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Bloodbath at Dhaka

Kuldip Nayar

The killing of dozens of people by terrorists at Dhaka is not an aberration, but the product of a committed mind that has been brainwashed by fanaticism. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is quite right when she says that this is not Islam, yet the Muslims all over must introspect why their co-religionists are striking all over and at regular intervals. Dhaka's Information Minister Hasanul Haq has blamed Pakistan for the attack. This may well be true, but there has to be evidence. Otherwise, the criticism will be considered a part of inimical attitude by Dhaka towards Islamabad.

First in Paris, then Brussels and now Dhaka, the message is always the same. Non-believers have no space if they do not accept Islam as the one religion nearest to God. True, this mocks at ideologies like secularism and democracy. But if the discipline of Islam is to be accepted, there is no place for dissent. The madrassas all over the world teach the tenets of Islam and make you remember the Koran by heart. But

there is little place for science or technology.

India is probably the only country which has compulsorily introduced science in madrassas. But the mullahs and maulvis are not happy with this and wherever they can—in remote parts of the country—they do away with teaching in science. Of course, there are exceptions like former President Abdul Kalam and Pakistan's A.Q. Khan. They represent the brilliant mind behind the finished product they brought before the wider world. But the weapon they are able to anvil can be lethal and destructive.

I recall when I interviewed the Bihar-born Dr A.Q. Khan he warned me that "if you ever drive us to the wall," as was the case when East Pakistan seceded, "we will use the Bomb straight away." In fact, I have heard some people saying in Pakistan that they would use the Bomb first and destroy India. But I argued with Khan that "you might destroy Northern India but that would also be the end of Pakistan.

India would still be able to rebuild the country with the resources available in the south.”

It is strange that A.Q. Khan remains a hero in Pakistan, although he has sold the nuclear knowhow at an exorbitant price to countries from North Korea to Iran. It is a frightening scenario, but thanks to Khan, a dirty nuclear Bomb is a possibility anywhere in the Islamic world. Imagine also some terrorists getting hold of the Bomb. They can hold the world to ransom.

What happened at Dhaka was indiscriminate killing at the posh Gulshan restaurant in an exclusive part of the city earmarked for diplomats. Suppose those same terrorists had at their disposal a dirty Bomb? What could have been the consequences? Instead of a few dozen casualties the numbers of those killed would have been in hundreds of thousands and stretching across the border.

This should make the governments in South Asia conscious of the fact that terrorism is not now confined to distant places in Syria and Yemen. ISIS is already present and it claims to have local support. To build a dirty Bomb it is not necessary to hijack finished nuclear weapons. All that is required is access to any civil nuclear facilities, either power reactors like Kanupp in Karachi or research centres at Trombay near Mumbai. There cannot be any foolproof ban on the procurement of key strategic materials needed for the Bomb.

Countries in South Asia have to come together on this specific issue and devise suitable steps so that this region doesn't become a hunting

ground for nuclear adventure. This will also involve a concerted drive against the fundamentalists. For example, persons like Hyderabad-based Owaisi who are trying to win headlines by taking a stand which is palpably wrong but probably acceptable in the eyes of fanatics.

I wish the media wouldn't give him the publicity he is getting because his eyes are fixed on the space he gets in the media. But then it is also understandable the media cannot ignore the provocative statements he makes. If we look back at the subcontinent's history the seeds of separation were sown by two Lahore-based newspapers, Zimidar representing the Muslims, and Pratap, the Hindus. They incited both communities and made Hindus and Muslims feel they belonged to two separate nations.

I recall that the feeling of being different came to be cultivated at Law College, Lahore, where I was studying. The common kitchen eventually was divided into Hindu kitchen and Muslim kitchen, just like they started selling Hindu paani and Muslim paani at the railway station. Fortunately, most students were not affected by this. At the Law College dining room Muslim students would get food from their kitchen, Hindu students would in turn get food from their kitchen. But we all sat and ate together.

I feel that even though we did not bother about the separation of the kitchen, yet it gave birth to the idea of division and this ultimately led to partition of the subcontinent. But we never imagined that there would be forced migration of populations. We who decided to stay in Sialkot city, now part of Pakistan, thought

that we would be in a minority, just as Muslims would be in India. But both will be living peacefully. This did not happen because the bureaucracy on both sides was also divided on the basis of religion.

We in Sialkot experienced how the Muslim police connived at the looting and killing of non-Muslims because similar was the case in East Punjab. In the process we killed one million people of each other's communities. Till today there is no accountability and I personally think that non-Muslims in India should offer an apology to the Muslims on the other side, just as they should do the same to us.

This may not make amends for the horrors, but at least it might begin a new chapter of healing. The terrorists who are the product of those terrible times may then be condemned by the people themselves and they would not be able to get the backing they need. Then the happening in Dhaka will be recalled with horror and humiliation.

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Is UP turning Right ?

Varughese George

The Uttar Pradesh politics since mid-sixties was dominated by the Lohiaite discourse of caste as class and consolidated further by the Mandal issue of 1990s. The backward classes and Dalits used caste as a means of political mobilization and seized power in UP which had once been a citadel of Congress politics. The majoritarian communal party, BJP emerged as a major contender in UP politics in the aftermath of Mandir politics marginalizing the Grand Old Party, Congress and in the midst of splits among the socialists. The split among the secular votes and the search for good governance helped BJP to secure a landslide victory in UP in the Lok Sabha elections of 2014.

The Samajvadi Party that largely represented the socialists in UP had suffered fatal backlash in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. The nature of the Samajvadi Party has been changing for sometime as the present author noted in an article in *Mainstream* as early as March 20, 2010. It said, 'the entry of corporate captains and Bollywood stars as parliamentarians on behalf of Samajvadi Party caused revulsion in the party... The party's taking sides with Reliance brothers' dispute with the oil ministry was not to its core spirit, though the cadres silently endured it with discipline and dignity... Mulayam Singh also cannot be absolved of the shift in party's ideological orientation. He

was a mute witness of the transition of the socialist party to a party of Bombay socialites".¹

After the exit of Amar Singh who was mainly responsible for the drift of the party along the corporate lines Mulayam Singh steered clear the party and brought it to its old moorings. There had been much criticism in the socialist groups about the dithering of the party's commitment to socialist principles. Surendra Mohan called the mainstream socialists a thousand suns away from Lohia. In the ensuing year that celebrated Lohia's birth centenary Mulayam addressing many meetings reconnected SP's legacy to Lohia. The people elected Samajvadi party in the Legislative Assembly elections of 2012 and gave it a resounding victory. The party got 206 seats in the 400 member strong House and Mulayam's son Akhilesh became the Chief Minister.

That might be a generational change. But the Muzafarnagar riots turned everything upside down. A fact team of civil society activists including Nivedita Menon, Harsha Mander and Kamal Chitra Chenoy who visited Muzafarnagar reported such: 'the state government was unable to contain the violence after it broke out... the police was absent with not a single incident being reported by the villagers of police intervention to either arrest leaders making provocative statements or to

help those being attacked by the mobs. There is not a single shred of evidence to prove that police acted against the mobs that freely attacked and killed their neighbours and looted and burnt homes'.²

In spite of the inept handling of the communal riot, the Muslim community stood solidly behind the Samajvadi Party in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. They were still loyal to Mulayam Singh who stood with courage of conviction at the time of Babri masjid. Though it won only five seats it was able to secure 22 percent votes and the main reason was Muslim support even while Yadav support showed a decline.³

But the party's debacle in electoral terms was devastating. The brilliant victory by BJP has been interpreted from many angles, but the most extensive and excellent study seemed to be that of Prof. A.K. Varma published in EPW as part of NES of CSDS on 27 September 2014. Prof. Varma attributes many factors that helped the unprecedented BJP victory including peoples urge for transcendence from caste to good governance, clinical organization of election campaign, Modi's decision to contest from Varanasi, Amit Shah's deft and dexterous handling of election machinery, thorough support of RSS in the campaigns and Modi's rapport with the people

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Indo-Pak War 1971— Field Marshal Manekshaw

Rajindar Sachar

Some inside facts of Indo-Pak war of 1971 are not so well known in public. Broadly, one knows of Anti-India slant of President Nixon but recently some declassified documents throw a fresh and interesting light on this crucial war.

The hostile aggressive stand taken by Nixon was sought to be justified by the false premise that Indira Gandhi was, right from the beginning, determined to attack East Pakistan. This however was a lie and Nixon above all the people knew that on the other hand she tried her best to avoid confrontation with Pakistan. As a matter of fact Indira Gandhi tried her best to persuade Nixon to intervene at an early stage to help her do so.

In July 1971 Kissinger had a stop over in India on his secret visit to China. At that time mass fleeing from East Pakistan and terror by Pakistan army were creating havoc in West Bengal and rest of the country. Mrs. Gandhi, was obviously under a big strain. She therefore invited Kissinger for a private breakfast to be able to discuss the matter urgently.

However, on the evening before, Indira Gandhi telephoned General Manekshaw, our Army Chief and told him that she would like him to come and meet her at breakfast next morning. She did not disclose as to who her other guests were. She

further told General that when he comes for breakfast, he should come in Army uniform. Naturally, General felt surprised and asked whether he had heard rightly that she wanted him to come in the uniform at the breakfast because it was naturally a very strange suggestion. Mrs. Gandhi was straightforward and told him “yes, she wanted him to come for breakfast but in uniform. So, General Manekshaw went for breakfast in full uniform and soon they were joined by Kissinger.

At that meeting Indira Gandhi was persistent in asking Kissinger to plead with Nixon that he should try to restrain Pakistan for what was being done in East Pakistan because the conditions there were becoming intolerable and it was almost becoming impossible for India to remain silent. Kissinger however, went on prevaricating and would not really give a straight answer. Rather he tried to underplay the situation. Mrs. Gandhi, however, still insisted, but to no avail. Kissinger would not give any assurance that Nixon would do something about it.

Obviously rattled, Mrs. Gandhi said if that was the position she may have to do something herself which she was reluctant to do. At this Kissinger again expressed his inability on his and Nixon’s behalf to do anything and asked her rather ironically as to what she intended to do. At that time she stood up and

pointing towards General (who was in full military uniform) told Kissinger that if USA Government, USA President cannot control the situation then I am going to ask him (meaning the General) to do the same.

There was stunning silence for a minute and the sharp message was conveyed to Kissinger in a very stark manner. As a matter of fact, General was himself surprised and suddenly understood the purpose as to why he had been asked to come in uniform rather than in civilian clothes at apparently, a harmless function of breakfast. Obviously, Nixon and Kissinger had their egos deflated and were not going to forgive Mrs. Gandhi for such an attitude.

It is to the credit of General Manekshaw that as a strategist he opposed immediate attack and waited to make full preparations till December, 1971.

Mrs. Gandhi had no other course but to create world opinion in favor of India. She requested J.P., the socialist and legendary hero of freedom struggle, to go on world tour to explain India’s case, which the patriot that he was he willingly undertook. But still the matters were getting worse, yet India could not directly intervene. Refugees were continuing to pour in from East Bengal. Sidharth Shankar Ray was in charge of borders. On one of the

usual visits by Mrs. Gandhi to border where a public meeting was being held to reassure the public that the matter was being looked after properly. On this visit to West Bengal she told Ray that after public meeting she would go back to Delhi, and Ray should stay for some days in Calcutta and come later.

At the public meeting while Mrs. Gandhi was addressing, one of her aides handed her a small paper – she read it and put it in her pocket and continued as usual with her speech. After the meeting ended when going to the airport she told Ray that he should come along with her to Delhi. Ray was a little surprised at this sudden change of his programme. But her followers did not ask questions of Indira Gandhi – there was implicit compliance. After about 15 minutes of flight onward to Delhi Mrs. Gandhi leaned back in her seat, a bit relaxed, took out paper given to her at public meeting and told Ray who was sitting next to her, here is the information “Pakistan has attacked”. At first blush it would seem strange that Mrs. Gandhi should seem relaxed on knowing about Pak attack. But there was obvious logic – India was reeling under refugee’s influx and yet it dared not attack East Bengal, because then the world opinion would call it the aggressor. An excuse was necessary and Pakistan had now conveniently provided it. Of course, let us be objective: war on East Bengal front was all weighed in favor of India – as General Arora told me, though to start with some hard knocks were taken it was smooth march – the whole population of East Bengal was against Pakistan.

The movements of Pak army were leaked in detail by Mukti Bahni and their volunteers to Indian army whose task was made smooth (though no doubt India lost quite a few thousand of armed forces). To make matters still easier Indian air force had no opposition and bombard General Niazi’s official bangalaw. As one of the Air Chiefs told me “you can’t imagine the panic, the utter helplessness at being bombarded from above by enemy planes, knowing fully well that you can’t even send one plane to stop them. It was inevitable that Niazi surrendered without much delay.

Again General Manekshaw showed grace and gentlemanly

temperament that even when 100,000 Pakistan soldiers were in the custody of India, he did not boast but publically said ‘Pakistani soldiers fought well’ – that shows grace and self-confidence even in victory.

I, must however, caution against using this unfortunate Indo-Pak history as a glorious victory. We should, rather feel sorrow at this unfortunate aspect of history and rather work whole-heartedly for a future Indo-Pak friendship and harmony. In this alone, lies the future prosperity of both our countries.

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with his rallies and speeches. Though I am in conformity to Prof. Varma in finer details mentioned above I totally disagree with his analysis in the core aspects. The most important factor seems to be that there was no credible national alternative to BJP. The Congress was in shambles. The non-Congress non-BJP parties spoke about only a post-poll alliance. They were not willing to come to a joint platform and every one contested on their own. These parties secured more percentage of votes than BJP. The BJP’s vote share was 42.3 while SP got 22.2 per cent, BSP 19.6 per cent, RLD 0.9 per cent and Congress 7 per cent. The secular votes were divided and BJP could romp home with 71 Lok Sabha seats. Its alliance with Apna Dal was a brilliant masterstroke, as Prof.

Varma says, since through this the upper caste dominated BJP made a link with the most backward castes. Thus while BJP consolidated its base, the secular parties let themselves disintegrated by disunity. Mayavati seemed to have helped transfer of votes to BJP by her low profile campaign in the constituencies where her party contested, with the ultimate aim of cornering SP to a tight spot. Though BSP contested in all 80 seats and secured one fifth of total votes polled, it could not win a single seat. That not a single Muslim candidate won this time from Uttar Pradesh proves a point: Is UP turning towards Right?

¹ *Mainstream 20 March 2010*

² *Centre for Policy Analysis*

³ *EPW 27 September UP turning Right 2014*

The meaning of Brexit

Jeffrey D. Sachs

The Brexit vote was a triple protest: against surging immigration, City of London bankers, and European Union institutions, in that order. It will have major consequences. Donald Trump's campaign for the US presidency will receive a huge boost, as will other anti-immigrant populist politicians. Moreover, leaving the EU will wound the British economy, and could well push Scotland to leave the United Kingdom – to say nothing of Brexit's ramifications for the future of European integration.

Brexit is thus a watershed event that signals the need for a new kind of globalization, one that could be far superior to the *status quo* that was rejected at the British polls.

At its core, Brexit reflects a pervasive phenomenon in the high-income world: rising support for populist parties campaigning for a clampdown on immigration. Roughly half the population in Europe and the United States, generally working-class voters, believes that immigration is out of control, posing a threat to public order and cultural norms.

In the middle of the Brexit campaign in May, it was reported that the UK had net immigration of 333,000 persons in 2015, more than triple the government's previously announced target of 100,000. That news came on top of the Syrian refugee crisis, terrorist attacks by Syrian migrants and disaffected children of earlier immigrants, and highly publicized reports of assaults

on women and girls by migrants in Germany and elsewhere.

In the US, Trump backers similarly rail against the country's estimated 11 million undocumented residents, mainly Hispanic, who overwhelmingly live peaceful and productive lives, but without proper visas or work permits. For many Trump supporters, the crucial fact about the recent attack in Orlando is that the perpetrator was the son of Muslim immigrants from Afghanistan and acted in the name of anti-American sentiment (though committing mass murder with semi-automatic weapons is, alas, all too American).

Warnings that Brexit would lower income levels were either dismissed outright, wrongly, as mere fearmongering, or weighed against the Leavers' greater interest in border control. A major factor, however, was implicit class warfare. Working-class "Leave" voters reasoned that most or all of the income losses would in any event be borne by the rich, and especially the despised bankers of the City of London.

Americans disdain Wall Street and its greedy and often criminal behavior at least as much as the British working class disdains the City of London. This, too, suggests a campaign advantage for Trump over his opponent in November, Hillary Clinton, whose candidacy is heavily financed by Wall Street. Clinton should take note and distance herself from Wall Street.

In the UK, these two powerful political currents – rejection of immigration and class warfare – were joined by the widespread sentiment that EU institutions are dysfunctional. They surely are. One need only cite the last six years of mismanagement of the Greek crisis by self-serving, shortsighted European politicians. The continuing eurozone turmoil was, understandably, enough to put off millions of UK voters.

The short-run consequences of Brexit are already clear: the pound has plummeted to a 31-year low. In the near term, the City of London will face major uncertainties, job losses, and a collapse of bonuses. Property values in London will cool. The possible longer-run knock-on effects in Europe – including likely Scottish independence; possible Catalan independence; a breakdown of free movement of people in the EU; a surge in anti-immigrant politics (including the possible election of Trump and France's Marine Le Pen) – are enormous. Other countries might hold referendums of their own, and some may choose to leave.

In Europe, the call to punish Britain *pour encourager les autres* – to warn those contemplating the same – is already rising. This is European politics at its stupidest (also very much on display vis-à-vis Greece). The remaining EU should, instead, reflect on its obvious failings and fix them. Punishing Britain – by, say, denying it access to Europe's single market – would only lead to the continued

unraveling of the EU.

So what should be done? I would suggest several measures, both to reduce the risks of catastrophic feedback loops in the short term and to maximize the benefits of reform in the long term.

First, stop the refugee surge by ending the Syrian war immediately. This can be accomplished by ending the CIA-Saudi alliance to overthrow Bashar al-Assad, thereby enabling Assad (with Russian and Iranian backing) to defeat the Islamic State and stabilize Syria (with a similar approach in neighboring Iraq). America's addiction to regime change (in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria) is the deep cause of Europe's refugee crisis. End the addiction, and the recent refugees could return home.

Second, stop NATO's expansion to Ukraine and Georgia. The new Cold War with Russia is another US-contrived blunder with plenty of European naiveté attached. Closing the door on NATO expansion would make it possible to ease tensions and normalize relations with Russia, stabilize Ukraine, and restore focus on the European economy and the European project.

Third, don't punish Britain. Instead, police national and EU borders to stop illegal migrants. This is not xenophobia, racism, or fanaticism. It is common sense that countries with the world's most generous social-welfare provisions (Western Europe) must say no to millions (indeed hundreds of millions) of would-be migrants. The same is true for the US.

Fourth, restore a sense of fairness and opportunity for the disaffected working class and those whose

Saving crony capitalists from Raghuram Rajan

M. K. Venu

Sometime ago I had asked a highly reputed economist advising the Modi government what he thought of a piquant observation made by Sanjay Subrahmanyam, one of India's foremost historians, that the government was more easily able to accept globally trained economists but not historians or sociologists who mostly reject the culturally fixed views of the Sangh parivar. The foreign trained economist reflected on the matter for a few seconds before responding, "It is not necessary that we economists endorse all the policies of the government, whether UPA or NDA. For instance, I strongly feel the government must structurally move away from a pro-business policy framework to a genuinely pro-market one where the benefits are more evenly spread. This is a continuing problem with the Indian policy regime". Put simply, India's economic policies are often tailored to benefit big business houses in the name of "development and employment creation."

The economist in question had expressed this opinion to Prime Minister Narendra Modi too but probably did not see much change on the ground. The reason why I am recounting this story is because it has a lot to do with the way RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan has chosen to leave his job even before hearing from New Delhi about his possible extension for another two years, making it a five year tenure – something that all RBI governors have got since 1991. Rajan completes three years at the helm of

the central bank on September 6 and has expressed his desire to go back to teaching economics at the Chicago University. His decision will disappoint the global investing community at large as he was seen as a big stabilising influence on monetary policy and financial market functioning in India.

Rajan too has strongly believed that for sustained growth, India had to move away from a big business-oriented policy framework to a much more broad based, pro-market one. His first public remarks against the entrenched big business came around end 2014 when he said many big business houses in India enjoyed "riskless capitalism"; in good times they enjoy profits and in bad times they are bailed out by the banks. Incidentally, such remarks had directly targeted some of the top indebted business groups whose names were listed by reputed independent research institutions as defaulting on loans. Credit Suisse India had been regularly putting out the names of the top ten business groups that owed about Rs 7.5 lakh crore to the banks and nearly 50 per cent of this was close to default status as per private credit rating agencies.

Rajan had begun to turn the heat on some of these powerful business houses, including the controversial Essar Group, Vedanta, Jindal Steel, Anil Ambani-led companies, Adani Group, JP Associates, GMR, GVK, Lanco and Bhushan Steel. Many of these entities had already got their loans restructured – a euphemism for

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postponement of interest and principal repayment — during the UPA regimes, especially after the global economic slowdown deepened post 2012. But how long could the banks postpone receiving interest and principal back from the companies without declaring them bad loans? This problem is still to be resolved except that PSU banks have begun to make heavy provisions against these loans over the past six months and have shown huge losses in their books. Rajan also instructed the banks to tighten the screws on the big business houses that had not repaid interest and principal for a considerable period. The banks, which had been lax for some years, suddenly started pressuring these groups to sell their profitable assets to pay back the debt on projects that had not taken off, especially in the infrastructure sectors. So Essar, with a total loan exposure of over Rs 1.15 lakh crore, has been negotiating to sell its profitable refinery project to pay back its debt in steel and power, while the Anil Ambani group and JP Associates have sold some businesses to pay back their massive loans

In the past, Essar, politically connected to both national parties, never felt compelled to sell its assets to pay back loans. In 1999-2000, at the peak of the downcycle in business after the Asian financial crises, Essar had nearly defaulted on its debt obligations. But it managed to retain all its assets and ride through the downcycle, of course with some help from the banks and their political masters. This does not seem to be happening now as, under Rajan's supervision, the PSU banks have been quite emboldened and have refused to even meet some of these promoters to negotiate deals. Modi has supported this upto a point.

But when the pain exceeds a certain limit, these businesses begin to forcefully encash their IOUs for past political funding. One has recently heard murmurs from senior ministers like Nitin Gadkari that the 'CBI, Central Vigilance Commission and judiciary cannot run the administration'. Gadkari has also said banks will have to be more pragmatic about dealing with bad loans. This too is a euphemism for adopting a softer policy on loan defaults by big business houses. When Rajan made a caustic remark against Vijay Mallya's lavish display of wealth, some official ventriloquists in New Delhi tried to counter the RBI governor by saying personal lifestyle should not be dragged into business dealings. Last fortnight Rajan retorted that personal lifestyle must certainly be commented on if the promoter has given personal guarantees against the bank loans. The public has a claim on the promoter's personal wealth in such situations.

Obviously, Rajan's attitude has not gone down well with the big business interests, which have run a subterranean campaign against him. Some powerful ideological advisors of the Sangh parivar have been carrying out a strong campaign against Rajan's policies for over a year. The campaign is couched politically correctly as a dire need for lower interest rates for small businesses but clearly there are multiple agendas at work. It must also be noted that prominent industrialists running their business well with modest debt from banks have supported Rajan fully and endorsed a second term for him.

Some of the business groups in Credit Suisse's top indebted companies' list are also known to have strong historical links with the

RSS leadership. Rajan may not have fully understood the complex nexus between business and politics when New Delhi encouraged him to nominally go after the big loan defaulters. The politicians in Delhi are known to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. Look at the ease with which Mallya, declared a proclaimed offender, attended a function co-sponsored by the Indian High Commission in London.

Modi too tries to project himself as a crusader against crony capitalism, but the circumstances surrounding Rajan's exit shows that entrenched interests have struck back successfully. In public perception the Modi government appears more and more compromised now. How else do you explain no action being taken on the elaborate investigative findings of the economic enforcement agencies, which have reported massive over-invoicing of power equipment imports by the very top business groups that are struggling to pay back bank loans? By unduly inflating the value of imports, these companies have reportedly diverted excess bank funds out of the country, and put them away in tax havens in Dubai and the British Virgin Islands. This is a classic case of funds diversion and qualifies to be described formally as wilful default if these companies are unable to pay back their bank loans. Will Modi ever take action on these reports? With someone like Rajan supervising banks at such a critical juncture, the political class might have even felt a bit uncomfortable and insecure. So it was best to send Rajan back to Chicago with a thank you note. Rajan must realise it is not so easy, after all, to rescue capitalism from capitalists in real life.

Should RSS Volunteers be permitted to join government services?

Ram Puniyani

An old controversy resurfaced lately. After the alleged denial of government jobs to candidates linked to the RSS, Minister of State in the PMO, Jitendra Singh, said last week that “the central government has not issued any such order (prohibiting government staff from joining RSS activities) recently”, and “if any old order exists, we will review it.” (16 June, 2016) RSS Prachar Pramukh Manmohan Vaidya had already stated that, “Banning RSS members from joining government service; is unjust and undemocratic. Such bans hardly affect RSS work and morale of swayamsevaks.” (*Indian Express* 11 June 2016)

As such civil servants are banned from participating in the political organizations. RSS calls itself cultural organization, and that’s what has been used as a ruse by the state governments on couple of occasions to permit the civil servants in joining RSS. In Gujarat when this permission was granted (Jan 2000), the President on receiving the protests intervened, and the Mr. Vajpayee prevailed upon the state BJP and got this permission revoked. Later in Madhya Pradesh Chouhan Government lifted the ban; thereby the government servants could join and carry on the RSS work openly(2006).

The basic premise of Indian constitution and parliamentary democracy is that the civil service should be neutral. Already RSS has infiltrated into various wings of the

state apparatus by sending its trained swayamsevaks to work in different areas of bureaucracy in states as well as at Center. In addition to these elements the ‘social common sense’ is so doctored that in the times of violence a big chunk of police and other state officials aid and abet the violence against minorities, putting aside the norms of constitution and even the civic decency. Thus far many a reports on the communal carnage have indicated the role of RSS and the complicity of police and other officials in the anti-minority pogroms. Such permission to the civic service opens the flood gates for the total communalization of the civil service which is the backbone of the state apparatus.

What about the argument that RSS is not a political organization; it is an organization which is cultural, committed to build a Hindu nation. This claim itself gives the game away; building a nation is a political process so how can this organization claim to be merely a cultural one? After seeing the actions of RSS and its role in the political arena, its role in dictating its political progeny, the BJP, any doubt about it’s being a cultural organization vanishes into thin air. RSS is a political organization which operates through its different progeny, some of which claim to be non-political to achieve its political goal.

Initially, it was just training the political volunteers, swayamsevaks, and from 1952 it started floating the

direct political organizations, first Bharatiya Jana Sangh and then BJP (after earlier floating Rashtra Sevika Samiti in 1936 and ABVP in 1948). It acted as controller of Jana Sangh and whosoever disagreed with its polices was removed from being the office bearer, Balraj Madhok, the President of Jana Sangh who was removed from his post for disagreeing with RSS line. Many more examples abound. In 1998 one saw it dictating the process of cabinet making, the allotment of portfolios, like wanting to have Yashwant Sinha as Finance minister, instead of Jaswant Singh. It came out openly against Lal Krishna Advani, when he stated that Jinnah was a secular.

In one of the affidavits filed, miscellaneous application No 17 of 1978, two of its functionaries, Deoras and Rajendra Singh, stated, “The work of RSS is neither religious nor charitable, but its objects are cultural and patriotic as contra-distinguished religious or charitable. It is akin to political purposes, though RSS is not at present a political party as much as RSS constitution...bans active participation by the RSS as such, as a policy...Tomorrow the policy could be changed and RSS could participate even in day-to-day political activity as a political party because policy is not a permanent or irrevocable thing.”

How do we assess the nature of organizations, by their own claims or from the outcome of their

activities? One has to note the claims of RSS being a cultural organization is a pure make believe. It operates in the political arena by remote control, by mechanisms which are direct as well as indirect. Its swayamsevaks have been involved in Gandhi murder, murder of Pastor Stains, demolition of Babri Masjid and running of political parties. Two noteworthy incidents are: one, when the Jana Sangh component of Janata Party broke away from Janata Party since their double membership, of RSS and of Janata Party was challenged; second, when Vajpayee himself claimed with pride that he was first a swayamsevak and then the prime minister of India. Recently faced with similar criticism Home Minister Rajanath Singh said 'we are RSS'.

Different progenies of RSS have been allotted the work in diverse social arenas to be able to control the basic thought process of society, starting from Saraswati Shishu Mandir right up to RSS shakha where through the bauddhiks the indoctrination into political ideology is carried on. It does monitor all its progeny and coordinates their activities through All India Pratinidhi Sabha (All India Representatives Association) which meets regularly to coordinate their activities. Its goal is political, its actions are political and its outcome is political through and through.

Even without being in power it is able to control the politics through various mechanisms. Currently through the compliant Government its agenda runs exponentially faster, the way Gujarat and many other states have demonstrated. Now its agenda is running from bottom to top and top to bottom both ways since the BJP is the ruling party at the centre. With the employees being

openly participating in RSS the divisive processes will move faster and running the administration on the lines of Indian Constitution will become all the more difficult. Despite knowing that such a provision is not legally tenable, many in the seat of power are asking for government servants be

permitted to be part of RSS and vice versa.

The present opinions being articulated by RSS leaders should neither be legally permissible nor are in tune with the principles of Constitution of India.

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Lessons from Brexit

The results of the referendum in Britain that signaled the exit of this leading member from the European Union have been extensively regretted. In Britain the short and medium term implications are a decline in the value of the pound and also a decline in the exports to the biggest market of the European Union. Then there is the very real possibility of the secession of Scotland and possibly even North Ireland, regions that voted strongly for remaining in the European Union.

It has been discussed that the longer term harm to the entire European Union project can be even more serious if the demand is taken up even more strongly by the rightist parties of other nations like France, Holland and Austria that have been gaining strength rapidly. Perhaps the fear voiced by George Soros may be closer to reality than what many people believe today. In a much discussed comment he said recently, "All of Europe, including Britain, would suffer from the loss of the common market and the loss of common values that the EU was designed to protect. Yet, the EU truly has broken down and ceased to satisfy its citizens' needs and aspirations. It is heading for a disorderly disintegration that will leave Europe worse off than where

it would have been had the EU not been brought into existence."

Yet the basic idea of the EU of eliminating the possibilities of war within a region and creating conditions of peace, stability and cooperation which are likely to enhance the possibility of prosperity of all member nations cannot be faulted. However basically sound or even noble this project was, it was administered within the overall framework of inequality based and inequality enhancing globalization led capitalism. This created several contradictions as the EU remained very much an important part and a pillar of an unjust and unequal global system and never challenged it in any basic way. Hence several conflicts were bound to appear sooner or later within its stated aims and the real situation.

Such unions of many nations in various regions are certainly needed but these need a wider vision of justice, equality, environment protection, peace and compassion for all forms of life. In addition these efforts should be very conscious of the need to think up and evolve alternatives to capitalism and globalization dominated by multinational companies.

–Bharat Dogra

Castes in India: their mechanism, genesis and development

B. R. Ambedkar

The paper by Dr. Ambedkar was presented at an Anthropology Seminar taught by Dr. A. A. Goldenweizer at Columbia University on 9th May 1916 and was first published in Indian Antiquary Vol. XLI (May 1917)

[1] Many of us, I dare say, have witnessed local, national or international expositions of material objects that make up the sum total of human civilization. But few can entertain the idea of there being such a thing as an exposition of human institutions. Exhibition of human institutions is a strange idea; some might call it the wildest of ideas. But as students of Ethnology I hope you will not be hard on this innovation, for it is not so, and to you at least it should not be strange.

[2] You all have visited, I believe, some historic place like the ruins of Pompeii, and listened with curiosity to the history of the remains as it flowed from the glib tongue of the guide. In my opinion a student of Ethnology, in one sense at least, is much like the guide. Like his prototype, he holds up (perhaps with more seriousness and desire of self-instruction) the social institutions to view, with all the objectiveness humanly possible, and inquires into their origin and function.

[3] Most of our fellow students in this Seminar, which concerns itself with primitive versus modern society, have ably acquitted themselves along these lines by giving lucid expositions of the various institutions, modern or primitive, in which they are interested. It is my turn now, this evening, to entertain you, as best I can, with a paper on "*Castes in*

India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development."

[4] I need hardly remind you of the complexity of the subject I intend to handle. Subtler minds and abler pens than mine have been brought to the task of unravelling the mysteries of Caste; but unfortunately it still remains in the domain of the "unexplained," not to say of the "un-understood." I am quite alive to the complex intricacies of a hoary institution like Caste, but I am not so pessimistic as to relegate it to the region of the unknowable, for I believe it can be known. The caste problem is a vast one, both theoretically and practically. Practically, it is an institution that portends tremendous consequences. It is a local problem, but one capable of much wider mischief, for "as long as caste in India does exist, Hindus will hardly intermarry or have any social intercourse with outsiders; and if Hindus migrate to other regions on earth, Indian caste would become a world problem." Theoretically, it has defied a great many scholars who have taken upon themselves, as a labour of love, to dig into its origin. Such being the case, I cannot treat the problem in its entirety. Time, space and acumen, I am afraid, would all fail me, if I attempted to do otherwise than limit myself to a phase of it, namely, the genesis, mechanism and spread of the caste system. I will strictly observe this rule, and will dwell on

extraneous matters only when it is necessary to clarify or support a point in my thesis.

[5] To proceed with the subject. According to well-known ethnologists, the population of India is a mixture of Aryans, Dravidians, Mongolians and Scythians. All these stocks of people came into India from various directions and with various cultures, centuries ago, when they were in a tribal state. They all in turn elbowed their entry into the country by fighting with their predecessors, and after a stomachful of it settled down as peaceful neighbours. Through constant contact and mutual intercourse they evolved a common culture that superseded their distinctive cultures. It may be granted that there has not been a thorough amalgamation of the various stocks that make up the peoples of India, and to a traveller from within the boundaries of India the East presents a marked contrast in physique and even in colour to the West, as does the South to the North. But amalgamation can never be the sole criterion of homogeneity as predicated of any people. Ethnically all people are heterogeneous. It is the unity of culture that is the basis of homogeneity. Taking this for granted, I venture to say that there is no country that can rival the Indian Peninsula with respect to the unity of its culture. It has not only a geographic unity, but it has over and

above all a deeper and a much more fundamental unity—the indubitable cultural unity that covers the land from end to end. But it is because of this homogeneity that Caste becomes a problem so difficult to be explained. If the Hindu Society were a mere federation of mutually exclusive units, the matter would be simple enough. But Caste is a parcelling of an already homogeneous unit, and the explanation of the genesis of Caste is the explanation of this process of parcelling.

[6] Before launching into our field of enquiry, it is better to advise ourselves regarding the nature of a caste. I will therefore draw upon a few of the best students of caste for their definitions of it:

1) Mr. Senart, a French authority, defines a caste as “a close corporation, in theory at any rate rigorously hereditary: equipped with a certain traditional and independent organisation, including a chief and a council, meeting on occasion in assemblies of more or less plenary authority and joining together at certain festivals: bound together by common occupations, which relate more particularly to marriage and to food and to questions of ceremonial pollution, and ruling its members by the exercise of jurisdiction, the extent of which varies, but which succeeds in making the authority of the community more felt by the sanction of certain penalties and, above all, by final irrevocable exclusion from the group.”

2) Mr. Nesfield defines a caste as “a class of the community which disowns any connection with any other class and can neither

intermarry nor eat nor drink with any but persons of their own community.”

3) According to Sir H. Risley, “a caste may be defined as a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name which usually denotes or is associated with specific occupation, claiming common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine, professing to follow the same professional callings and are regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community.”

4) Dr. Ketkar defines caste as “a social group having two characteristics: (i) membership is confined to those who are born of members and includes all persons so born; (ii) the members are forbidden by an inexorable social law to marry outside the group.”

[7] To review these definitions is of great importance for our purpose. It will be noticed that taken individually the definitions of three of the writers include too much or too little: none is complete or correct by itself and all have missed the central point in the mechanism of the Caste system. Their mistake lies in trying to define caste as an isolated unit by itself, and not as a group within, and with definite relations to, the system of caste as a whole. Yet collectively all of them are complementary to one another, each one emphasising what has been obscured in the other. By way of criticism, therefore, I will take only those points common to all Castes in each of the above definitions which are regarded as peculiarities of Caste and evaluate them as such.

[8] To start with Mr. Senart. He draws attention to the “idea of pollution” as a characteristic of Caste. With regard to this point it may be safely said that it is by no means a peculiarity of Caste as such. It usually originates in priestly ceremonialism and is a particular case of the general belief in purity. Consequently its necessary connection with Caste may be completely denied without damaging the working of Caste. The “idea of pollution” has been attached to the institution of Caste, only because the Caste that enjoys the highest rank is the priestly Caste: while we know that priest and purity are old associates. We may therefore conclude that the “idea of pollution” is a characteristic of Caste only in so far as Caste has a religious flavour.

[9] Mr. Nesfield in his way dwells on the absence of messing with those outside the Caste as one of its characteristics. In spite of the newness of the point we must say that Mr. Nesfield has mistaken the effect for the cause. Caste, being a self-enclosed unit, naturally limits social intercourse, including messing etc., to members within it. Consequently this absence of messing with outsiders is not due to positive prohibition, but is a natural result of Caste, i.e. exclusiveness. No doubt this absence of messing, originally due to exclusiveness, acquired the prohibitory character of a religious injunction, but it may be regarded as a later growth. Sir H. Risley makes no new point deserving of special attention.

[10] We now pass on to the definition of Dr. Ketkar who has done much for the elucidation of the subject. Not only is he a native, but he has also brought a critical acumen and an open mind to bear on his

study of Caste. His definition merits consideration, for he has defined Caste in its relation to a system of Castes, and has concentrated his attention only on those characteristics which are absolutely necessary for the existence of a Caste within a system, rightly excluding all others as being secondary or derivative in character. With respect to his definition it must, however, be said that in it there is a slight confusion of thought, lucid and clear as otherwise it is. He speaks of *Prohibition of Intermarriage* and *Membership by Autogeny* as the two characteristics of Caste. I submit that these are but two aspects of one and the same thing, and not two different things as Dr. Ketkar supposes them to be. If you prohibit intermarriage the result is that you limit membership to those born within the group. Thus the two are the obverse and the reverse sides of the same medal.

[11] This critical evaluation of the various characteristics of Caste leave no doubt that prohibition, or rather the absence of intermarriage—endogamy, to be concise—is the only one that can be called the essence of Caste when rightly understood. But some may deny this on abstract anthropological grounds, for there exist endogamous groups without giving rise to the problem of Caste. In a general way this may be true, as endogamous societies, culturally different, making their abode in localities more or less removed, and having little to do with each other are a physical reality. The Negroes and the Whites and the various tribal groups that go by name of American Indians in the United States may be cited as more or less appropriate illustrations in support of this view. But we must not confuse matters, for in India the situation is different. As

pointed out before, the peoples of India form a homogeneous whole. The various races of India occupying definite territories have more or less fused into one another and do possess cultural unity, which is the only criterion of a homogeneous population. Given this homogeneity as a basis, Caste becomes a problem altogether new in character and wholly absent in the situation constituted by the mere propinquity of endogamous social or tribal groups. Caste in India means an artificial chopping off of the population into fixed and definite units, each one prevented from fusing into another through the custom of endogamy. Thus the conclusion is inevitable that *Endogamy is the only characteristic that is peculiar to caste*, and if we succeed in showing how endogamy is maintained, we shall practically have proved the genesis and also the mechanism of Caste.

[12] It may not be quite easy for you to anticipate why I regard endogamy as a key to the mystery of the Caste system. Not to strain your imagination too much, I will proceed to give you my reasons for it.

[13] It may not also be out of place to emphasize at this moment that no civilized society of today presents more survivals of primitive times than does the Indian society. Its religion is essentially primitive and its tribal code, in spite of the advance of time and civilization, operates in all its pristine vigour even today. One of these primitive survivals, to which I wish particularly to draw your attention, is the *Custom of Exogamy*. The prevalence of exogamy in the primitive worlds is a fact too well-

known to need any explanation. With the growth of history, however, exogamy has lost its efficacy, and excepting the nearest blood-kins, there is usually no social bar restricting the field of marriage. But regarding the peoples of India the law of exogamy is a positive injunction even today. Indian society still savours of the clan system, even though there are no clans; and this can be easily seen from the law of matrimony which centres round the principle of exogamy, for it is not that Sapindas (blood-kins) cannot marry, but a marriage even between Sagotras (of the same class) is regarded as a sacrilege.

[14] Nothing is therefore more important for you to remember than the fact that endogamy is foreign to the people of India. The various Gotras of India are and have been exogamous: so are the other groups with totemic organization. It is no exaggeration to say that with the people of India exogamy is a creed and none dare infringe it, so much so that, in spite of the endogamy of the Castes within them, exogamy is strictly observed and that there are more rigorous penalties for violating exogamy than there are for violating endogamy. You will, therefore, readily see that with exogamy as the rule there could be no Caste, for exogamy means fusion. But we have castes; consequently in the final analysis creation of Castes, so far as India is concerned, means the superposition of endogamy on exogamy. However, in an originally exogamous population an easy working out of endogamy (which is equivalent to the creation of Caste) is a grave problem, and it is in the consideration of the means utilized for the preservation of endogamy against exogamy that we may hope to find the solution of our problem.

[15] *Thus the superposition of endogamy on exogamy means the creation of caste.* But this is not an easy affair. Let us take an imaginary group that desires to make itself into a Caste and analyse what means it will have to adopt to make itself endogamous. If a group desires to make itself endogamous a formal injunction against intermarriage with outside groups will be of no avail, especially if prior to the introduction of endogamy, exogamy had been the rule in all matrimonial relations. Again, there is a tendency in all groups lying in close contact with one another to assimilate and amalgamate, and thus consolidate into a homogeneous society. If this tendency is to be strongly counteracted in the interest of Caste formation, it is absolutely necessary to circumscribe a circle outside which people should not contract marriages.

[16] Nevertheless, this encircling to prevent marriages from without creates problems from within which are not very easy of solution. Roughly speaking, in a normal group the two sexes are more or less evenly distributed, and generally speaking there is an equality between those of the same age. The equality is, however, never quite realized in actual societies. At the same time to the group that is desirous of making itself into a caste the maintenance of equality between the sexes becomes the ultimate goal, for without it endogamy can no longer subsist. In other words, if endogamy is to be preserved conjugal rights from within have to be provided for, otherwise members of the group will be driven out of the circle to take care of themselves in any way they can. But in order that the conjugal rights be provided for from within, it is absolutely

necessary to maintain a numerical equality between the marriageable units of the two sexes within the group desirous of making itself into a Caste. It is only through the maintenance of such an equality that the necessary endogamy of the group can be kept intact, and a very large disparity is sure to break it.

[17] *The problem of Caste, then, ultimately resolves itself into one of repairing the disparity between the marriageable units of the two sexes within it.* Left to nature, the much needed parity between the units can be realized only when a couple dies simultaneously. But this is a rare contingency. The husband may die before the wife and create a *surplus woman*, who must be disposed of, else through intermarriage she will violate the endogamy of the group. In like manner the husband may survive his wife and be a *surplus man*, whom the group, while it may sympathise with him for the sad bereavement, has to dispose of, else he will marry outside the Caste and will break the endogamy. Thus both the *surplus man* and the *surplus woman* constitute a menace to the Caste if not taken care of, for not finding suitable partners inside their prescribed circle (and left to themselves they cannot find any, for if the matter be not regulated there can only be just enough pairs to go round) very likely they will transgress the boundary, marry outside and import offspring that is foreign to the Caste.

[18] Let us see what our imaginary group is likely to do with this *surplus man* and *surplus woman*. We will first take up the case of the surplus woman. She can be disposed of in two different ways so as to preserve the endogamy of the Caste.

[19] First: burn her on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband and get rid of her. This, however, is rather an impracticable way of solving the problem of sex disparity. In some cases it may work, in others it may not. Consequently every surplus woman cannot thus be disposed of, because it is an easy solution but a hard realization. And so the *surplus woman* (= widow), if not disposed of, remains in the group: but in her very existence lies a double danger. She may marry outside the Caste and violate endogamy, or she may marry within the Caste and through competition encroach upon the chances of marriage that must be reserved for the potential brides in the Caste. She is therefore a menace in any case, and something must be done to her if she cannot be burned along with her deceased husband.

[20] The second remedy is to enforce widowhood on her for the rest of her life. So far as the objective results are concerned, burning is a better solution than enforcing widowhood. Burning the widow eliminates all the three evils that a *surplus woman* is fraught with. Being dead and gone she creates no problem of remarriage either inside or outside the Caste. But compulsory widowhood is superior to burning because it is more practicable. Besides being comparatively humane it also guards against the evils of remarriage as does burning; but it fails to guard the morals of the group. No doubt under compulsory widowhood the woman remains, and just because she is deprived of her natural right of being a legitimate wife in future, the incentive to immoral conduct is increased. But this is by no means an insuperable difficulty. She can be degraded to a condition in which she is no longer

a source of allurements.

[21] The problem of the *surplus man* (= widower) is much more important and much more difficult than that of the surplus woman in a group that desires to make itself into a Caste. From time immemorial man as compared with woman has had the upper hand. He is a dominant figure in every group and of the two sexes has greater prestige. With this traditional superiority of man over woman his wishes have always been consulted. Woman, on the other hand, has been an easy prey to all kinds of iniquitous injunctions, religious, social or economic. But man as a maker of injunctions is most often above them all. Such being the case, you cannot accord the same kind of treatment to a *surplus man* as you can to a *surplus woman* in a Caste.

[22] The project of burning him with his deceased wife is hazardous in two ways: first of all it cannot be done, simply because he is a man. Secondly, if done, a sturdy soul is lost to the Caste. There remain then only two solutions which can conveniently dispose of him. I say conveniently, because he is an asset to the group.

[23] Important as he is to the group, endogamy is still more important, and the solution must assure both these ends. Under these circumstances he may be forced or I should say induced, after the manner of the widow, to remain a widower for the rest of his life. This solution is not altogether difficult, for without any compulsion some are so disposed as to enjoy self-imposed celibacy, or even to take a further step of their own accord and renounce the world and its joys. But, given human nature as it is, this

solution can hardly be expected to be realized. On the other hand, as is very likely to be the case, if the *surplus man* remains in the group as an active participator in group activities, he is a danger to the morals of the group. Looked at from a different point of view celibacy, though easy in cases where it succeeds, is not so advantageous even then to the material prospects of the Caste. If he observes genuine celibacy and renounces the world, he would not be a menace to the preservation of Caste endogamy or Caste morals as he undoubtedly would be if he remained a secular person. But as an ascetic celibate he is as good as burned, so far as the material wellbeing of his Caste is concerned. A Caste, in order that it may be large enough to afford a vigorous communal life, must be maintained at a certain numerical strength. But to hope for this and to proclaim celibacy is the same as trying to cure atrophy by bleeding.

[24] Imposing celibacy on

(To be Concluded)

(Continued from Page 7)

livelihoods have been undermined by financial crises and the outsourcing of jobs. This means following the social-democratic ethos of pursuing ample social spending for health, education, training, apprenticeships, and family support, financed by taxing the rich and closing tax havens, which are gutting public revenues and exacerbating economic injustice. It also means finally giving Greece debt relief, thereby ending the long-running eurozone crisis.

Fifth, focus resources, including additional aid, on economic development, rather than war, in low-income countries. Uncontrolled

the *surplus man* in the group, therefore, fails both theoretically and practically. It is in the interest of the Caste to keep him as a Grahastha (one who raises a family), to use a Sanskrit technical term. But the problem is to provide him with a wife from within the Caste. At the outset this is not possible, for the ruling ratio in a caste has to be one man to one woman and none can have two chances of marriage, for in a Caste thoroughly self-enclosed there are always just enough marriageable women to go round for the marriageable men. Under these circumstances the *surplus man* can be provided with a wife only by recruiting a bride from the ranks of those not yet marriageable in order to tie him down to the group. This is certainly the best of the possible solutions in the case of the *surplus man*. By this, he is kept within the Caste. By this means numerical depletion through constant outflow is guarded against, and by this

migration from today's poor and conflict-ridden regions will become overwhelming, regardless of migration policies, if climate change, extreme poverty, and lack of skills and education undermine the development potential of Africa, Central America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, and Central Asia.

All of this underscores the need to shift from a strategy of war to one of sustainable development, especially by the US and Europe. Walls and fences won't stop millions of migrants fleeing violence, extreme poverty, hunger, disease, droughts, floods, and other ills. Only global cooperation can do that.

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