



A thought for today

We defended our allies in Europe for 40 years during the worst days of the Cold War – and nothing happened. So deterrence does work

ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

Rubicon Crossed

Only way to manage Pyongyang's nukes now is through resumption of talks

North Korea's latest nuclear test – its sixth one and purported to be a hydrogen bomb – clearly exemplifies that the hermit nation's nuclear programme has reached an advanced stage. Combined with Pyongyang's ICBM tests in July, it's possible that the North now possesses the technology to miniaturise its nukes and fit them onto long-range missiles that can potentially hit US territory. Given this scenario, the US and the larger international community need to recalibrate their strategy towards the Korean peninsula. It cannot be denied that North Korea has flown the coop and it's a veritable nuclear power today. Getting Pyongyang to completely abandon its nukes is no longer a feasible option.

The White House hasn't ruled out a pre-emptive strike against Pyongyang's nuclear facilities. It has said all options are on the table. There is, however, only one that is realistic. Military action jeopardises South Korea and Japan which are well within Pyongyang's range and also house thousands of American troops. Nevertheless the existential threat faced by South Korea is far greater than that faced by the US, and Pyongyang appears already to have achieved its goal of weakening their alliance – as evidenced by US President Donald Trump's tweet blaming South Korea for the nuclear test. Separately, Trump is also weighing pulling out of a trade deal with South Korea.

Trump is also looking to China to help out with North Korea, but Beijing has signalled it has no intention of doing this. At the end of the day, the US and its allies have to recognise that the North was able to get to this point because of the failure of their previous policies. North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong-un has seen what happened to Iraq's Saddam Hussein and Libya's Muammar Gaddafi, dictators who gave up nuclear weapons programmes. He has no incentive to give up his own. But this doesn't mean the North's nuclear programme can't be capped in exchange for security guarantees and conditional aid.

The only logical step forward is a resumption of talks with Pyongyang with the aim of managing the latter's status as a nuclear entity. Moreover, Trump must not give up on the one thing the US got right previously: the nuclear deal with Iran. Withdrawal from that deal will not only harden Pyongyang's resolve to continue developing its nukes, Tehran too is likely to follow in its footsteps.



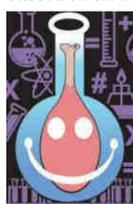
Future Of Food

It should make cows happy but put beef politics on the breadline

New tourism minister Alphons Kannanthanam has disclosed, perhaps unwittingly, that his party has no plans to dictate food habits. Using the example of his home state, the minister said Kerala will continue to eat beef and BJP doesn't have a problem with that. This kind of latitude helps make tourism a revenue grosser in God's Own Country. However, one just has to cross state borders and enter, say, a BJP-ruled state and beef becomes more a matter of lynching than of lunching. This is a cussed circle that the saffron party is finding difficult to square.

According to outgoing tourism minister Mahesh Sharma Prime Minister Narendra Modi has carefully handpicked Alphons, like a flower from a bouquet. But other handpicked flowers smell dramatically different. MoS for home Hansraj G Ahir proposes setting aside a staggering 1,000 hectares of forest land for cow sanctuaries in the 16 states where cow slaughter is banned. Ministers seem to be jostling to have very dissimilar policies enacted – not unlike how cows and crops, jungle and man are battling for India's cramped space. There just doesn't seem to be enough of it for everyone to graze contentedly.

However help may soon be at hand, even if from firangi scientists. Meat that isn't meat is set to resolve this conflict in the future. Companies are racing to develop affordable lab-grown meat, with starter cells taken from live rather than dead animals. This should satisfy Hindutva's vegetarian warriors and dedicated carnivores alike – reducing the strain on forests, farmlands and climate too. The masses may have to wait for some time but the future of food is already here for the Richie Rich – who report that at \$36,000 a kilo in vitro meatballs taste pretty orthodox. This is more revolution than evolution.



The Anxiety Of Asymmetry

India@70: Acknowledge and address deep imbalances that threaten the idea of this nation

Vijay Mahajan



India@70 is being celebrated currently, but how different is it from, say, India at 50? And what is the implication of this for our collective desired future: inclusive, sustainable development for India, that can contribute to environmental resilience and global peace?

For me, India@70 is characterised by three asymmetries. One, the Aspiration vs Attainment asymmetry at the level of self-concept of individuals. Second, the Rights vs Responsibility asymmetry at the level of how individuals relate to each other. And third, the Technology vs Mythology asymmetry at the level of how individuals relate to the environment and other aspects of existence beyond human control.

By describing these dyads as asymmetries rather than as contradictions or dichotomies, we are underlining that we are not arguing for one side over the other. Instead, we are pointing to the imbalance that exists in today's India in each of these dyads.

First, the self-concept of Indians has changed a lot in the last 20 years. Today India is a nation of the young; over 60% Indians are below the age of 30. Younger Indians have higher number of years of education, much higher access to media and the internet, greater possibilities of physical mobility. All this has led to an explosion of aspirations.

Yet, the aspirational explosion is matched with an attainment implosion. As an example, see Pratham's Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) for 2016. While enrolment rates in our schools were a very creditable 95%, roughly one out of four children in Standard VIII could not read Std II texts and 57% of Std VIII students could not correctly solve a three-digit by one-digit division problem.

With such a disadvantage in educational attainment, how can we ever cash the much-heralded "demographic dividend"? It seems more like a demographic disappointment. So, the school dropouts of yesterday, whose aspirations have been kindled but means of attainment extinguished, vent their ire



Third, the underlying world view of those who believe in the power of technology is that Nature is meant to be conquered and used for furthering the quality of human life through the application of science. This world view yielded an enormous increase in the lifespan and quality of life of millions of people in the 19th and 20th centuries, through advances ranging from immunisation to the internet.

But technological advancement needs more and more capital, which exacerbates inequity. Not everyone has benefited equally from technological advances; as a result, the skew in the distribution of well-being and wealth has reached unprecedented levels. The unsustainable use of resources has led to an adverse response from Nature.

By contrast, the underlying world view of those who have faith in mythology is that human life is significantly impacted by forces beyond the control of human beings. Those at the extreme believe that the end of the world could be coming as a consequence of arrogant human actions.

What is the implication of this asymmetry for inclusive, sustainable development? We have to accept that rationality is bounded, scientific knowledge is incomplete, and technology based on it is fraught with unforeseen or unintended consequences. And we must recognise the existential value of mythology – as the balm for all that cannot be explained in rational terms, but needs to be accepted.

Thus, in practical terms, to move forward, we must reconcile the religious and cultural value of the river Ganga with its economic value for irrigation and generating hydro-electric power, and its ecological value as an enormous hydraulic channel from the Himalayas to the oceans. Integrating these disparate world views in a wholesome manner is essential, when in issue after issue that seems intractable.

Finally, it's about balance. Unless the balance is restored in each dyad, we will remain deeply flawed as a nation and are unlikely to achieve the cherished, consensual goal of inclusive, sustainable development.

The writer founded PRADAN in 1982 and the BASIX Social Enterprise Group in 1996

against "the system" in multiple ways, such as joining gangs of vigilantes.

We need a national mission for promoting self-employment, starting with skill, business and entrepreneurial training, followed by start-up financing and handholding until the self-employed persons stabilise their enterprises. It will be impossible for India to have inclusive, sustainable development without this.

Second, while there has been a massive increase in awareness and assertion of rights and entitlements in the past two decades, there has been no corresponding increase in our sense of responsibility. A majority of us do not feel any responsibility for building and preserving the normative and institutional framework that protects and promotes those rights.

This could be something as simple as, for example, asserting that it is the responsibility of government school teachers to attend school and teach. Or, at a personal level, how many of us show responsibility towards the environment by reducing, reusing and recycling?

What is the implication of this

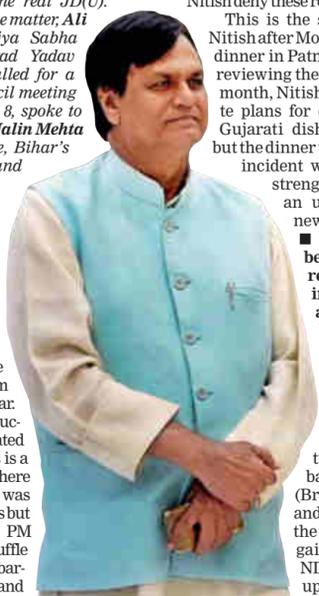
The three asymmetries we face are Aspiration vs Attainment, Rights vs Responsibility and Technology vs Mythology

asymmetry for the goal of inclusive, sustainable development? The numeric logic of universal adult franchise ensures that political leaders feed on the entitlement mentality with pre-election freebies and promises of more, which militate against either fiscal or environmental sustainability. But no political leader dares raise the issue of responsibility, for fear of losing the elections.

The way out of this is to first practise and then promote the notion of responsibility being an essential precondition for entitlements. Once that belief is more widely adopted, our public life is bound to become more accountable and the conduct of public systems and institutions is bound to improve.

'Non-induction of JD(U) a setback for Nitish ... being left out of Modi's cabinet reshuffle is a major embarrassment'

After JD(U) revived its alliance with BJP in Bihar, rival party factions led by state chief minister Nitish Kumar, on one hand, and Sharad Yadav, on the other, are vying for recognition as the real JD(U). With EC taking up the matter, Ali Anwar, JD(U) Rajya Sabha MP with the Sharad Yadav group which has called for a party national council meeting in Delhi on October 8, spoke to Sanjeev Singh and Nalin Mehta on the party's future, Bihar's changing politics and its fallout.



■ JD(U) was not invited to join Narendra Modi's council of ministers. What factors do you think were responsible?

This is PM Modi's prerogative and the matter is between him and Nitish Kumar. However, the non-induction of JD(U) has created a perception that this is a setback for Nitish. There is no doubt JD(U) was expecting some berths but being left out of PM Modi's cabinet reshuffle has caused major embarrassment for Nitish and

the party. For many days before the reshuffle, reports had been suggesting RCP Singh and Ramnath Thakur as JD(U) nominees for taking oath as ministers. Why didn't Nitish deny these reports then?

This is the second setback for Nitish after Modi didn't turn up for dinner in Patna last month. After reviewing the flood situation last month, Nitish had made elaborate plans for dinner with Modi. Gujarati dishes were prepared but the dinner was cancelled. That incident was also a show of strength by Modi to keep an upper hand in the new-found alliance.

■ But Bihar has been given adequate representation by inducting RK Singh and Ashwini Chaudhary in the council of ministers. How will this impact state politics?

BJP has made these changes to consolidate its traditional vote bank of upper castes (Brahmins, Rajputs and Bhumihars). But the message that is gaining ground is that NDA stands only for upper castes. There is

no place for Dalits, minorities and backward classes in its scheme of things.

■ What about the turmoil between JD(U)'s two factions?

We are the real JD(U), led by Sharad Yadav and me. I say this with full responsibility because such a big decision to break alliance with RJD and BJP's support was taken without the national council and executive being called, as required by procedure. A meeting of the council was scheduled for July 23 but was deferred till August 19.

If the council meeting had happened, then the July 26 event of changing alliance partners could have been discussed. It didn't happen. The whole thing was scripted well in advance. This is totally divergent with the last time when the council meeting was called before deciding to part ways with NDA in 2013.

■ Is there any scope of rapprochement between the two sides?

The ball lies in Nitish's court. He supported demonetisation but Sharad Yadav and I had protested at the party conference held at Talkatora stadium a few weeks later. Nitish said JD(U) will take a formal stand after 50 days but nothing happened. Now RBI has stated that 99% of money has returned to banks, and low GDP growth is there for everyone to see. Where is the black money? Yet there is no word of protest from Nitish.

He supported surgical strikes but today our jawans are dying every day fighting terrorists from across the border.

He supported GST and took the decision to support Ram Nath Kovind despite sharing power with Congress and RJD in the state. Who authorised these decisions? Why wasn't the council called before these decisions were taken? This is like saying whatever Nitish decides becomes the law without following any democratic norms as stated in the party constitution.

■ How do you think the new government will fare under Nitish?

There is no doubt he is a great leader who has managed to defy all odds. But this time he seems to have committed political suicide by siding with BJP. This is the same Nitish who coined the slogan 'BJP ke saath nahai jayenge, mitti mein mil jayenge' (We prefer to die but will not join hands with BJP). He gave the clarion call for 'Sangh-mukt Bharat'. It is a national loss because only Nitish was being seen as an alternative, not any Congress leader. Nitish was seen as a viable alternative to Modi but he has now diminished his image by going with BJP.

If corruption was such a big issue with RJD, Nitish could have just resigned and started touring the country. He would have become a hero. One has to take risks in politics but Nitish is very calculating. The country is going through a leadership crisis and there is no single party and no one leader that can take on BJP. All parties with a democratic and humanitarian approach need to come together to tackle the divisive politics of BJP in 2019.



Minting money

Thanks to demonetisation, India has reaped huge economic benefits

Jug Suraiya



Two bhakts exchanging notes – pun not intended – on the merits of demonetisation.

1st bhakt: No matter what these lefty liberals like Amartya Sen and Raghuram Rajan say, demonetisation has been a great boon for us.

2nd bhakt: You bet it has. What with 99% of the banned 500 and 1,000 rupee notes having been returned to the RBI it's obvious that magically – chhooo mantar! – black money has disappeared as though it never existed in the first place.

1st bhakt: And along with black money so have all the nakli notes that were funding terrorism.

2nd bhakt: But how come terrorists continue to carry out terror strikes?

1st bhakt: Oh, those are only nakli terrorists, not real ones. According to the brilliant reasoning of demonetisation, only fake notes could fund real terrorism. So, by that logic, real notes would have the inverse effect and could fund only nakli terrorism.

2nd bhakt: That's very reassuring. But the greatest benefit of demonetisation has been the remonetisation made necessary by demonetisation. India is literally minting money, with the RBI churning out new notes to replace the old banned notes.

1st bhakt: Right. And the beauty of it is that the sarkar is spending more money on printing the new notes than the total sum of all the old notes that were returned. By this one master stroke the sarkar has turned Make in India into Mint in India. Wah, wah!

2nd bhakt: Wah, indeed, wah. Demonetisation has proved to be such a huge success that we should make it an annual feature, like Diwali, or Holi, or Friendship Day.

1st bhakt: Hey, that's a terrific idea which'll ensure that we keep minting money year after year. But what'll we do with all the old banned notes the RBI collects?

2nd bhakt: Don't worry. That's where Skill India comes in. We'll provide mass employment by imparting special skills to the people who'll dispose of the old notes. All we have to do is figure what special skills are needed to become a raddiwala ...

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dilbert



Shri Shri Anandamurti

The faithful believe that if you die in Varanasi, liberation is guaranteed. In this sense, Varanasi does not refer to a city or place; it refers to a 'bindu', a particular point. In the spiritual sphere, when you reach that bindu, you no longer take rebirth – the cycle of birth and death stops and the aspirant no longer has to return to this world.

When we say that in Varanasi there is no rebirth, it refers to a point situated between the Ajna chakra (between the eyebrows) and Sahasrara chakra (in the crown of the head), between the pituitary and pineal glands. Spiritual aspirants, through sadhana and with Divine help, become established in that point, attaining great mental power and omniscience. Such people do not have to take another birth in this world. That is why it is said that if you die in Varanasi – also known as Kashi – you will never be

reborn. Kashi does not refer to a city, but to that spiritual point.

"Trailokyani bhutani tani sarvani dehatah." "Whatever exists in this world also exists within your body." You are a microcosmic expression of the universe. That is why it has been said, "Know thyself. Acquire Atmajnana, Self-knowledge."

Go deep within to the centre-point of your existence. First, go to your centre plexus and then to your Muladhara chakra at the base of the spine. Your Muladhara chakra is an ideational entity orbiting like a satellite around the Supreme Muladhara. If you make the effort to know your inner Self, if your desire for Self-knowledge is strong, all secrets will be revealed to you. There are four dimensions of yoga psychology: Muladhara chakra to Manipura chakra,

Manipura chakra to Vishudha chakra, Vishudha chakra to Ajna chakra and above, to Sahasrara chakra. These dimensions correspond to the four phases of meditation. The position of Ajna chakra is psycho-spiritual and Sahasrara chakra is pure spiritual. Hence, sadhana is a bio-psychological process. When we do spiritual practice, then only we know the location of chakras.

That point, that Varanasi, situated between Ajna and Sahasrara chakras, is bright and luminous. It is Kashi, the "very luminous entity".

Some people say that the town Varanasi is so-called because it is situated between the rivers Baruna and Ashi, but if that were so, the name would have been Varunasi and not Varanasi. The correct derivation is var + anas = varanas which



Sacredspace

The Sea

The sea is everything. It covers seven-tenths of the terrestrial globe. Its breath is pure and healthy. It is an immense 'desert', where man is never lonely, for he feels life stirring on all sides.

Jules Verne

In Varanasi, There's No Scope For Rebirth

becomes varanasi in the feminine gender. "Var" means "to forbid" and "anas" means "birth". Those who die at Varanasi are not reborn. It is not a city in India, but a bindu or point. One may learn the secrets of this point through the practice of Vishesh yoga. During this meditation the mind ascends to such a height that there is no further need to acquire a new body.

To establish the mind on this point of Varanasi or Kashi, one has to elevate the mind. Those who have learnt the technique of Tantra sadhana or Kapalika sadhana, know what joy can be derived from this. It helps to establish the practitioner in the cult of Varanasi. Those who have not yet mastered it, will one day be established in the cult of Varanasi. Why not? Those who have acquired a human structure will surely be established in Varanasi.

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