mr. T. R. Zeliang. He pointed out that in the NER while Japan is more known for its role during the Second World War there is now a real opportunity for Japan to create a new image and memorial for itself in this region through active involvement in infrastructural development. He hoped that with the successful implementation of infrastructural projects in this region as part of India-Japan strategic partnership Japan will no more be associated with war, but with peace and development in the minds of the new generation of this region.

Notable participants included – Alok Bansal, *Director, India Foundation*; Rajat Kathuria, *Director and CE, ICRIER*; Akio Isomata, *Minister Economic, Embassy of Japan*

in India; Ram Muivah, *Secretary, North Eastern Council*; Naoyuki Yoshino, *Dean, Asian Development Bank Institute, Tokyo*; S. L. Meena, *Joint Secretary, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region*; Yasushi Ueki, *Economist, ERIA*; Akio Okamura, *Director, Planning Division, South Asia Department, JICA*; Y. Nakayama, *Member, Japan Plus, DIPP, Ministry of Commerce*; Prodyut Bora, *Regional Expert & Commentator*; M.P. Bezbaruah, *Former Member, North Eastern Council*; and Manoj Pant, *Professor of Economics, Jawaharlal Nehru University.*

The workshop discussion agenda was structured around the following themes:

- Economic Development in NER: Current Status and Potential
- Connectivity Imperatives in NER: Inter-regional, With Rest of India and Cross Border
- Areas for India-Japan Cooperation
- Public Private Partnerships: Pointers from Japan's Involvement in the Development of SEZ's in Myanmar
- Strategies for Enhancing India-Japan Cooperation in Infrastructure Development in NER

The participants pointed out that primarily the NER states are all subsistence agricultural economies. Agricultural production is mainly for local consumption and not much is being done in terms of value added. The number and percentage of population below poverty line in NER is declining steadily but at the same time what is

worrying is that the gap with the rest of India is widening.

In this context connectivity is vital to promote trade, commerce and development of this region. The necessity and importance of strengthening connectivity is:

- For NER (own development)
- For India (balanced development)
- As a catalyst of BBIN (utilizing each comparative advantage, efficient access to sea from landlocked countries/areas)
- As a gateway between India and ASEAN (connecting vast economies/markets)

Further, it was pointed out that three main areas needed to be focused on with regard to NER connectivity – transport, energy and IT with connectivity at 4 levels in each category – within each state, inter-regional, with rest of India and cross border. Participants agreed that India-Japan cooperation in NER had immense potential in terms of the creation of the necessary infrastructure. However in order to maximize the benefits of Japan's assistance the following points were highlighted:

- The emphasis should be on 'quality

infrastructure' utilizing the technical skills and technological expertise from Japan.

- Infrastructure development is not sufficient to achieve effective economic growth.
- In tandem there has to be a long-term economic development plan focusing on 'value creation'.
- The planning process must be participatory and inclusive involving multilayered consultations among all stakeholders – the Central government, the State governments, the private sector as well as the wider community.

The valedictory address was delivered by Shri Ram Madhav, *National General Secretary, BJP & Director, India Foundation* and the session was presided over by Shri Himanata Biswa Sarma, *Member, BJP*. In his address, Shri Madhav said that the development of Northeast is one of the major priorities of the ruling government. He also emphasized that Japan is a very important ally of India for the development of Northeast and the government will immensely benefit from the proposals and suggestions offered at this important workshop.



Megacity Security Conference



Megacity Security Conference was hosted by the India Foundation and Atlantic Council’s South Asia Center in partnership with the US Consulate General, Mumbai on 23-24th November, 2015 at Hotel Taj Vivanta, Mumbai.

This conference attended by high ranking policymakers, leading academicians, policy practitioners, and security experts, mainly from India and the United States, to discuss security

challenges confronting megacities such as Mumbai. The conference provided a forum for candid conversation aimed at producing practical policy recommendations to serve as a basis for strengthening US-India as well as global cooperation in confronting megacity security challenges.

Delegates also participated from other megacities such as London, Sydney, and Tokyo to examine governance challenges.

India Ideas Conclave 2015

The Rig Veda says, “*Aano bhadra krtavo yantu vishwatah*” (Let good thoughts come from everywhere, from all the world, It was in this spirit, that India Foundation organised the 2nd India Ideas Conclave in Goa on the theme of Learning from Civilizations. The 3-day event saw participation from more than 350 eminent intellectuals, academicians and scholars. More than 65 speakers from around the world addressed the gathering on socio-economic, cultural and political themes that dominate the public discourse in India today. This was the second edition of the conclave and built upon the ideas deliberated in the first edition which was on the theme of integral human development.

Prime Minister of Bhutan His Excellency Lyonchhen Tshering Tobgay was the Chief Guest during the inaugural session. In his address, he compared the contributions of various ancient civilizations and came to the conclusion that Indic civilization was the greatest of them all because various religions and faiths harmoniously co-existed in the country. Eminent spiritual leader and Founder of Isha Foundation, Coimbatore His Holiness Sadguru Jaggi Vasudev was the Keynote speaker. He described India as a civilization of God-seekers and spoke on the role of spirituality in helping individuals navigate the problems of society. The inaugural session was chaired by Union Railway Minister and Director, India Foundation Shri Suresh





Prabhu and graced by Union Defence Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar, Minister of State for Finance Shri Jayant Sinha and Chief Minister of Goa Shri Lakshmikant Parsekar.

The India Foundation, together with Swarajya Trust and Indic Academy also instituted the prestigious Swarajya Awards from this year. There were four awards named after four eminent leaders:

1. Sree Narayana Guru Award For Social Work- Robin Hood Army
2. Dr. Syama Prasad Mookherjee Award For Political Activity - Shri Sajjad Lone
3. Dr. B.R. Shenoy Award For Economics - Shri Arvind Panagariya
4. Ustad Bismillah Khan Award For Cultural Activism - Shri Joe D'Cruz

The deliberations were structured in four formats: Special Keynotes, Special Plenaries, Plenary Sessions and Parallel Sessions. The Special Keynotes were delivered by luminaries like (Late) Shri Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and Shri Dattatreya Hosabale (Joint General Secretary, RSS) who spoke on Kashmiriyat, Jamhuriyat and Insaniyat and RSS and Its Cultural Agenda respectively. This was one of the last public speeches by (Late) Shri Sayeed who reiterated



his commitment to the welfare of Kashmiri people based on the guiding principles established by Former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and continued by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. Shri Hosabale described RSS as a cultural institution and highlighted the importance of culture as a basic element that makes/enables people to form a nation.

The Special Plenary session on New Politics saw a lively discussion between Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan (Loksatta Party), Shri Baijant 'Jay' Panda and Shri Jayant Sinha who was chairing the session. Dr. Narayan and Shri Panda had vastly different prescriptions for fixing the political system in the country. While the former wanted more devolution in favour of state and local governments and a heightened focus on education, Shri Panda believed that the traditional politics of subsidies and hand-outs needed to be reworked to cater to the rise of a massive aspirational class in India.

The plenary and parallel sessions focused on both economic and cultural issues and saw a wide range of themes being covered as follows: World Without Poverty, Digitisation and Future of India, In Search of Lakshmi- Towards Indic Economics, Rise of Radicalism- Future of Civilizations, Cultures

in Conflict- The Road Ahead, Pen Warriors- Literary Battles for Civilisational Ideas, Semitic Ideas- Orthodoxy, Modernity and Reform, Lifestyle Issues as Identity Issues and Mother Earth, Mother Nature- the Eastern Wisdom.

Several national and international thought leaders participated in these sessions. These included: Mr. Alojz Peterle, MEP, former PM, Slovenia; Dr. Walter Andersen, JHU, USA; Amb. Muhammad Zamir, Bangladesh; Mr. Victor Vekselberg, Skolkovo Foundation; Mr. Carlos Magarinos, former DG, UNIDO; Dr. Daniel Pipes, USA; Shri Sadanand Dhume, AEI, USA; Shri Subhash Kashyap, Delhi; Amb. Nyamdavaa Oidov, Mongolia; Shri Lobsang Sangay, Sikyong, Central Tibetan Admn, Dharmashala; Dr. David Frawley, USA; Mr. Patrick French, Historian, UK; Ms. Tavleen Singh; Ms. Madhu Kishwar; Ms. Jaya Jaitley; Mr. Tufail Ahmed, MEMRI, USA; Mr. Tareq Fatah, Canada; Shri Milind Kamble, Pune; Prof. Pralay Kanungo; Shri Swapan Dasgupta and Shri M.J. Akbar.

On economic themes, the speakers focused on the best practices India could learn from other countries in the world and our ancient past to reduce the poverty in the country. Several examples were cited by panelists from Arthashastra (on limited government and the need to promote a welfare state) and from developing countries post 2nd world war (focus on education and physical infrastructure). The session on digitisation was chaired by Shri Sharad Sharma (Co-founder, iSPIRIT) and saw the panelists

discuss how digital technology could be used to enhance the effectiveness of flagship government programs. The session on gender equality was chaired by Smt. Lalitha Kumaramangalam (Chairperson, National Commission for Women) who flagged off gender budgeting and gender sensitization as key tools to bridge the gap between men and women in society.

The other set of sessions were on cultural and civilizational conflicts. Dr. Lobsang Sangay spoke about the strong connection between Buddhism and nature and Dr. David Frawley underscored the importance of Ayurveda and Yoga in modern life. The session on Pen Warriors saw a spirited discussion between panelists on the crucial role of writers in the never-ending battlefield of ideas. Shri Amish Tripathi pointed out that stories had the power to create lasting change. Ms. Tavleen Singh defined a civilized country as one which had an abundance of libraries and bookshops. In the session on Semitic Ideas- Orthodoxy, Modernity and Reform, the panelists explored the question whether monotheistic religions could evolve to accommodate the plurality of views present in most modern societies today.

The valedictory session was chaired by HE Smt. Mridula Sinha, Governor, Goa and the valedictory address was delivered by Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman who emphasized the importance of fora like IIC that provided unique perspectives to the audience on national issues and allowed a healthy debate and discussion between intellectuals from all over the world.



3rd International Dharma-Dhamma Conference

The 3rd International Dharma-Dhamma Conference on the theme ‘Harmony of Religions: Welfare of Humankind’ was held at the Brilliant Convention Centre in Indore from 24th October, 2015 to 26th October, 2015. This was jointly organized by the Department of Culture, Government of Madhya Pradesh; Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies (SUBIS), Bhopal and the Centre for Study of Religion and Society (CSRS) of India Foundation, New Delhi as a prelude to the Simhastha- 2016.

In this 3-Day International Conference, along with the main session, topics pertaining to Global Peace, Environment and Nature, Gender Equality,

Religious Pluralism, Knowledge, Moral and Spiritual Values were discussed in different sessions. Religious gurus and noted scholars discussed mainly on: Religion as a means of global peace, Role of religion in ecological balance, Religion promoting gender equality, Religion to safeguard human dignity, Religion to ensure social justice, Religion propagating moral and spiritual values, Religious pluralism, Development of Yogic traditions in different religions, Significance of knowledge in religion. Religious scholars from India, Southeast Asia, America and Europe presented research papers on the conference’s theme.





In his welcome speech, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan stated that through religion solution of the world's problems is possible. He further reiterated that outcome of this conference will be received in the form of nectar that may be helpful to resolve the problems of suffering humanity. He also told that government is quite determined to provide adequate space to the nations that are interested to establish their academic centres at Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies (SUBIS).

The Hon'ble Chief Guest of the conference and Lok Sabha Speaker Smt. Sumitra Mahajan said that Simhastha is a grand assembly of thoughts and stressed that the outcome of this conference would be helpful to us in deciding our course of life.

The Special Guest, Hon'ble Foreign Minister of Bhutan Shri Lyonpo Damcho Dorji highlighted that it is imperative to find the ways to make religion as a facilitator of welfare of mankind. Praising India's religious diversity, he said that in the world's biggest democracy people of different religions have been living together for centuries. "India is the birthplace of the world's four major religions — Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism — and people belonging to these religions have been living together in India for centuries.

Keynote Speaker Shri Bhaiyyaji Joshi, RSS Sarakaryavah emphasized the need of mutual cooperation and interdependency. Joshi said that one should have 'respect' for all religions and adopt principles of non-violence.



The inaugural session was followed by a special session chaired by Shri Banagala Upatissa Nayaka Thero, President of Mahabodhi Society (Sri Lanka). In this session Rev. Baselios Mar Thoma Paulose II, Head of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (Kerala) addressed the gathering and stated that he is personally against the forcible religious conversion. He considered communication is very important element for any community and put emphasis in the relevance of organization of conferences like Dharma-Dhamma in keeping religious intolerance aside.

Eminent personalities like Swami Parmatmanand Saraswati of Arsh Vidya Mandir Rajkot, Swami Vishveshwaranand of Sanyas Ashram, Prof. Sadhvi Chaitnya Pragya from Jain Vishwa Bharati University, Prof. Sun Keun Kim, Dongguk

University, S. Korea; H.H. Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan, Head Mar Thoma, Sabha, Kerala and other dignitaries discussed issues related to tolerance and harmony. Swami Sukhabodhananda, Founder and Chairman, Prasanna Trust mesmerized the gathering with his interesting and thought provoking talk. He told that just like our daily lives religion has become mechanical.

Shri Shivaraj Singh Chouhan, in his public speech, highlighted the importance of Simhastha and termed it as a grand assembly of thoughts. He stressed that along with GDP, benefits of development should be provided to common man.

Swami Avdheshanand Giri Maharaj, Acharya Mahamandaleshwar, Juna Akhara; Mr. Champika Ranawaka, State Minister of Megapolis and Western Development, Government of Sri Lanka;



Prof. Geshe Ngawang Samten, Former VC, Central Tibetan University, Sarnath, Varanasi; Prof. David Frawley, Director, American Institute of Vedic Studies, USA and Shri Sultan Shahin, Founder & Editor, New Age Islam, India enlightened the audience on global peace and harmony through religion.

Mr. Oded Wiener, Advisor to the Chief Rabbinate, Israel stated that due to lack of dialogues there is chaos in the entire world. War cannot offer us solution for any problem. Rev. Sumana Siri, Buddhist Realists' Centre, Singapore told that we can bring heaven on the planet through religion. He considered the present era as an era of digital disturbance. Prof. Vamsee

Juluri, Professor of Media Studies, University of San Francisco, USA focused on the role of media in the welfare of mankind. Dr. Thich Nhat Tu, Deputy Rector, Vietnam Buddhist University, Vietnam stated that spiritual and ethical development of society is must. Dogmatic views neglect pragmatic values of other religions and it results into conflicts.

Dr. Kusum Jain, Professor (Retd.), Department of Philosophy, University of Rajasthan; Prof. Haiyan Shen, Shanghai University, China; Prof. Yasuo Kamata, Professor of Philosophy, Kwansai Gakuin University, Japan; Prof. Yajneshwar Shastri, Former Director of School of Philosophy, Psychology and Education, Gujarat

University shared thoughts about unfolding richness and wisdom found in all the religions.

The Key Note speaker, world renowned spiritual Guru and founder of Art of Living Sri Ravi Shankar remarked that in India social and individual welfare are never treated as different entities. There should be spiritualistic politics, secularized religion and socialized business. Spiritualise politics means that politicians and people in authority will have to have feelings for people, connection with people, a feeling of righteousness. He stated that the purpose of religion is purity in heart, clarity and quality in mind and sincerity in action. One should not keep quiet but spread the message of Dharma loud and clear in society for a one world family – ‘*Vasudev Kutumbkam*’. Quoting from ancient Indian

scriptures, he said differences of opinion and diverse ways of thinking can get one closer to ultimate reality and bring happiness and peace in the world.

Dr. Lobsang Sangay, Guest of Honour of the conference and Head of Central Tibetan Administration, Dharamshala earned the audience’s appreciation when he said that he came from the land of Manasarovar, an abode of Kailashpati Shankar. He elaborated the importance of 4Cs in life-Compassion, Clarity, Co-operation and Co-existence. Hon. Sikyong began his speech by quoting H.H. the Dalai Lama, “My religion is simple. My religion is kindness” and underscored the importance of compassion as a core essence of leadership, giving a call to religious and political leaders to incorporate compassion in their official activities.



India Economic Convention 2015



India Foundation in collaboration with International Chamber of Commerce organised the 2nd India Economic Convention on the theme, ‘Architecture for Growth’ at Taj Palace Hotel, New Delhi on 17-18th September, 2015.

The event was graced by the presence of senior ministers of the government including Shri Arun Jaitley, Union Minister of Finance, Government of India; Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad Union Minister of Telecom & IT; Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Minister of State with Independent Charge, Commerce and Industry; Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Union Minister of State with Independent Charge, Skill development; and Shri Jayant Sinha, Union Minister of State for Finance.

The convention was inaugurated by Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley where he laid bare the direction of the government’s economic

transformation programme which focuses on beefing up agriculture by giving a thrust to rural infrastructure and irrigation and hastening the pace of reforms for facilitating business, ushering in GST, putting in place a bankruptcy code, expediting dispute resolution through arbitration and bringing in transparent and fair public procurement laws. Addressing global and Indian CEOs at the India Economic Convention, the Finance Minister said that the present government was totally clear on the direction that economic governance of the country needs to take. “We have sought to restructure the model of governance which takes the burden of employment off a fragile agriculture sector; one which forces the pace of development of the services and urban sector and builds a vibrant manufacturing sector”, he said.

Mr. Jayant Sinha, Minister of State for Finance,

in his address, dwelt on how the growth model adopted by the government was different from that of the past. “Our government wants to build India’s productive capacity to achieve and sustain an 8-10% growth steadily through boom and bust cycles. Our approach is to power growth through supply-side interventions and investments, rather than a consumption-led, demand-side

orientation.” He said that the present government was pro-poor, pro-market. He referred to major government initiatives, such as, the financial inclusion programme -- Jan Dhan Yojna, which has brought millions of people into the financial system. Referring to financing of MSMEs, he cited the instance of Mudra Yojna as one of the first steps the government has taken to address this issue.

Mr. Sunil Bharti Mittal, Chairman, Bharti Enterprises and ICC First Vice Chairman, exhorted Indian and global investors to cash in on the opportunities that have opened up through the launch of programmes such as Make in India, Digital India, Skill India and ‘Swachh Bharat Mission’.

Ms Naina Lal Kidwai, Executive Director on the board of HSBC Asia-Pacific and Chairman India, HSBC Ltd pointed out some of the structural issues saying that although “the RBI has brought down the interest rate by 75 basis points but the transmission rate is quite low”. She said that it takes approximately 18 months for the deposits to reach the beneficiaries under the current system.



The Government of India is working towards removing obstructions that have led to stagnation in the growth of manufacturing sector. Manufacturing needs to be given the necessary push as the new entrants in the job market cannot be absorbed by agriculture or services sector. Along with the state governments, the Centre was focusing on removing the policy impediments and red-tapism to boost investments and realize the goals of ‘Make in India’, said Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Commerce & Industry, while addressing the session on ‘What will “Make in India” look like’ at the India Economic Convention 2015. Ms. Sitharaman said that India’s demographic dividend was one of its advantages and the government was aiming to impart skills to youth. It was expected that this initiative would reach its fruition in the next 5-10 years, and a skilled and employable workforce would be ready to join the market.

Digital India is a transformational programme which has been launched in a mission mode to

bridge the digital divide between the haves and have nots, said Mr Ravi Shankar Prasad, Union Minister for Communication and Information Technology at the India Economic Convention 2015. “Digital India is politics neutral,” Mr Prasad said even as he highlighted the government’s achievements in strengthening Digital India to “empower India as well as Indians”. The minister, in his address during the panel discussion entitled: ‘Is India’s Digital Revolution a panacea to its infrastructure challenges’, said that the government through its Bharat Net initiative is creating a digital architecture for delivery of services to common man. Nearly 9,000 km of work under the programme has been completed in the past 14 months, he said. He cited the example of a recently launched programme ‘Digital Pramanam’ to highlight how digitisation has been helping thousands of pensioners by eliminating the requirement for them to get physically verified that they are alive in order to claim their pension. Mr Prasad said that people in India are waiting for

Digital India to become a success as the “initiative gives them a voice”. He also said that electronic manufacturing in India has immense potential. “We have approved 20 electronic clusters and now the state governments are competing to get more approved,” he said. The minister informed that Rs 104,000 crore worth of electronic manufacturing proposals are under consideration of the government.

Mr. Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, urged the private sector to partner with the government to drive the ‘Skill India’ movement at a fast pace to match industry’s demand for skilled workers. He informed that a portal would be launched soon by the Ministry to facilitate the Skill India initiative. While addressing a session on ‘Skilling India: How and When’ at India Economic Convention, Mr. Rudy said that the private sector needs to spell out the skills required by them and only then would the government be able to provide them with the



requisite workforce. He added that there was also a need for trainers as teachers and professors were not adequately equipped to impart skills. Hence, the government was accessing the skills of ex-servicemen who had the necessary skills to train workforce in numerous fields. Speaking on the need for infrastructure to impart skills, Mr. Rudy said that the Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Ministry was not in a position to build new infrastructure and therefore it was looking at leveraging the existing infrastructure such as with the railways, which already had 43000 kms of optical fibre network. Also, states need to be on board to link training with jobs, he said.

India can emerge as a key provider of high end analytics based on genomics big data, stated Mr. Vijay Raghavan, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India, at an interactive session on biotechnology on day two of the 'Indian Economic Convention' in association with Niti Aayog. There is a big opportunity for India to both analyse and model genomics big data and to build mechanisms for using the analytics, said Mr. Raghavan and pointed out that India should also look to build a sizeable pool of people who are trained to handle computational genomics.

In another interactive session on Indian Railways, Mr. Girish Pillai, Advisor-Infrastructure, Indian Railways, highlighted some of the key features of the Railways' five-year Action Plan. He said that the National Transport Development Policy Committee has estimated that the Indian Railways would require about Rs. 32,00,000 crore

worth of investment till 2032. "We need to increase the investment 3-5 times," he added.

In the session 'Indian space initiatives', Dr. A S Kiran Kumar, Chairman, ISRO, said that it was essential to build capacity to bring technology for the benefit of the country. He informed that an Indian Industry Consortium would be formed soon to launch space vehicles and teams have been set up to discuss and finalize the details. Dr. Kumar said that government departments were being encouraged to utilize space technology and available information for carrying out their day to day duties effectively and now 60 departments were employing the technology in their daily work.

Dr. UR Rao, Chairman of the Governing Council of the Physical Research Laboratory and Former Chairman, ISRO, in his presentation narrated the fascinating journey of ISRO over the decades. Highlighting the needs of the future, he said space technology should be employed for new applications such as expansion of tele education and tele medicine; for disaster monitoring and management; management of communicable diseases; resource identification, efficient management of financial operations; management of forestry and water resources and management of agriculture. At last Dr. Arvind Panagariya, Vice Chairman, Niti Aayog, said that Niti Aayog was at a nascent stage and was working on different fronts with knowledge institutions and think tanks at various levels. The convention was a unique platform where the national & international industrial leaders came together to brainstorm and the event was showered with appreciation from all corners of the economic world.



India Foundation Dialogues

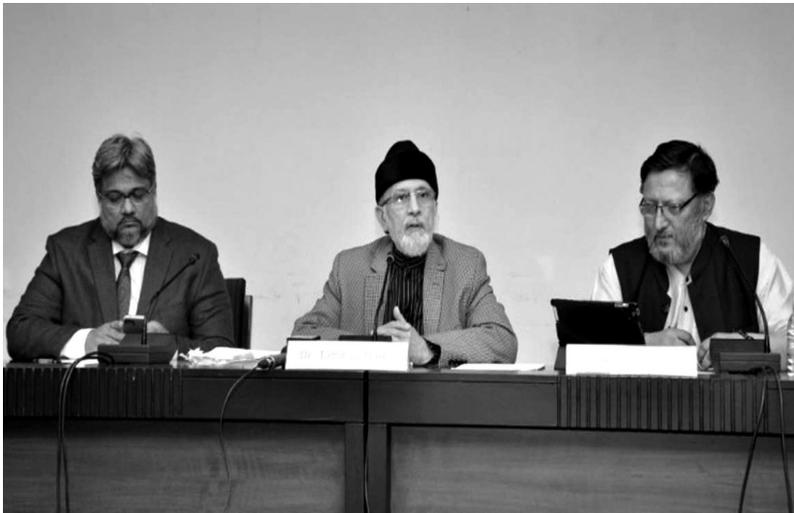
India Foundation organises **IF Dialogues'** to discuss contemporary issues. A group of intellectuals and policy makers attend **The Dialogues** to discuss and debate the various facets of national, social, political and international issues. Social activist, Government officials, Political Leaders and Scholars from India and abroad enlighten the audience about current affairs.

22 April, 2016



*Prof. Neela Quadri Baloch,
President,
World Baloch Women's Forum*
**Theme: Human Right
Situation in Balochistan**

18 March 2016



*Dr. Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri,
Founder,
Minhaz-ul-Quran International*
**Theme: Deradicalisation :
The Way Forward**

2 March, 2016



*Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali,
Foreign Minister, Bangladesh*
Theme : India-Bangladesh Relations

9 February, 2016



*Amb. Arun Singh,
Indian Ambassador to USA*
Theme : US Presidential Elections

12 February 2016



Bob Blackman, Member of Parliament, UK
**Theme: Leveraging India's Friends in
Global Capitals**

22 January 2016



*Prof. Vali Nasr,
Dean, PHN School of Advanced International
Studies, John Hopkins University.*
Theme: US-Iran Engagement & US-Saudi Tensions

15 January 2016



*Mr. Steve Coll,
Dean, Columbia Journalism School
Theme : American Foreign Policy under
Obama: Middle-East to Afghanistan*

28 December 2015



*Shri Prakash Jawadekar,
Union Minister of State for Environment (IC)
Theme : Paris Climate Conference*

09 January 2016



*Ms. Priti Patel,
Minister of State for Employment, UK
Theme : India UK Relations*

14 December 2015



*Prof. Mark S Wrighton,
Chancellor, Washington University, St. Louis
Theme : Relevance of
American Higher Education System for India*

20 November, 2015



*Shri Hekmat Karzai,
Deputy Foreign Minister, Afghanistan*
Theme : India-Afghanistan Relations

17 October, 2015



Amb. Ranjit Rae, Indian Ambassador to Nepal
Theme : Nepal : The New Developments

02 November 2015



*Shri Richard Verma,
US Ambassador to India*
Theme: New Horizons in India-US Relations

30 September 2015



*Shri Dattatreya Hosabale,
Sah-Sarkaryawah, RSS*
Theme: RSS-BJP Relations & Related Issues

9 September, 2015



*Shri Ajit Doval,
National Security Advisor, Govt. of India*
Theme: Present & Future of Indo-Pak Relations

26 August 2015



*Shri Manohar Parrikar,
Hon'ble Defence Minister, Govt. of India*
**Theme: Challenges before
India's Defence Establishment**

24 August 2015



*Prof. Stephen Tankel, Asst. Professor,
SIS, American University, USA*
**Theme : Perspective on
the US India and US-Pak Relationship**

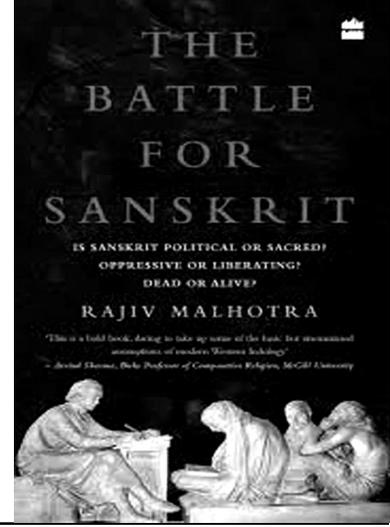
The Battle for Sanskrit

Author : **Rajiv Malhotra**

Publisher : **HarperCollins Publishers India**

Price : Rs.699/-

Book review by
Khandavalli Satya Deva Prasad



The refined aspect of Bharatiya society is Sanskriti. Its language is Sanskrit. Sanskrit and Sanskriti are almost synonymous. Such is the importance of Sanskrit language. The four hundred sixty pages book *The Battle for Sanskrit* by Sri Rajiv Malhotra, analyzes in detail the threat posed to Sanskrit and Sanskriti by the latest round of western intervention called American Orientalism represented by scholars like Sheldon Pollock. The earlier form of western intervention was European Orientalism of 19th century. The book gives the details of various canards created by the Pollock school in the garb of lofty sounding theories and concepts.

Malhotra draws the battle lines between the outsiders represented by the American Orientalists and their Indian chelas and the insiders represented by the traditional Sanskrit scholars. The prize of the battle is control over the discourse that decides

the fate of Sanskrit. He urges the traditional scholars of Sanskrit, who, till now, kept themselves aloof from the world currents that affect the future perception about Sanskrit even in India, its birth place.

The book's content is presented in a highly organized and purposive manner.

The first chapter begins with an account of the attempts to hijack Sanskrit and Sanskriti. The writer makes an impassioned appeal to the insiders to form a home team to rescue Sanskrit from the hijackers and reclaim its true legacy.

Then, some details about the hijacker camp are given. The writer says that there are important differences between the methods employed, output turned out and the effects achieved by the old and new Orientalist schools. The American Orientalists are a small but influential, left-leaning group of scholars deploying every trick in their bag

to de-link the sacred aspects of Sanskrit literature and secularize it to suit their agenda. This grand project to secularize Sanskrit includes an attack on the transcendental or paramarthika element of Sanskrit lore, attacking ritual which is in the form of yajna, sidelining the vital oral tradition, rejecting the shastras which are knowledge systems, branding Sanskrit grammar as 'toxic', and condemning the Ramayana as socially oppressive. The Pollock school is in no mood to consider the significance of UNESCO's declaration of Vedic chanting as world culture heritage and the crucial importance of oral version of Veda to Indian culture. The Pollock repeatedly appeals for the revival of Sanskrit while at the same time argues for the suppression of its vital features!

Through his 'Deep Orientalism', Pollock seeks to prove that Sanskrit had been an inspiration to oppression in India and elsewhere. He goes to extreme lengths to blame Sanskrit for the atrocities committed by Europeans in India, for Nazism, holocaust by the Germans and what not! He cites the Ramayana as the kavya that propagates Vedic social oppression. By purveying this falsehood, he indirectly admits the truth that ancient texts like Ramayana propagate Vedic teachings. It is also proposed that Ramayana was popularized since 11th century just to demonize the Muslims! Such are the scholarly knots into which the Pollockian scholarship ties itself. Biggest of such knots is the theory that the Valmiki Ramayana was written after the advent of Buddhism. In short, Ramayana is interpreted by the American Orientalists as

atrocious literature and offered to the outsiders as an excuse to intervene in Indian politics.

Then there is the theory of aestheticization of power. Through this theory Pollock supplies the much needed intellectual ballast to the Indian Left to divide and weaken the society and boost its political power in the process-'the Indian Left is clearly working with him closely to boost their own political power. His work on Sanskrit supports them ideologically' (p.90).

Malhotra helps the traditional scholars to gain purchase on the issues involved by formulating the issues in traditional categories. It is useful for traditional scholars to study the threat posed by Pollock's ilk to Bharatiya Sanskriti in general and Sanskrit in particular by placing him in Charvaka category. And Pollock meets most of the Charvaka requirements like his denial of Paramarthika (sacred) spirit of Sanskrit texts, his espousal of strictly materialistic view of the world, and, above all, his condemnation of Vedas and Yajnas and Pujas as magical buffoonery. After all, the ancient charvakas declared- 'agnihotram trayo vedah tridandam bhasma gunthanam; buddhi pourusha hinanam jeeviketi brhaspathih'- (yajna, Vedas, staff of the renunciate, and smearing of ashes are the signs of brainless nincompoops donned for livelihood, so says Brahpathi). True to his charvaka proclivities, Pollock pastes the same old charges on Sanskrit and the Veda. The ancient darshanikas accepted Charvaka thought as an alluring but a system of thought harmful to the civilized society.

Chapter seven of the Battle for Sanskrit gives

a summary of Pollock's noxious formulations about Sanskrit and Sanskriti. Then Pollock attempts to pronounce Sanskrit as dead and non-existent. While doing so, studious silence is maintained on how the West plagiarized the Shastras and tried to kill Sanskrit as if to destroy the evidence of its culpability. The neo-orientalist repeats the old canard propagated by the erstwhile colonialist-missionary-indologist combine that there is no such thing as Indian Civilization and Indian nation ad nauseam.

The tenth chapter is devoted to dissect the Pollock phenomena. The writer tells us how Pollock gathered his clout with the academia, media, Indian entrepreneurs and the Indian public. In the next and the last chapter, a way forward is suggested to those who undertake the task to

reverse the damage so far explained in detail.

There are five appendices that throw light on some of the topics dealt in the text.

As usual, like Rajiv Malhotra's other books, this one also features its schematic diagrams that focus on the vital points, copious chapter notes and long, useful bibliography. The book published by Harper Collins Publishers in the present year belongs to the genre that reverses the gaze on the forces that attack the Bharatiya Sanskriti and society. Included in this genre are the works by such stalwarts as Sri Aurobindo, Lala Lajpatrai, Sita Ram Goel, Arun Shourie, David Frawley, Koenraad Elst among others. The book is a must read for all those who love and cherish the continued existence of Bharatiya culture and Sanskrit, the language that embodies its soul.



Upcoming Events

India-Iran - Two Great Civilizations Historical Links and the Way Forward

22-23rd May 2016; Tehran

Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) is celebrating a festival of India in Tehran. India Foundation is partnering with them on a strategic dialogue with relevant Iranian institutions on matters of bilateral interest.

India Foundation Delegation visit to China

4-16th July 2016

India Foundation has been having regular bilateral interaction with International Department of Communist Party of China. The delegation visit is a part of the ongoing interaction.

Ganga Mekong Cultures Conference

22-24th July 2016; Bangkok

The Centre for Study of Religion and Society (CSRS) of India Foundation International (India Foundation International is an international wing of India Foundation, New Delhi) is organizing Ganga Mekong Cultures Conference. The conference is in the context of Ganga Mekong Cooperation initiative of multiregional dimensions designed to enhance and boost cultural ties between India and countries of Mekong valley - Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand.

Young Thinkers Meet

6-7th August 2016

Young Thinkers Meet is one of the key annual events of India Foundation, which primarily facilitates constructive dialogue between youth and senior functionaries of Government, Bureaucracy, Research Organizations and Civil Society.