



Armed Conflicts in South Asia 2012

Sixth Annual Conference



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Inaugural Session

D. Suba Chandran

Director, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS)

The Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies has been mapping armed conflicts in South Asia on an annual basis. It largely focuses on eight or nine conflicts, particularly armed conflicts during the previous year. In the past, the spotlight of this research effort comprised of Afghanistan, FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Jammu and Kashmir, Nepal, Sri Lanka, India's North East and Naxal conflict in the country. Young researchers engage in reviewing of the events of the previous year with respect to the conflict in order to identify the major trends in this regard. Their research enumerates the course of action undertaken by state, non state actors and civil society in addressing respective armed conflicts.

The theme of research publications of the year 2008 and 2009 was related to expanding trends of violence, whereas the year 2010 displayed a shift in research with an attempt to focus on transformation of armed conflicts in the region. Therefore, the 2010 edition of the series was titled *Promise and Threat of Transformation* with the belief that there are positive and negative aspects to a conflict. The publication of 2011 attempts to address the unease with the dearth of positive peace in spite of the conclusion of armed conflicts in South Asia, especially in Jammu and Kashmir, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Therefore, the 2011 publication concentrates on the peace processes initiated in the region. This signifies the shift from the research of earlier years which had its strict focus on armed conflicts to an assessment of the promises and threats of transformation this year. Another noteworthy point to this year's publication is the inclusion of Myanmar within the purview of South Asia.

The principal aim of this conference is to gain insight and inputs from scholars and practitioners in this area of research to ensure success to this endeavour. It is imperative that publications of the past years are reviewed in order to improve and enhance the quality of research and publication. To facilitate this process, the session would begin with an external critique on the last five ACSA publications followed by the first technical session, which is a review of armed conflicts in the year 2010.

Gratitude is extended to the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), New Delhi, for the support to this project since 2007. Also, the annual publications on *Armed Conflicts in South Asia* have been made possible with the cooperation of Routledge India.

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-Meenakshi
Gopinath



Chair: Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, *Principal, Lady Shri Ram College*

Presently, the lines between interstate and intrastate conflicts seem to be blurring, especially aggravated by India's current foreign policy. This situation is accompanied by human security deficit and humane governance deficit combined with ethnic exclusion and fragile institutions of the country. In addition, the mobilization of religions and left-wing extremist violence has provided a combustible mix in creating situations leading to armed conflict. Significant to the shared histories and the cartographic anxieties of the region is the issue of migration and escalation in the Internally Displaced Population of the country.

It is indispensable to recognize that the eco space of South Asia continues to challenge geography of the region. The 2011 publication of the *Armed Conflicts in South Asia series* attempts to comprehend the change in dynamics of the state, particularly raising the question on the manner of exception invoked as a norm of governance when the state oscillates between the role of protector and perpetrator. In this regard, it would be productive for the future publications to provide a gender analysis in understanding the methodology of victim-perpetrator rubric. It is also imperative to reflect on the future latencies of armed conflict in South Asia.

Integral to this subject is the Indo-Pak Joint Anti-Terrorism Mechanism, at least within the theoretical paradigm to facilitate the engagement between erstwhile not-so-friendly neighbours. The establishment of National Investigation Agency and the National Intelligence Grid could perhaps lean towards the direction of creating a counter-terrorism space.

The National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Shivshankar Menon, has described the larger thrust of India's foreign policy as 'expanding circles of engagement'-beginning with the immediate neighbourhood for ensuring peaceful periphery and then intensifying the engagement in the region and beyond. Crucial to this engagement are the issues of food security, environment protection and energy conservation. This indicates the possibility of a paradigmatic shift in India's foreign policy from predilection to play a hegemon in the region. Thence, the question to be considered is regarding the prospect for intractable borders to turn into crossings; the likelihood of culture, trade and human interactions flourishing for equitable transformation in today's world.

It is this trajectory of research that is reflected in the *Armed Conflicts in South Asia*, which attempts to incorporate early warnings and early responses with respect to the conflict situations in the region.

Keynote Address

Mr. Shivshankar Menon, *National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister of India*

From the perspective of a practitioner, it would not be appropriate and justifiable to state the region of South Asia as one of the most violent regions of the world. The societies of South Asia are noticeably heading in the right direction today.

2011 was relatively a quiet year for India with respect to violent conflicts, especially as it witnessed significant decline in militancy and violence in Jammu and Kashmir. It is also noteworthy to remember that the country has not been a spectator to communal conflation in the past three years. The volume of 2011 from the series, indubitably, notes these changes and transformations. The publication has been extremely valuable in distinguishing between military operations, political and social aspects of armed conflicts. The cumulative analysis from this publication would prove helpful in understanding the phenomenon of armed conflicts in the region.

Today, there is a fundamental change in the nature of conflict, which is not just evolving from one stage to another, but is undergoing change as a result of the shift in the character of a conflict. The age of global interdependence has ensured the decline in conflicts between states. Nevertheless, there is escalation in the conflicts involving non-state actors, particularly when the lines between state and non-state actors are considerably



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becoming vague. State actors, today, appear to mimic the non-state actors. The states are observed to be cultivating and using non-state actors like non-governmental organizations for their political and other pursuits. The cocktail of NGOs, social media and the like, as spotted in West Asia, induce kinetic and physical consequences ultimately culminating in regime changes. In addition, the technology has also empowered the non-state actors to pose an important challenge to the state. The obliteration of distinction between state and non-state actors along with the punctured boundaries of state sovereignty has created new situations demanding novel perspectives.

In this regard, it is crucial to examine the reasons which hamper the success of peace processes that are embraced with the best of intentions to resolve a conflict. This is a situation that a practitioner encounters in resolving a prolonged conflict irrespective of the context. Scrutinizing any conflict from the past that has ended, it is easy to recount that it is through the process of political evolution and changes in objective conditions and mutated in benign forms of competition that the conflict has concluded, rather than as an upshot of a peace process. Therefore, it is essential to rethink the elements of the conflicts in South Asia to ensure that the efforts behind a peace process thrive. Nevertheless, the expansion of democracy in the region along with mounting economic interdependence has ensured that countries like Nepal and Sri Lanka could survive armed conflicts without crumbling of their economies.

Today, political and social benefits of peace are vividly visible in South Asia. Thus, it is necessary to focus on the paradox between intent and reality. Perhaps, there lies an opportunity in the gradually disappearing lines between state and non-state actors because this is the time of fluidity where the natures of conflict is changing requiring decisive attention.

Session I: A Review of ACSA Process & ACSA Overview 2012

Chair: Dr. Arvind Gupta, *Director General, Institute of Defence and Strategic Analyses (IDSA)*

Everyone is aware of the existence of conflicts. These conflicts have been discussed at various forms and have been thoroughly analyzed. To an extent, it would not be a mistake to believe there is an understanding on the methods and measures to resolve conflicts, at least theoretically. The probable reasons for the setbacks rest within the process of effective implementation, active diplomacy, deficiencies in governance, lack of regional cooperation, the squeamishness of the CBMs and the lack of understanding of the causes of conflict due to differing perceptions. The complexity involved in the idea of national security is extremely crucial in considering a conflict, especially with involvement of non-state actors and non-traditional security concerns. It is necessary to observe on the limitations in the capacity of the state in dealing with these issues today.

In this regard, it would be advantageous to indulge in the possibility of a cooperative security framework for South Asia. One of the major impediments to this deliberation arises in the understanding of the term cooperative security with respect to South Asia. In addition, there have been constraints to this conceptualization. The concept of security in the region has evolved more as a zero sum game. It has been viewed within security



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- Arvind Gupta

dilemma and under the realist paradigm. The blurring of the state borders and rise of social media has brought about new implications to the existing concept of security. Even so, there is greater acceptance of democracy in the region with economic progress helping the youth to look through the prism of future perspective.

The fundamental question that remains to be answered is whether the countries in the region are visibly hesitant to discuss on the concept of security together, particularly when the SAARC has not been utilized as a platform to advance these thoughts. Advancing disaster management and cooperation between coast guards in defence talks between the countries of the region is also critical towards providing an insight into cooperative security framework for the region. This idea could be promoted through public diplomacy provoking people to think of the benefits of such an exercise. Defence sector, consequently, has significant contributions to make toward strengthening the cooperative frameworks with joint peacekeeping operations, joint training exercises, maritime conferences and the like. There could be separate institutions outside the umbrella of the SAARC for defence cooperation along with the initiation of projects on mutual understanding on the histories that are common but with differing perception to deepen the acceptance of diversity existing in South Asia.

In conclusion, there is a need to encourage an annual meeting of the countries in the region at intergovernmental levels involving cabinet ministers, foreign secretaries and national security advisors as an attempt to advance confidence building measures, which is of utmost importance to the region.

Dr. P Sahadevan, *Professor of South Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University*

The annual publications on the subject have been unique as with its wide range of analysis and interpretation of events occurred in a year. These publications facilitate those wishing to understand the dynamics of conflicts in South Asia, especially the process of unfolding of conflicts and their transformations. Therefore, it is crucial for the Institute to sustain this exercise and in forthcoming years this effort could ascend to become a data bank particularly on South Asia. The methodology and framework adopted by this project demonstrates sound narration of events with systematic presentation of developments taking place in particular places and in contexts.

An analysis and critical scrutiny of the previous publications in the series inevitably provoke thoughts on improving the quality of the project in future. In this regard, suggestions toward expanding the scope of the exercise to fine tune with advanced rigour in the project would be supportive.

The usage of the term armed conflict as a specified concept could possibly stress limitations to the project. In order to expand the scope of this project a generic conceptualization of



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- P. Sahadevan





the term armed conflicts could be considered. Nonexistence of an armed conflict necessary does not indicate the absence of latent conflict. Therefore, revision of the existing frameworks with the use of generic concepts would eliminate the concerns of an incomplete approach towards understanding a conflict. Categorizing the varied conflicts of South Asia under a generic concept would help policy makers and other concerned actors to be well-informed on the subject.

The spread of the scope of research beyond intrastate conflicts toward interstate conflicts in the region could enlarge the scale of this project by enhancing its capacity to produce comprehensive understanding of the conflicts in the region.

The progress in the quality of these publications is necessitated by the requirement to ensure that the articles in these publications do not conclude as mere factual narrations but also state chronology of events with respect to a conflict in a nutshell. A reader of this series could expect to have a comparative analysis in the trends of a particular conflict in the time frame between previous publication and the present one. Treatment of this annual publication in a particular format would augment the synchronization of all chapters.

The adoption of a statistical approach in research analysis of a conflict over a period of time could ease the process of identifying the stages of a conflict with deeper insight into its life span. Therefore, embracing this methodology along with maintaining the quality of research raises the standard of these annual publications. This style could generate huge amount of data with an aim to help in creation of a larger database.

Finally, in order to widen the readership and to guarantee the publication to be far reaching, it is vital that application of concepts in each chapter is accompanied by definitions. Clarifying and revisiting the usage of terms like military exercise and conflict management under the same subtitle is extremely crucial since they both indicate two different exercises.

Prof. P.R. Chari, *Research Professor, IPCS*

In the sixth annual review of the *Armed Conflicts in South Asia*, the spotlight is on the peace processes in the region in the year 2011 against the backdrop of armed conflicts. This year's publication incorporates Myanmar in the region of South Asia. Commonalities between the Indian subcontinent and Myanmar are not recent as historically Myanmar has been a part of British India until 1936.

The two most noteworthy instances in 2011 which would shape the future of the international system are the Arab Spring and the killing of Osama bin Laden. The Arab Spring has given a novel relevance to the voice of the people. The upshot of events that unfolded within the Arab Spring has pertinent lessons for South Asia. It has bestowed considerable bearing on the governments of South Asia to display transparency and probity. In the second instance, the killing of Osama bin Laden visibly displays the breach of Pakistan's sovereignty. The enormity of this signal event lies in the revelation that Pakistan, today, has limited sovereignty.

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It is to be noted that the peace process in South Asia has followed a convoluted path, which has been haphazard and cyclic. Cases of peace processes have been extremely specific each having its own individual characteristics.

A swift glance at South Asia in 2011 brings forth the highly anarchic situation within. The sole manner in which Afghanistan could be re-stabilized is through the local institutions like the *loya jirga*, which could address its internal issues. The question of Pakistan regaining its cherished strategic depth in Afghanistan with the US withdrawal in 2014 also raises doubts, especially with a highly factional Taliban and the state of internal polity of Pakistan.

In 2011, Bangladesh is in a bright spot, raising the bar of optimism, while Nepal and Sri Lanka are struggling with an uneasy peace. It is to be appreciated that the domestic politics in these countries could act as spoilers with plebiscitary politics. In India, the militancy in the Northeast remains problematic even as the Prime Minister asserted left-wing extremism to be the main threat to the country. There does not seem to be a possibility of peace process in this regard in the near future.

In conclusion, the events that would unfold in 2014 with the withdrawal of the US in Afghanistan are likely to have a profound influence on the armed conflicts in the region. In addition, the issue of terrorism, both cross-border and indigenous, proves crucial to the internal security of India. The plain criminality of terrorism demands reforms of law and order machinery along with the criminal justice system.

There is a greater need to improve trade relations and trust-generation between countries of the region. As we travel through the 21st century, internal security is becoming more complicated and the process by which this annual publication encapsulates the complexity is to be debated further.

Session II: Afghanistan and Pakistan

Chair: Brig. (Retd.) Gurmeet Kanwal, Director, Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS)

Afghanistan and Pakistan have been witnessing a huge degree of instability in the last few years. In Afghanistan there is an ongoing conflict between the Taliban and the US, while in Pakistan it is between the Pakistani army and several factions of the Taliban. There are tensions along the Af-Pak border and these regions are witnessing cross-border conflict as well. Along with that Pakistan mainly faces internal instability which ranges from ethnic clashes in Karachi to political instability where the Prime Minister is being charged with contempt of court by the Supreme Court.

North Waziristan is not isolated by the Pakistan's military either, rather they are preparing for additional posts along the Durand line which can reduce the chances of infiltration. Punjabi Taliban's are not active in Pakistan but they have joined hands with Afghani Taliban to fight against US led forces. They might come back after stability in Afghanistan.



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Again there is not much fear of talibanization within Pakistan.

With respect to Afghanistan, the important question which should be asked is whether the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) can take autonomous independent operations after the NATO forces leave. Similarly, one should question the importance of talks with the Taliban. Moreover, it is important to note that for the Taliban to agree to any concession they would either have to be squeezed militarily or undergo a change in their ideology.

D. Suba Chandran, *Director, IPCS*

In terms of major armed conflicts witnessed in Pakistan, FATA is the most violent region followed by Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkwa (KP). In FATA most attacks took place in Khyber agency followed by Muhammad and Kurram agency. But it should also be kept in mind that Khyber agency has not only seen conflict between military and the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) but also witnessed sectarian conflict between two jihadi groups. However, on analyzing the major trends of armed conflict in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2011, it can be seen that the number of attacks have come down as compared to the previous year.

First, the areas of Muhammad and Khurram agencies are becoming the most violent regions because of the presence of the TTP and the anti-militancy operation. North and South Waziristan, which used to be the most violent region, witnessed only about a hundred attacks. Second, the attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkwa are concentrated more on Peshawar because it is the central power hub of KP. Third, there is a substantial decrease in drone attacks by the US, and the drone strikes are concentrated mostly on North and South Waziristan (70 out of 75 drone attacks).

Fourth, the suicide attacks have witnessed a substantial decrease. But the question is whether the decline results from a strategic decision? The trend states that, they are mostly seasonal, once they reach the peak they decline. Fifth, North and South Waziristan have become the new base for the Haqqani network. This may explain the concentration of the US drone attacks. Sixth, different factions of the Taliban like the Haqqani network, TTP, Punjabi Taliban and the Quetta Shura have come together to target US led forces instead of Pakistan. Seventh, there is a reduction of sectarian violence in Khurram and Khyber agency but sectarian violence has increased in Karachi and Quetta.

Future trends:

- TTP continues to look east of Khyber Pakhtunkwa and FATA.
- There is a reversal in the concept of strategic depth. Pakistan would become Taliban's strategic depth instead of Afghanistan.
- The Punjabi Taliban would get formalized and there would be an end of tribal jirga.

There are three scenarios for Pakistan in the future

- Ignoring TTP's ingress, indifferent to the attacks and rather allow sectarian violence because that might reduce attack on the military.
- Finding good Taliban, working with them and targeting the bad.
- Need for successful negotiation with Taliban and TTP so that they get back to constructive work like farming in Punjab.

Ms. Mariam Safi, *Deputy Director, Center for Conflict and Peace Studies, Kabul*

(Paper Presented by Aryaman Bhatnagar, *Research Officer, IPCS*)

2011 was marked as a highly critical year keeping in mind the 2014 deadline for withdrawal of foreign troops. Two important developments currently underway in Afghanistan are the security transition process and the reconciliation and reintegration process being carried out by the Afghan government and international community. Both these developments are an outcome of the realization that there is no military solution to the problem in Afghanistan and the conflict can be resolved only through a political and diplomatic surge. Thus, there is a need to strengthen the Afghan forces that would take over the work of foreign security forces and ensure a viable democratic government in Afghanistan.



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- D. Suba Chandran

The first phase of the security transfer started in March 2011 and saw the transfer of seven areas to the ANSF. In the second phase, 50 per cent of the population came under the control of the ANSF. A major criticism of the transition process is that it is taking place at a time when the Taliban is in a position of strength vis-à-vis the International Community. The continued attacks on civilians and high profile targets like Burhanuddin Rabbani and Ahmed Wali Karzai further proves the point. The problems within the ANSF– high rates of attrition and illiteracy, shortage of equipment and ethnic imbalances in the composition– have further undermined the transition process.

The reconciliation process essentially involves talking to high levels of the Taliban. The decision for undertaking such a step goes back to the 2010 London Conference and the idea of a political dialogue was endorsed by the International Community as well. There were certain preconditions to the talks like acceptance of the Afghan constitution by the insurgents, renouncing violence and breaking ties with al Qaeda.

However, the high profile assassinations and violence perpetrated by the Taliban raises doubts about their intentions regarding a political settlement. Moreover, the ineffectiveness of the Afghan High Peace Council, especially its inability to find a successor to Rabbani and the opposition within the Afghan society regarding the talks has created further obstacles. Another obstacle is the Afghan government who feels its role has been undermined in the whole process. But one great achievement in this respect has been the Taliban's decision to open a political office in Qatar.

The task of reintegrating the foot soldiers and mid level commanders in the civil society has fallen to the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme. It has been designated to alleviate legitimate grievances and address cause of violence and pave the way for reintegration. About 1300 insurgents have been integrated as of December 2011. Provincial Peace Committees are established to carry out social outreach programs. Vocational training centers have also been established for the training of the ex-combatants.

Despite the achievements, a number of obstacles continue to persist especially regarding effective and timely training, participation of the civil society and provision of employment to the ex-combatants. It is important to overcome these obstacles soon in order to maximize the achievements made so far.

Discussant: Mr. Rana Banerji (Retd.), Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat

The situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan is extremely complex. The Pakistan Army is dealing with the TTP in a limited manner. The operations they are conducting in Khyber, Bajur and Mohmand agencies, are of the pattern of build and hold. By sheer deterrence and presence they are trying to clear the area. Another problem is that the Taliban is moving from one area to the other as the operations are taking place. Pakistan and The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) are also on a different page regarding the number of posts along the Af-Pak border. The Pakistani military wants more posts

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- Mariam Safi





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- Rana Banerji

along the border so that the Taliban cannot run away across the border, which the ISAF are not willing to do.

The Pakistani Army is clear on the fact that the Haqqani network should not be attacked. The Haqqanis are more important than the Quetta Shura as Pakistan believes that they can play an important role in the power sharing after the departure of the foreign troops in 2014. Moreover, the preference for the Haqqani network is also motivated by the fact that it is more malleable than the Quetta Shura and hence, more likely to serve Pakistan's interests.

The TTP looking east is not very successful in this regard and the Pakistani Army also will not allow them to do so. There is also formation of Shura-e-Murakbah which sought to focus its attacks on the US forces in Afghanistan rather than the Pakistani forces. The

Pakistan Army says TTP will be off their back and will not look into the east as they will be busy fighting the Quetta Shura inside Afghanistan. Moreover, the limited peace accords between the militants and the state may reduce the pressure on the latter. The tendency of attacking major installation has decreased and this may explain the decrease in the suicide attacks. Violence on sectarian front has not stopped or remedied in a significant manner as most of the well organized attacks on the Hazaras of Baluchistan and Shias of Gilgit are being carried out by the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi activists. The Punjabi Taliban may be broken and their leaders though not active in Punjab maybe hiding in FATA.

Regarding Afghanistan the reconciliation process is not getting anywhere so far. The Pakistanis are supporting the Haqqani network. Pakistan will make sure that any substantial negotiation of the United States and Taliban can go ahead if only Pakistan is taken on board. The Pakistani army feels that after the withdrawal of ISAF the balance will be in favor of the Taliban, which can change the nature of the negotiations. Finally, the weaknesses of the Afghan forces can worsen the situation further and there should be negotiations to bring the Pashtun players on board.

Session III: Myanmar and Northeast

Chair: Mr. P.C. Haldar, Former Director, Intelligence Bureau

Northeast needs to be considered a launch pad for trade and engagement with bordering countries. Myanmar's importance then is intensified because engaging with Myanmar can result in economic regeneration of the northeast.



When we discuss Myanmar or the northeast, it is crucial that we factor in China. We need to consider the question that was it by design that the Chinese leadership kindled on the disturbances in the northern Myanmar state of Shan by supporting the ethnic Han community there, the Wa people so that the state remains in a ferment and Myanmar's dependency on China continues. The Chinese political leadership has a two-fold support base in Myanmar: one is through government to government and the second is through government to people. The United Wa State Army (UWSA) provides a passageway to China to gain access and maintain control in Shan state in northern Myanmar.

The fact that Myanmar is now reaching out to the international community could be because of its fear of China. If so, India must take this as an opportunity. In expanding Myanmar's economy, the northeast has a major role to play in which, there is mutual benefit for both the countries. But, while engaging with Myanmar, India must be wary of the problem of drug trafficking. India also needs to factor in a possible Chinese backlash. India also needs to perform a trade audit before taking big steps like reopening the Stillwell Road. There needs to be serious capacity building to absorb the money which comes in through such trade. Most importantly, connectivity needs to be improved to facilitate any economic activity within the northeast and across the border.

Internally, in the northeast, the civil society needs to become proactive and not depend on the government completely. The Centre has so far remained very cautious with the ceasefire agreements that have been reached with the insurgents in the northeast as these agreements brought in a fresh set of problems because of poor implementation. Also, on the issue of alienation that the people of the northeast feel, the Centre needs to harmonize and not homogenize and strike a balance.

Peace is two-fold, stage one is absence of conflict and stage two is building institutions. Stage two cannot be attained without including the local population. Many places in the northeast have attained stage one but it can relapse if the civil society is not serious about constructive engagement. India can enter tripartite agreements to create special economic zones to sidestep the conflict which will disappear in due course if the local population is gainfully employed.

Another important point that needs consideration is devolution of power and taking it to the grassroots level. This can be achieved through a corruption-free, proper implementation of Panchayati Raj and Schedule VI of the Constitution. Civil society must hence, take on the role of a mechanical deterrent to corruption. Conflict resolution is not a linear process and will have its ups and downs. Unless the people are made stakeholders, the problems of integration will persist.

Dr. Bibhu Prasad Routray, *Visiting Research Fellow, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, NTU, Singapore*

The civilian government in Myanmar has come with a promise of affirmative action and positive change and has been met with optimism internationally because of its rapid pace. What remains to be seen is if this change is irreversible.

There are 16 major ethnic insurgent groups representing most of the communities. Some splinter groups are from the same community but, with different set of demands and fighting to be recognized as the dominant group representing their community.

To fight these insurgents, the Tatmadaw was raised which comprises over 4,00,000 soldiers, although, they have very little actual experience before being pushed into combat. However, what the military lacks in capability, it makes up for by raising new battalions. Myanmar's army also deployed child soldiers for self protection. One can gauge the increase in the strength of Myanmar army by the fact that in 18 years, it has increased from 40 to 200 battalions.

Recent trends in Myanmar include the army's softer stance on the ethnic armed groups which is evident by the ceasefire and peace agreements the civilian government is signing with them. However, despite the government's assurances that offensives will cease, Kachin Independence Army, the second largest ethnic army in the country, is continuing to fight. This indicates a difference within the government as the Myanmar army factions do not



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want to listen to the civilian government.

Another trend that has emerged is the extensive poppy cultivation in Myanmar. It has taken over the second place in terms of poppy cultivation and the produce has doubled since 2006 with estimates stating that it will grow at 10 per cent annually throughout 2012. Production and trafficking of the Thai methamphetamine drug, Yaba has also grown from USD 800 million to USD 1 billion annually. The largest ethnic army, the United Wa State Army (UWSA) is major producer of narcotics and has been identified by the UN as well. Even the military in forward areas are big stakeholders in this process.

In terms of conflict management, Myanmar always falls back on ceasefire agreements; however, what is different this time is that the civilian government has not imposed the clause for the ethnic armies to integrate with the Border Guard Forces (BGF). This time, the Myanmar government has apparently recognized the futility of that arrangement and has proposed a Four-Stage Plan for Peace instead. The chief government negotiator, however, claims that all the insurgent outfits will be on board with the peace agreement by 2012. The problem lies in the fact that the ceasefire agreements are not durable because some factions of the army and BGF have been attacking the ethnic groups who have already signed peace agreements.

The road ahead will be shaped by the developments now. Ceasefire does not represent reforms and so far, the government has not taken any measures towards structural reforms to ensure that the government cannot take back what it is giving as a compromise now. The civilian government also needs to consider that there can be divisions within the rebels as well and if that would be a hurdle in the peace process.

Also, where there has been no trust for decades, how can there be any within months? The key issue is that the government is hurrying this process while the ethnic groups need time. To ensure that after the peace agreements, the ethnic groups do not return to their notorious activities, the need is to take the process beyond ceasefire agreements. For a lasting peace process, a federal structure has to evolve.

Mr. Mirza Zulfiqur Rahman, Doctoral Candidate, JNU

For Assam, a major event took place on 1 January 2011 in the form of the release of Arvind Rajakhowa. There was huge support for Rajakhowa and it generated some optimism that this event would signal an end to the violent quagmire in Assam. However, the conflict in Assam has gone up and down and it's protractedness of the political process has remained. No permanent solution has been arrived at.

Many designated camps for the displaced people in the northeast have emerged as hotbeds of drug trafficking, arms dealing and criminal activities. The inability of all stakeholders to move forward under the ceasefire agreements has resulted in this situation. On one side is



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*- Bibhu Prasad
Routray*



the poor implementation of the agreement and on the other side is the refusal to follow it sincerely. In the meantime, opportunists like the NSCN (I-M) are using the ceasefire agreement to eliminate rival groups.

What needs to be understood is that the northeast is not a homogenous entity, but the entire northeast sub-region is connected and linked to the conflict. It is beyond terrorist activities and issues like money laundering and illicit drug and human trafficking are plaguing the sub-region. New layers to the conflict have emerged over the last few years which, if left unaddressed, will snowball into a much bigger problem in future. The biggest issue is that, in the absence of a visible enemy, we do not know whom to talk to in order to find a solution.

There is also the problem of quantifying collective trauma of the people who have suffered due to the insurgencies. Many families still suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. There needs to be an outreach to do damage control by the army and the security forces for reconciliation. It is critical for building trust and loyalty for the security forces in the northeast. The people need a support system which is lacking due to minimal government presence in terms of healthcare and development initiatives. They need to be included in the grand scheme of things now.

If the governance deficit remains as it is now, peaceful states like Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram can also go back to conflict because of the lack of the reconciliation process in the neighbouring states. The peace in the northeast is fragile right now. For lasting peace, formal political process and simultaneous development needs to take place. If this gap deepens, the dangers from issues like Maoism and anti-dam movements could escalate into major problems for the northeast.

Discussant: Col. (Retd.) Gautam Das, Visiting Fellow, CLAWS

Myanmar had been outside India's consciousness since 1962's military takeover by Gen Ne Win and India refused to engage with it. However, now India has come to realize that Myanmar cannot be ignored and developments within Myanmar have to be taken in conjunction with what happens in the northeast.

Most of the Indians are not aware of the reasons of the ethnic insurgencies in the northeast and that they extend well into Myanmar. There is also the religious angle which needs to be considered since some of the insurgencies breed on the Christianity vs. Buddhism aspect, similar to the insurgency in Nagaland and Manipur. In Myanmar also, Christianity is considered a western concept. Now there is more polarization on other accounts as well, but these factors remain.

The struggle in Myanmar is primarily identity based and it has a cascading effect on Myanmar's neighbours as well due to the cultural, religious and identity proximity of the



“Many designated camps for the displaced people in the northeast have emerged as hotbeds of drug trafficking, arms dealing and criminal activities. The inability of all stakeholders to move forward under the ceasefire agreements has resulted in this situation.”

- Mirza Zulfiqur Rahman



“India has come to realize that Myanmar cannot be ignored and developments within Myanmar have to be taken in conjunction with what happens in the northeast.”

- Col. Gautam Das

population across the borders with China, India and Thailand. Therefore, the struggle cannot be contained without a federalist structure implemented in Myanmar. Having had some experience with similar conflicts in the northeast, India must take initiative in mildly suggesting this to the civilian government in Myanmar so that India's insurgencies are contained while the Look East Policy gains.

On the issue of the northeast, today the army is taking the reconciliation issue very seriously because they have seen the consequences of not doing so. The Malayan method of grouping villages with local autonomy needs to be done urgently to control the situation at the earliest.

Session IV: The Naxal Conflict

Chair: Prof. P.R. Chari, *Research Professor, IPCS*

The Naxal conflict is the most important security threat faced by the country today. It is not a new phenomenon or problem. In 1942 the Telangana movement started due to the land issue, unequal sharing of natural resources and injustice, in 1967 due to similar concerns another movement- Naxalbari- started but was later crushed in 1970-71. The movement seen in the central Indian states in form of Naxalism was also based on similar issues. Today, the numbers of districts that have fallen under Naxal influence have increased. This has heavily affected the development activities, industrialization and investments in that region.

The only way to resolve the issue is through a two-pronged approach. Along with the operation of hard force to defeat the Naxals, the government should also open itself for negotiations.

Dr. Rajat Kujur, *Lecturer, Sambalpur University*

Naxalism is most of the time misunderstood and underestimated; it is time-tested and deceptive. When it appears that it has discontinued and gone, or thought to be subdued it comes back with resurgence. The statistics of 2011 show that there has been less number of deaths in Maoist related violence as compared to 2010. However, in reality there are still some elements of continuity. Although the consolidation of Para-military forces in different Maoist affected areas has actually reduced the violence, but the after effects continue with Maoists now penetrating into new areas and raising new issues. For instance, its presence is now reported in new areas, such as the Nawapara and Polangi districts of Orissa and Raigarh of Chhattisgarh.

The Maoists have adopted a new strategy called the 'Look Northeast Policy' specifically focusing on Northeast and exploring the 'Policy of Great Revival' in southern states such as in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The Maoists are also concentrating on building an informal commercial hub. They have formed a golden corridor committee that operates from Pune to Ahmedabad. Another significant thing that came to attention in 2011 is the Maoist connection with Dawood Ibrahim with Dawood's interest in investing in illegal mining business in eastern India. The Naxals are now targeting the civil society and the Panchayati Raj Institutions. For instance, in Orissa 2500 Panchayati Raj members were elected unopposed as they received Maoist support.

In 2011, efforts were made to fill a number of posts vacant in the CPI (Maoist) due to the arrest or killing of their occupants. The recruitment campaign targeted the youth, students and women. The Naxals are also focusing on recruitment and procurement of sophisticated arms and weapons. There are reports that the Maoists have successfully manufactured rocket launchers in Jharkhand.

The Government of India adopted a two-pronged approach to the Naxals in 2011; 'Security' and 'Development'. At the security front, the GOI wants to implement initiatives such as establishment of more police stations and strengthening the intelligence system. Another important element that was emphasized in 2011 was having a pro-active and coordinated operation at the ground level which was lacking in the 2010 operations. Also focus was on modernization and funds utilization, the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) was increased and deployment of Para military forces in newer areas with recruitment and special



training was introduced. A common agreement was staged among the different Naxal affected states to have a new uniform 'Surrender and Rehabilitation Policy,' and community policing coordinated with affected states as far as post-mobilization was concerned.

On the development front, the number of districts that were covered under the integrated development plan was increased.

2012 will be a year of challenges. Along with the above-mentioned measures the government also needs a tactic to prevent the Maoist strategy of area-wise creaser. State governments must work on the training aspect of the existing forces and recruitment is a must as central paramilitary forces cannot remain forever in the affected areas as it can have adverse affects. The Development of new vistas and proper implementation of the projects holds the key to participatory development; it should be included in the government policy initiatives as well. Civil society plays a major role and a force must be made at proper level to involve them in conflict management.

Dr. P.V. Ramana, *Research Fellow, IDSA*

Time and again, it has been emphasized that negotiations should be conducted with the Maoists but, so far there have been only infrequent and incoherent noises on negotiations and peace. There were attempts made by the government towards negotiations but the talks have failed due to various factors. For instance, the Union Home Minister offered for talks with the Maoists in 2010. Subsequently, the interlocutor met both the sides to process the talk in 2011 in West Bengal. But the talks failed to pick-up. This was because in both these cases a central committee member was killed in an encounter. These encounters further vitiated the atmosphere of negotiations. Subsequently, talks never succeeded and both sides only accused each other for being insincere.

However, in reality the Maoists were never serious about the negotiations and they never considered it as a means to end the conflict. In 14 October 2004 when the Maoist came for talks with the Andhra Pradesh government, one of their prominent leaders stated in a press conference that "talks are war by other means and talks are tactics and we shall not give-up the right to bear arms."

Since 2000 efforts have been made to hold talks with the Maoist and twice in Andhra Pradesh in 2002 and 2004 this was exercised. The 2002 process called as 'talks about talks' where the Naxals spoke to the representatives of the Andhra government failed to bring any effective result. In 2004 there was immense pressure from Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) on People's War Group (PWG) to withdraw from any kind of negotiation with the government.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh had also set three conditions under which the talks



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- Rajat Kujur



“The government must hold talks with the Maoists but it should not be under any misperception that as a result of the talks the Maoists will give-up their arms and join the mainstream society. That is not a possibility at least in the near future.”

*- P.V.
Ramana*



should be held:

- Talks should be held within the framework of the constitution of India,
- The PWG should lay down their arms
- There should be a creation of a congenial atmosphere

Irrespective of when the Union and state government have stated that talks will be held, it remains doubtful that any talks will be held in the near future. Except for Andhra Pradesh, in all the other Naxal affected states the civil society is least bothered about both the sides sitting for negotiations. Unfortunately, none of the negotiating rounds so far held were effective enough to reduce Naxal violence. Finding peace and negotiations only remains as a major election plank and becomes a part of the election manifesto in the state.

The major question, against the background of failed attempts in the past, should the government hold any negotiations. Anytime a negotiation is held it is a win-win situation for the Maoists; if the government refuses to hold talks, it will be accused of being undemocratic and insincere. The government must hold talks with the Maoists but it should not be under any misperception that as a result of the talks the Maoists will give-up their arms and join the mainstream society. That is not a possibility at least not in the near future.

It is important to note that as much as the Maoists will make use of the peace process the government too should fully utilize this process. Once the Maoists are over-ground for the talks, the government can mark the supporters, their roots of entry and exit and bring them down. The Government must also focus on infiltrating the Maoist ranks, scout the forest and demolish them from within.

Discussant: Ms. Medha Chaturvedi, Research Officer, IPCS

According to the 2011 headcount the Maoist related violence has reduced but concerns have been raised that the Maoist is now utilizing this time to regroup and re-arm themselves. In Maharashtra, UP and Karnataka the worst affected number of districts have increased. In Orissa five more districts namely Bolangir, Bargarh, Kalahandi, Nuapada and Nabrangpur have been added as highly affected Naxal areas. As the Naxal related violence in Andhra Pradesh has reduced, the Naxals are now looking for its revival in this state. The Khammam, Karimnagar, Adilabad and Vizianagaram district in Andhra Pradesh are supposed to be still affected in moderate degree. In this context the Internally Displaced People (IDP) from these four districts are moving into the neighbouring states especially to Chhattisgarh and Orissa. There are chances that along with the IDPs the Maoist might also fall through these tracks into Andhra Pradesh.

Another major trend of 2011 is the change in Maoist leadership and the change in their strategy and approach. After the death of Kishenji in 2011 the scenario has changed, for instance in Vairagadh, Gadchiroli, Malewada, Gondia and Chandarpur districts the gram panchayat offices were burnt down. Is there a direct link that the death of Kishenji the focus and targets of the Maoist have changed? Is the new leadership changing their focus by



attacking the Gram Panchayats?

Along with new measures and approaches, it is also important to focus on the reason behind the withdrawal of government policies. For Instance, Supreme Court had put a hold on the operations of Salwa Judum in Chhattisgarh. This policy was considered as a great force applied by the government in Chhattisgarh and having discontinued that what will be the implications on the general security environment.

Along with concentrating on the operations and the counter insurgency measures by the government the development aspects are equally important. The Maoist is essentially a development deficit related problem which has escalated to the level it is today. Andhra Pradesh is a successful model in this regard but cannot be applied today. In Andhra Pradesh the Naxal retreated because of the use of hard core force followed by development. The Development aspect should be in conjugation with the use of force. In terms of the process of negotiation with the Maoist, West Bengal is the only state which has from time and again accepted the idea of negotiation and has succeeded in bringing the Naxals to the table.

Negotiation is not only a win-win situation for the Maoist; although it gives them the time to spread and forward their propogandas but if there is some kind of compromise and understanding is reached between the two, it will also be a win-win situation for the government. It necessarily has to be in equal level but government should be in a position of authority. It may not be by use of force but the government should compel the Naxals for talks.

[Session V: Peace Audit: Jammu and Kashmir](#)

Chair: Mr. Ved Marwah, Former Governor, Jharkhand and Manipur

It is important to first define what the word 'peace' means. Whether it is the absence of violence or should the definition be extended to mean something much more. Today voices from the official quarters are coming out that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir is improving greatly. Yes, there has been a decline in the number of terrorist incidents. However, this should not be taken as a sole definition of peace in the region. Unless the basic causes that give rise to conflict are not addressed, peace cannot prevail.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the conflict has both Internal and External dimensions. Many experts believe that if it wasn't for the external dimension, there would not have been a violent secessionist movement. It is sponsored and supported by external sources. However, these external sources would not have been able to take advantage and create trouble in the State, unless they had an opening provided by internal factors. These are political, economic, social, ethnic, religious and other unresolved factors. Thus, all these factors need to be considered to see where we have gone right or wrong and what needs to be done. India's ability to control these external dimensions is very limited. Therefore, concentration must be paid to the Internal factors, which the Indian state can control.



“Negotiation is not only a win-win situation for the Maoist; although it gives them the time to spread and forward their propogandas but if there is some kind of compromise and understanding is reached between the two, it will also be a win-win situation for the government.”

- Medha Chaturvedi



Dr. Ashok Bhan, *Former Director-General of Police, Jammu and Kashmir*

Violence has definitely receded in Jammu and Kashmir but the resultant peace is still very fragile. Peace needs to be tested for its durability and irreversibility. Military solution can only take us up to a certain point. Durability can only come through a political process which addresses the causes and the side effects of the conflict. Irreversibility will only come when the conflict is resolved to the satisfaction of at least the major stakeholders.

While violence definitely vitiates peace, its end may not guarantee the return of 'positive peace.' Not only do we have to fight residual terrorism, but also attend to the causative factors and attend to the bruised psyche of the victims of conflict. It is thus important to win the hearts and minds of the people.

One needs to answer a few burning questions to address the issue of a peace audit in Jammu and Kashmir. Have the causative factors of conflict been addressed? There is a pro-Pak and pro-Azaadi sentiment in the state and these anti-state voices have been marginalized in Jammu and Kashmir. Moreover, there continues to be a lack of operational space for the Muslim United Front or the Jamaat-e-Islami, which was one of the causative factors for the conflict. This shows that the causative factors are not being addressed.

Is the reduction in violence irreversible in the State? The continuation of targeted killings and a much higher rate of ceasefire violation would suggest that irreversibility has still not been achieved.

Have the sources of terrorism dried up completely? The Pakistani government continues to keep Kashmir as a central point of relations with India. The material and moral support continues openly. There is no attempt by Pakistan to stop hardline jihadi activities against India.

Has the conflict been resolved for important stakeholders? Has the decrease in violence brought a corresponding change in the government's attitude and response so that peace dividends reach the common citizen of Jammu and Kashmir? Once again, a positive change has not been noticed.

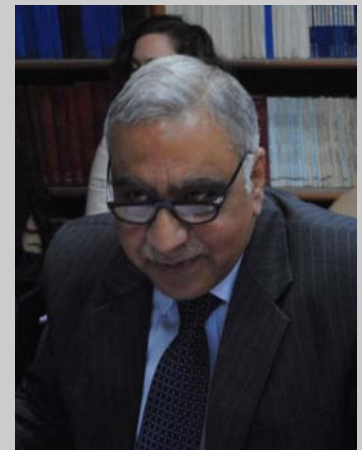
The side effects of the conflict also need to be analyzed. The lack of development, economic activity and job opportunities has fuelled a great degree of resentment among the youth, who have grown up in a charged and violent environment. There has to be redressal for the excesses of the armed forces. There is also distancing on religious and regional lines in the State and these fault lines need to be addressed.

The Government has made efforts in this regard. The Pachayati Raj elections were held in



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- Ved Marwah



“The lack of development, economic activity and job opportunities has fuelled a great degree of resentment among the youth, who have grown up in a charged and violent environment.”

- Ashok Bhan

Jammu and Kashmir after a long time which witnessed a sizable voter turnout. The Public Service Guarantee Act has been put in place. Here, in a particular time frame, services have to be delivered to the citizens or else the public servants will be punished. There is a Sher-e-Kashmir Employment Act where the focus is laid on the employment of the youth and the Rangarajan Committee has been set up with the impetus provided by the Prime Minister for skill development of the youth.

The peace process has not moved forward because of the ‘Suspicion Syndrome.’ This trust deficit is going on at various levels; India/Pakistan, New Delhi/Kashmir, Government/Security forces, Ruling coalition/Mainstream opposition, Government Separatists, regions against each other and so on. This suspicion syndrome is not allowing us to move forward.

A proposition is laid out that focus must be on political initiatives as catalysts for peace. A democratic framework needs to become fully functional at the grassroots level. Any political solution must be based within the framework of the constitution and without geopoliticizing the unity of Jammu and Kashmir. While addressing the problems, we need to accommodate regional aspirations. The communications link with the separatists have to be strengthened because they are an important voice.

In conclusion, impetus must be provided to the political initiatives since economic growth on its own is a very slow healer.

Discussant: D. Suba Chandran, Director, IPCS

Peace must start by winning the hearts and minds of the people. The question thus arises, how to address the mind and encourage people to work towards peace. Tourism as a gauge of peace is not desirable. The point of the fact is even though pro-Pakistan sentiments have gone down dramatically, anti-India has not come down as one would expect. The biggest issue faced now is that even though violence has come down, governance has not moved in. The lack of ‘employability’ in the state is a major issue. There has been a steady decline in the educational institutions and capacity building of the youth and this has led many of those in region to be unemployable elsewhere in the country. At present, there is a big youth bulge in Jammu and Kashmir. Those belonging to this youth bulge have only seen violence and resort to stone-throwing and other forms of violence. There is a need to address the youth’s anger. Stone pelting mirrors a social crisis and better parenting needs to be encouraged. Though number of hartals have gone down, the question arises why people support it in the first place. Is it because of an affiliation to the particular organization or leader who has called it or is it a form of people expressing their anger.

Any comparative study between two Panchayati Raj institutions across the Ravi River will reveal huge differences and show that they are very feeble in Jammu and Kashmir as



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- D. Suba Chandran



compared with the neighboring Indian states. In addition to these institutions, the people who run these institutions are also very weak and they too need to be empowered. Along with the Panchayati Raj institutions, the idea of Hill councils is also very appealing. There has been a lot of success in the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Council in Leh and to some extent even the one in Kargil in addressing local concerns . It is difficult to understand why this success cannot be emulated in similar institutions in Rajouri, Poonch and Doda as well.

The nature of the youth bulge needs to be understood. In the 80s and 90s, the youth took up their guns for a political cause. However, now with the way the violence is being allowed to fester, the youth may not just express their anger for political means but a more radical way, in a religious sense. Any other interference to the Sufi islamism in Kashmir another ideology from Saudi Arabia or elsewhere could be a threat not only to Jammu and Kashmir but to the rest of the country as well.

Session VI: Peace Audit: Nepal and Sri Lanka

Chair: Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Dipankar Banerjee, Mentor, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi

In both, Sri Lanka and Nepal, although the actual war fighting is over, the situation is far from being stable. Does the present situation, then, threaten future conflict? Therefore, analyzing the complications and implications of the current situation becomes a very vital part of this exercise.

On Sri Lanka, people are already talking as to how long this interim will last between one war and another? The potential for conflict remains deeply entrenched. Hence, even in the event of carrying out a peace audit, one sees that the ground realities have not been addressed. With Sri Lanka as we see, the Rajapaksa dynasty has just begun. With reference to Nepal, the deal over the PLA is so far a major development of an intractable problem. However, the continuation of the conflict in Nepal is due to other less important issues coming to the fore causing hindrance to other acceptable solutions to these problems.

The concept of audit, a peace audit is certainly a very good idea. But it is very important to lay down the parameters and a common structure of these chapters to enable the reader to understand the direction of the book. The structure enunciated by Dr. Manoharan, especially of perceptions is crucial and could be a starting point for other peace audits as well. In a recent conference, when senior military officials were asked about the meaning of peace, they mostly agreed upon the ‘absence of war’ as peace. It is here that the perceptions to view same concepts differently gains prominence.

Dr. Nishchal Nath Pandey, Director, Centre for South Asian Studies (CSAS), Kathmandu



The absence of an armed conflict in Nepal is certainly a positive development but further inquiry into Nepal should ultimately depend upon developments following the May 28 deadline for the framing of the constitution.

This is a very critical juncture for both Nepal's democracy and history as it has witnessed six constitutions in six decades and nineteen governments in nineteen years. The foremost problem in Nepal is that of political instability.

Three crucial issues hinder the timely drafting of the constitution, namely, federalism, integration of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the political system. Nepal has declared itself a federal democratic republic but the basis on which the federal units are to be created is unclear. Two models were discussed but there was no focus on the financial viability of each of these federal units. It is interesting to note that all 75 provinces of Nepal generate revenue less than 10% of their total expenditure. In this event then, when all things are supplied from the Centre, the feasibility of ethnicity based federalism will be put to question. The problem of ethnicity based federalism in Nepal is that Nepal is a multi-ethnic society with nearly 110 declared ethnic groups and, consequently, everyone can be called a minority in Nepal.

Owing to the past failures of the Westminster model, the Maoists are suggesting for a Presidential system as seen in the US. This has a hidden design in it as this system draws heavily from the personality factor. If such a system is devised, nobody would manage to match up against Prachanda which is precisely his aim.

In an effort to compromise, another system put forward by the Nepali Congress and the CPN (UML) is the French Model wherein both the President and the Prime Minister have equal leverage. There is also doubt over the new constitution being democratic as the Leftists constitute a majority in Nepali parliament. 2011 saw the passage of a remarkable deal over the integration of PLA soldiers. The three parties in Nepal have agreed for the creation of a special directorate under the Nepal army allocating 35 per cent of PLA and 65 per cent of security forces for infrastructural activities. It was also agreed to relax the age and educational qualifications of the PLA to join the Directorate.

The current chief of army staff had forwarded a proposal to integrate 6500 PLA, out of which 64 would be given the position of majors, 120 as captains, 96 as lieutenants, 120 as second lieutenants and the rest as non-gazette officers. The latest contention in this regard is over the Maoist demand for the creation of a Brigadier General Level position within the army, which the army and other parties are against.

Although, Nepal has not seen armed conflicts per se but the Tarai region is far from being normal. Five Inspector Generals' of the Nepal police have been put behind bars on corruption charges which have Generals' of the Nepal police have been put behind bars on corruption charges which have seriously tainted the image of the police. It is also estimated that as the situation is improving in Bihar, the criminal actors could have sneaked into the



"In both, Sri Lanka and Nepal, although the actual war fighting is over, the situation is far from being stable. Does the present situation, then, threaten future conflict?"

*-Maj.Gen.
Dipankar Banerjee*



Tarai belt.

Despite these estimates, the positive factor is that, Indo-Nepal relations have remained unaffected in all this. The appointment of Jayanta Prasad as the Indian ambassador to Nepal has contributed positivity to the relations. 2012 will determine a lot of things related to constitution drafting, with the future of the Nepal Army, with relation to internal security and the integration of the PLA.

Dr. N. Manoharan, Senior Fellow, Vivekananda International Foundation, New Delhi

It has been three years since the end of the Eelam war which witnessed casualty, both in terms of injuries and losses to property, of an unexpected magnitude. But does this absence of armed conflict amount to real, sustainable or just peace? This is the question that needs to be asked at the moment. This year a peace audit of Sri Lanka has been undertaken.

Real peace does not mean the mere absence of armed conflict but it should be a situation of something good happening. For the performance of the peace audit, three things have been taken into consideration, one, the perceptions of peace by the actors in Sri Lanka, second, the priorities in bringing about this peace and third, the practice of it or how it is to be implemented.

The perception that feeds into the notion of peace is important. In the Sri Lankan case, the government is of the opinion that armed conflict is over and hence peace is back. On the other hand, the Tamil community views this peace as negative peace and as the absence of a real or full peace. This perceptual difference has been a major stumbling block in bringing about comprehensive and real peace in Sri Lanka.

The priorities of the Sri Lankan government are clear with the four D's put forward by President Mahinda Rajapaksa. They stand for demilitarization, development, democratization and devolution. On the other hand, the Tamil community feels that this is not the correct order in which the four Ds should be prioritized. They have accepted demilitarization as being the topmost priority but this would mean demilitarization of the state forces as well and not just the Tamil rebels which is more so the case. Apart from demilitarization, they would stand for demobilization of the forces as well. The second priority should be devolution of power and not development.

After touching upon the perceptions and the priorities, the crucial step is to understand the practice of it. Peace is doing something in that direction and not simply thinking about it. With respect to demilitarization, the government made sure that the LTTE should not come back again. Even the rehabilitation of LTTE cadres was aimed at containing revival of the LTTE.



“Three crucial issues hinder the timely drafting of the constitution, namely, federalism, integration of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) and the political system.”

- Nishchal N. Pandey



“In the Sri Lankan case, the government is of the opinion that armed conflict is over and hence peace is back. On the other hand, the Tamil community views this peace as negative peace and as the absence of a real or full peace.”

- N. Manoharan

As a result, human rights violations continue to be ignored. In terms of development, the gap between the equals and in-equals is widening. The funds are being diverted to the South and preferential treatment is not being undertaken. Although democratization has been highlighted by Rajapaksa as giving voice to the people, but the elections happened so far, present a different story altogether.

Hence, democracy in the true sense does not prevail. The three options of sustainable solution, acceptable to all communities and a post conflict situation, emphasize that true devolution is nowhere near realization.

The findings are simple. Sri Lanka is far more peaceful today than in the last three years. Negative peace is what prevails in Sri Lanka today. To establish just and real peace, one needs to first acknowledge the existing reality. The four Ds need to be much more comprehensive. Colombo needs to reconcile with the minorities and in the process alleviate the trust deficit by de-securitizing the state. The opposition needs to be treated equally. The international community should not keep hanging to the Human Rights considerations. At the end, a credible sustainable solution is what is required.

Discussant: Dr. J. Jeganaathan, Research Officer, IPCS

Both Nepal and Sri Lanka are witnessing political turmoil. Nepal is undergoing a post-crisis political instability. Sri Lanka, on the other hand, is in a post-war situation, undertaking a peace process aimed at reconciliation and rehabilitation and ultimately towards a harmonious social order. Does the present situation threaten future conflict? In the Sri Lankan peace audit, the priorities as enunciated by President Rajapaksa appear more as promises. Building the broad argument on these promises is flawed as these promises ignore the existing ground realities. Based on the four D's, if demilitarization is a priority for the government, what has been the progress on it so far needs to be accounted for. It has been stated in recent reports of the International Crisis Group (ICG) that the state has indulged in over militarization. One sees that the military men have been given policing powers. Also, the main strand of the audit is based on the Kantian notion of perpetual peace. Isn't thinking of perpetual peace too early in a country like Sri Lanka?

Probably one should think of other pragmatic and practical notions of peace. A positive development in this regard is the latest initiative by the President to make policies tri-lingual in character. This certainly will have long term implications. The role of the international agencies in the implementation of the peace in Sri Lanka, also need to be taken into consideration.

In the case of Nepal, the political process is being greatly delayed. Efforts need to be made towards fastening of the process as further delays can have negative consequences attached



with it. Why should one evaluate Nepal's constitution drafting process as either going the Indian or the Pakistani way? Why cannot it move forward by taking the best from each model in consideration? The consequences or the implications of the prolonged delay may also be of interest to the readers. There is also need to address questions such as 'Will the delay end in a political crisis again'? In the Nepal peace audit, three issues that hinder the new constitution were discussed. With respect to federalism and as India was also mentioned, it should be noted that India itself has not completely succeeded in maintaining its federal structure. But that should not stop Nepal from beginning with a new structure? With regard to the integration of the PLA, the idea of different regiments within the army may also help in the integration process.

“In the Sri Lankan peace audit, the priorities as enunciated by President Rajapaksa appear more as promises. Building the broad argument on these promises is flawed as these promises ignore the existing ground realities.”

- J Jeganathan

