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Has
Much to
Rejoice
while . . .



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PEACE IMPULSES FROM OKINAWA



MEMORABLE ENCOUNTERS IN GHANA



Nuclear Non-Proliferation

B E Y O N D

IMPRINT

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES – INTERNATIONAL EDITION
MAGAZINE FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
A PRODUCTION OF GLOBAL COOPERATION COUNCIL
in cooperation with IDN-InDepthNews | Analysis That Matters

WWW.GLOBAL-PERSPECTIVES.INFO
ISSN 2190-0671 (PRINT) • ISSN 2190-068X (INTERNET)
PERIODICITY: 12 ISSUES A YEAR
INCLUDING NOVEMBER-DECEMBER COMBINED ISSUE.

PUBLISHER: GLOBALOM MEDIA GmbH
Marienstr. 19-20 • D-10117 Berlin | E-Mail: rjaura@global-perspectives.info
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Annual Subscription: Europe 40 Euro | Postal charges additional.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

MAGAZINE FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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Global Editors:

Ernest Corea and Ramesh Jaura

Correction

The January 2011 edition of
Global Perspectives carried on page 9
a news analysis headlined

Turmoil in Tucson Distorts Political Process

The article was written by Ernest Corea.

We very much regret the error.

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Analysis That Matters



Civilisation Has a Future Beyond Oil

By Stefan Schurig* in Hamburg



Each generation takes care of its descendants: This basic tenet is ignored when it comes to the energy systems deployed by most of the industrialised nations. The 'western' lifestyle today is based almost exclusively on fossil fuels. This will have to change if we want to pass on a more-or-less intact world

to the generations to come. Not sometime in the distant future but now!

The discovery of fossil fuels cleared the path for industrialisation with the automation and acceleration of work processes. It ignited a self-perpetuating cycle of burning fossil fuels to build bigger machines to drill for more oil, gas and coal to gain capacity for an even bigger technical exhaustion of fossil fuels. The availability of previously unknown quantities of oil, gas and coal triggered electrification, mobility, mass production, speed, large-scale infrastructure measures, etc.

Between 1950 and the year 2000 alone the global demand for fossil fuels went up by 500% with devastating consequences for the environment -- the rapidly increasing emissions of greenhouse gases that cause climate chaos as well as the pollution of the air and our flora and fauna. Since oil prices are rising again a more deeper look into this fossil fuel and its impact on our societies deserves attention.

OIL POLLUTION

In the last 200 years oil has become one of the most dominant factors of western societies. It is used as a source of energy as well as a raw material in the manufacturing of plastics and fertilizers. In 1920, 95 million tons of oil were produced annually around the world. This number reached 500 million tons by 1950, a billion tons in 1960, and an average annual production of around 3 billion tons in the 1990s, according to crude oil statistics of the International Energy Agency (IEA).

The problems of the oil industry, however, are massive at every single component of the supply chain. It starts with the 'upstream' business where oil is being explored and extracted from the earth crust. Stunned like a rabbit by car headlights we

had to witness the incapacity of BP to quickly react at the Deepwater Horizon accident in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, a disaster unfolding before our eyes over weeks and weeks.

The impacts of the oil spill on the people, economy and environment of Gulf coastal states will persist for decades. And unless we change course it is much likely that deep sea drilling will cause more of these devastating accidents like in the Gulf of Mexico since the bulk of the global oil reservoirs sits thousands of meters under sea level.

Also, most of the places where oil has been produced are remote areas either in the ocean or desert regions of the world. The transport routes and methods are as important as the production. Since the first oil tanker began shipping oil in 1878 in the Caspian Sea, the capacity of the world's maritime tanker fleet has grown remarkably.

As of 2005, about 2.4 billion tons of oil -- roughly 62% of all the oil produced -- were shipped by maritime transportation. The remaining 38% either used mainly pipelines, trains or trucks. More than 100 million tons of oil are shipped each day by tankers.

Between 1984 and 2008 every year there were some 9,000 tons of discharges and spillage of dispersed oil only in the North Sea and the Northeast Atlantic, according to the OSPAR (Convention for the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic). Since oil is of strategic importance for the global economy, it has always been an object of geopolitical conflicts too. Several geopolitical confrontations were closely related to oil or had serious impacts on oil supply and prices.

OIL CONFLICTS

Not only had the recent wars in the Persian Gulf but also the two World Wars underlined the strategic importance of oil. Almost all military vehicles were equipped with oil combustion engines. The Second World War in particular was dominated by oil as a key weapon for armoured and air forces. The decision of the United States to establish an oil embargo on Japan which was reliant on the U. S. by some 80% in 1941 triggered the war in the Pacific.

The oil industry still is oligopolistic both in its supply, demand, control and in its functional and geographical concentration. The demand is controlled by a few very large multinational conglomerates, each having a production and distribution system composed of refineries, storage facilities, distribution centres and at the end of the supply chain, gas stations. ☺

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The supply is controlled by a few countries where the oil industry is often nationalized or by the OPEC umbrella, which holds 79% of world's crude oil reserves and 44% of world's crude oil production.

In addition to the environmental and geopolitical problems it is quite likely that global oil reserves will run out far before politicians have managed to put in place alternative and inexhaustible resources. The point in time when the maximum rate of global oil production is reached and after which the production begins to decline (peak oil) is by no means a futuristic scenario. Quite the opposite: We may have even passed it.

"Oil supplies are running out fast," warned the British newspaper 'The Independent' already in summer 2009. The world's capacity to meet projected future oil demand is in fact at a tipping point, according to research by the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment at Oxford University.

A report by the German military (Bundeswehr) from January 2010 suggests that there is "some probability that peak oil will occur around the year 2010 and that the impact on security is expected to be felt 15 to 30 years later."

The study even raises fears for the survival of democracy itself. Parts of the population could perceive the upheaval triggered by peak oil "as a general systemic crisis." This would create "room for ideological and extremist alternatives to existing forms of government."

But as mentioned above, the total dependence on oil and other fossil fuels such as coal and gas also inevitably impact climate change with its perilous consequences for agriculture as well as for cities and thus for the thousands of lives and livelihoods. These harmful consequences are suffered above all by the countries of South America, Asia and Africa.

Disastrous harvest failures caused by drought and increasing soil infertility imply the loss of means of existence for many farmers already today -- with disastrous implications for the lifestyle and culture of the rural population. People are migrating to cities to survive. Social structures and cultures established over centuries are disintegrating.

GOOD NEWS

The good news however is that there are alternatives to fossil fuel life styles. The industrialised nations which are mainly responsible for the problems described above must act resolutely

by way of encouraging massive push for renewable energy and energy efficiency, renewable energy access in developing countries, forest protection and support of organic agriculture.

Alternative policy proposals need to be integrated, need to encourage innovation, need be easily understood, and need to promote resilience and rapid change. We must build economies that serve the people -- rather than people serving economies -- and economies that internalise environmental costs. Markets are good servants but bad masters.

Also we must start taxing "the bad", not the good. A shift from labour to resource taxes is a pre-condition for a shift to a sustainable, energy-efficient economy.

Solar and other renewable energies can deliver abundant long-term energy for all, if we stop rejecting projects for short-term 'cost' reasons. The German Renewable Energies Act, the so called Feed-in-tariff is a good example of how a well designed policy can unleash the renewable energy uptake and make these technologies competitive.

The legislation resulted into a 15% share of Germany's total electricity demand only within 10 years. 300,000 jobs were created and Germany became a world leader in this innovative technology sector, holding out fresh opportunities to thousands of small electricity suppliers.

This is a good example of giving power to the people in the best sense.

A stable climate is part of the foundation of our lives and livelihoods. Climate disasters are threatening the freedom, security and rights of all future generations. But solutions are available.

In fact we can decide today to create an earth community built on sharing best technologies, reciprocity and co-operation. We can transform our production and consumption systems, based on the circular loop "cradle-to-cradle" models already developed. The human species has shown that it actually can take care of its descendants. Let us listen to those who have seen the future path for energy already many decades ago.

Let us recall what Thomas Edison, the American inventor and scientist (1847-1931), told his friend Henry Ford.

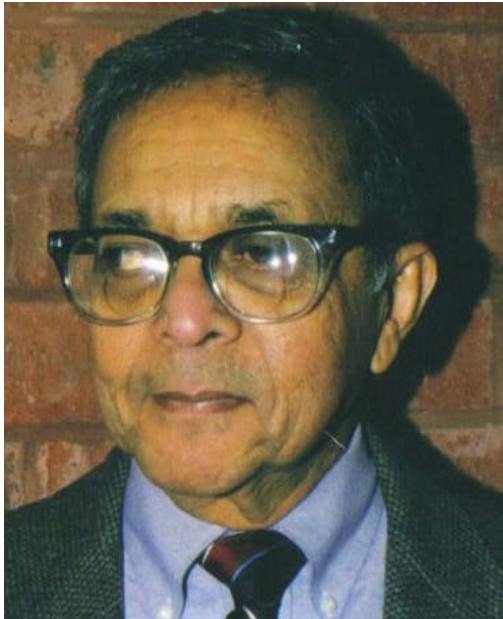
"We are like tenant farmers chopping down the fence around our house for fuel when we should be using Nature's inexhaustible sources of energy -- sun, wind and tide. ... I'd put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don't have to wait until oil and coal run out before we tackle that." ■

... the total dependence on oil and other fossil fuels such as coal and gas also inevitably impact climate change with its perilous consequences for agriculture as well as for cities and thus for the thousands of lives and livelihoods. These harmful consequences are suffered above all by the countries of South America, Asia and Africa.

Egypt Has Much to Celebrate While Questions Linger

By Ernest Corea* in Washington D.C.

Twenty-one years to the day on which Nelson Mandela emerged from the darkness of 27 years in a South African prison, Egypt's Hosni Mubarak packed his bags and departed with his family from the darkness of 30 years of his own dictatorship.



Only a day earlier, Mubarak had declaimed in a pathetic display of paternalism that he would hold out until the elections due to be held in September. The next morning, pfft, he was blown away to Sharm el-Sheikh where, for now, he can luxuriate in isolation.

There are, to be sure, huge differences between the two men and their circumstances, but the coincidence of their dates is fascinating because what happened with each of them on February 11 (1990 and 2011) presented each of their countries with the challenges and opportunities of a new beginning.

Mandela, an icon at home and abroad, led his people as they confronted those challenges and attempted to seize the opportunities. In Egypt, that process has only begun, and it is too early to tell whether electoral support will identify an outstanding political figure from Egypt's pro-democracy groups to lead the country towards healing and rebuilding. Who could that be?

WIDE INFLUENCE

The best-known manifestation of Egypt's anti-Mubarak public upheaval was at Tahrir (Libera-

tion) Square in Cairo. Protests opposing Mubarak took place elsewhere in Cairo, as well as in major cities such as Alexandria; and also in some rural areas. The upheaval was both strengthened and expanded when workers from numerous industries came out on strike in support of the pro-democracy movement.

These developments made it clear to most public figures other than Mubarak and, to a lesser extent, his newly-minted Vice President, Gen. Omar Suleiman, that the Mubarak presidency was not sustainable. It was the military, however, that presented him with a "quit or be kicked out" choice. In leaving the presidency, he handed over power to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, thereby effectively suspending the constitution.

Will the military, who have -- with a few exceptions -- conducted themselves with exemplary professionalism throughout the Egyptian revolution, maintain that record? Or will they attempt to "run the clock down" until they feel confident that the status quo, with some cosmetic modifications, can be preserved?

The military has been a component of the Mubarak system, with influence and engagement even in non-military business activities. Their professionalism will be sorely tested as demands for replacing the system itself and not only the president grow more persistent.

Will the pro-democracy groups remain united even when they have no outstanding figure against whom to combine their resources and energies? Will individual ambitions turn divisive? Will external pressures, overt and covert, be disruptive?

Yes, of course, questions linger, but this is not a time for pessimism. This is a time for Egyptians to savour what they have achieved through non-violent civil disobedience. It is a time for the region to learn the lessons that the Egyptian experience provides.

And it certainly is a time for the world to exult in the triumph of a peaceful revolution that took just 18 days (less than the gestation period of a rabbit) to reach its most fundamental goal: Mubarak's exit.

HISTORIC MOMENT

President Barack Obama said in his first formal comment on the triumph of Egypt's civil society: "There are very few moments in our lives where we have the privilege to witness history taking place. This is one of those moments..... The people of Egypt have spoken, their voices have been heard, and Egypt will never be the same."

Several elements converged to create the historic moment. Perhaps the most important of them was the clarity and simplicity of the revolution's message: Mubarak must go. As the faithful who gathered day in, day out at Tahrir Square chanted: "Leave, leave, Mubarak." And "He must go, we will stay."

When drop-by correspondents sought amplification, they did not receive much more than: "He must go. No more corruption. We want freedom. We want democracy. He must go." The unified message and the discipline with which it was kept intact is extraordinary for any combination of groups with disparate backgrounds and priorities. Nevertheless, the groups that came together at Tahrir Square temporarily set aside their separate interests to emphasise the one demand that animated them all.

The Muslim Brotherhood did not preach religious fundamentalism, secularists did not challenge fundamentalists, classlessness was achieved among protestors in a stratified society, and everybody involved in the pro-democracy exercise was unusually energised. ☺

*The writer has served as Sri Lanka's ambassador to Canada, Cuba, Mexico, and the USA. He was Chairman of the Commonwealth Select Committee on the media and development, Editor of the Ceylon 'Daily News' and the Ceylon 'Observer', and was for a time Features Editor and Foreign Affairs columnist of the Singapore 'Straits Times'. He is on the IDN editorial board and President of the Media Task Force of Global Cooperation Council.

These ranged from a "command post" at Tahrir Square itself, maximum use of the new information technology and, where all else failed, word of mouth and door-to-door dissemination.

Some observers noted that power was "tapped" from public lighting around the square to power IT devices and, also, that the ubiquitous cell phone connected almost everybody to almost everybody else.

'NOT NOTHING'

Just as getting the message out was crucial, so was the respect that the pro--democracy movement earned by its commitment to non-violence.

When vigilantes shed their police uniforms and attacked Tahrir Square on horse back and on camels, the protesting crowds retaliated – and their defence was, at the very least, robust. The invaders eventually scurried away, but not before some of them were captured and handed over to the army. The rout of pro-Mubarak goons prompted a foreign observer to ask: "Is Mubarak losing his hand at repression?"

Despite having to defend themselves against an onslaught, the protestors, not only in Cairo but elsewhere in the country, maintained their commitment to peaceful protest. In Alexandria, for instance, observers said, "the efforts by demonstrators, particularly the young, collaborating with the military to protect cultural artifacts from vandals and looters -- many of them allegedly identified as police agents -- has been truly extraordinary." As these various strands coalesced in a strong and unbreakable skein of public resistance, Egyptians showed unflinching courage -- and rediscovered themselves.

"The government made us all believe that we are nothing," a protesting Egyptian said to a reporter. "Now, we have freed ourselves from that belief. We are not nothing"

"We don't trust them any more," a young Egyptian patiently waiting his turn to enter Tahrir Square told BBC. "How can Suleiman guarantee there'll be no more violence around the election after all the attacks we've seen on young people?"

An older Egyptian, who was also part of the protesting crowd, said: "We are asking why there is no committee for young people. He has to ask the young people what they want -- this is all about the young people."

Throughout, the protestors did not lose their infectious sense of humour. Asked whether what had just happened in Egypt would influence events in other Middle East countries, a Tahrir Square activist replied: "For sure. After our Liberation Friday, all dictators have decided to abolish Fridays."

THINK AGAIN

There will certainly be much to think about in the region, both by governments and potential protestors. Some heads of government and politicians will sleep uneasily in coming days. Others, such as the Israelis, will do slightly better, now that the



Supreme Council of Egypt's Armed Forces has announced that it will respect existing treaty obligations.

There will also be much to think about in numerous foreign policy institutions beyond the region, as well. The notion that Mubarak or, at least, Suleiman was indispensable for a peaceful transformation to take place in Egypt will surely need to be extensively reviewed at the U.S. State Department.

Those considerations are less significant than the realities that Egypt must face. How soon will power be transferred to an elected, civilian authority? Will the emergency be lifted before elections take place? Who will be entrusted with the responsibility of creating new, democratic institutions that will replace those that need to be taken down? What mechanisms are required to fight corruption?

Modernisation of the economy has fuelled growth in recent years, but the fruits of growth have not reached the approximately 40 percent of the population who are considered poor or near--poor. The challenge of turning this situation around will loom heavily before the country and its next government. Failure to make progress on this front will surely lead to a new wave of protests.

CONSIDER THIS

So now, consider this. Throughout the tumult of the 18-day revolution, Egyptians in general and participants in the January 25 Movement in particular, were roundly insulted both by their leaders and by the patrons of those leaders in foreign capitals.

The notion that the heirs to a culture as great as Egypt's are unfit for democracy is drivel straight out of never-never land. So is the claim that the country could not move away from dictatorship unless the transition was managed by the dictator and his cronies.

Contrary to such claims and assertions, recent events have demonstrated, yet again, that Egypt is a powerhouse of talent. Friends of Egypt, and they are numerous, will surely hope that the country's talent pool will be fully utilised as Egypt attempts to recover from 30 years of dictatorship. ■

Picture above: Wikimedia Commons - Muhammad Ghafari

NATO Ready to Facilitate Middle East Peace

By Bernhard Schell



As uncertainty and suspense about an emerging new Egypt and its impact on the Middle East grip the international community, the Euro-U.S. military alliance NATO

has offered to serve as a facilitator, though in a rather circum-spect manner.

"Through its Mediterranean partnership, NATO can help the region by acting as a facilitator, building closer ties between the stakeholders and providing a venue for a security dialogue," the alliance's Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen told an international gathering in Israel.

"Our own countries in Europe have set aside their differences to build security mechanisms that allow them to address the challenges of tomorrow. The Middle East does not have to be an exception and I believe that Israel can play a leading role in that endeavour," Rasmussen said.

He added: "Of course, pending a comprehensive Middle East Peace Settlement, this seems almost utopian. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict may no longer be perceived as the only problem in the region, but it still constitutes a major impediment in addressing other issues that threaten regional stability. The lack of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to undermine the stability of the region."

Rasmussen was addressing the 11th annual Herzliya Conference on February 9, 2011 in the Israeli city of Herzliya, named after Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism.

Explaining the rationale behind the Herzliya Conference, the 'Interdisciplinary Center' (IDC), which organised the gathering, said: "Early 2011 is likely to be a critical juncture of game-changing developments requiring international decision-making regarding a broad and daunting array of issues to include strategic directions of the key regional actors, the Middle East Peace Process, the future of Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, domestic political stability in the Middle East, energy and natural resource security and geopolitics, regional and global economic governance, as well as new forms of cyber and missile warfare and the attempts to curb nuclear proliferation" -- all issues of crucial interest to the 28-nation NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).

These issues indeed drew the focus, prompting Rasmussen to say: "I do not have illusions about NATO's role in providing secu-

urity in the region: NATO cannot solve all the problems and it never intended to do so. After all, Mediterranean partners never expected such a thing from NATO. But we can still provide a substantial added value in the region."

According to the IDC, the deliberations at Herzliya also addressed "Israeli responses to these challenges and strategies to pro-actively confront the 'soft war' launched against the legitimacy of Israel's right to self-defense, its inherent obligation to vigorously pursue its national interests, and even its very existence as a Jewish state."

Responding to Israeli concerns, he assured that "in times of upheaval such as this, you can count on established partnerships. Indeed, I am here to speak about a better future: the future of NATO's relations with Israel and the other Mediterranean partners."

According to Rasmussen, a better future depends: on how common threats and challenges are defined; on finding common solutions; and on "our understanding that we share a common destiny".

NATO is presently not involved in the Middle East peace process. In fact, any possible NATO involvement is linked to three 'IF's': if a comprehensive peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians was reached; if both parties requested that NATO should help them with the implementation of that agreement; and if the United Nations endorsed NATO's possible involvement.

The NATO chief said there was a common destiny which bonds Allies and the Mediterranean. "A strong and dynamic relationship between the Euro-Atlantic countries and Israel is a key part of it. We have much in common, not least a pluralist democracy, a robust public debate and a lively media scene. But stability and prosperity can only come from within the region. And stability and prosperity will only survive if the regional players want to be engaged."

A new and different challenge emerging across the region, Rasmussen said, was the need to address the demand of Arab societies for democratic reforms. "We monitor the situation very closely -- Egypt and Tunisia are valued members of the Mediterranean Dialogue (established in 1994) I have urged all parties to engage without delay in an open dialogue, to ensure a peaceful, democratic and speedy transition with full respect of human rights." ➔

Statement by the NATO Secretary General on events in Egypt

I welcome President Mubarak's decision. I have consistently called for a speedy, orderly and peaceful transition to democracy, respecting the legitimate aspirations of the people of Egypt.

In the long run, no society can neglect the will of the people. Democracy means much more than majority rule -- it also means respect for individual freedom, for minorities, human rights and the rule of law. These are the values on which our Alliance is based and the values we encourage our partners to respect. Egypt is a valued partner in our Mediterranean Dialogue and a pivotal country in the region. I am confident Egypt will continue to be a force for stability and security. (February 11, 2011)

Rasmussen said: "Though we are only at the beginning, I am confident that our new Mediterranean Dialogue partnership will better address the threats and challenges of tomorrow. I can see three priority areas where there is scope for improvement: political consultations, practical cooperation and operations."

The first priority area, he explained, are political consultations on a bilateral and multilateral basis. The Mediterranean Dialogue provides the tools to engage in a genuine exchange of views on all the issues of common concern. "It is up to us to expand the range and intensity of these discussions. We must take our dialogue further and address those issues that really matter."

Secondly, NATO has taken the decision to further expand its practical cooperation with the Mediterranean. It is extending the range of activities together with all Mediterranean partners: from around 700 to more than 1600. "When it comes to cooperation projects, there is no longer any distinction between the Mediterranean countries and the Euro-Atlantic partners," the NATO chief said.

Among the areas where the NATO and Mediterranean countries we can work together are: civil emergency planning, military-to-military cooperation, and the fight against terrorism. An evidence of cooperation in civil emergency is that in December 2010 several NATO Allies contributed to the Israeli effort to extinguish the fires that ravaged the North of the country. This cooperation could be taken further through joint training, joint exercises and greater connectivity between our emergency centres, Rasmussen said.

To ensure the protection of its Allies, NATO is developing new capabilities to meet new threats and challenges, such as Missile and Cyber defence, he told the gathering.

The third priority is joint operations. Several Mediterranean partners are taking part in NATO's ongoing operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan. "These contributions are important in themselves. However, it is also important to set a clear framework, within which Mediterranean partners could further participate in NATO-led operations."

The NATO Secretary-General said that since the beginning, Israel had been one of the "most dynamic participants" in the Mediterranean Dialogue. This initiative had gathered Israel and its Arab partners around the same table, engaging them in a political and security dialogue, and touching on military cooperation. "That was an achievement which we should not underestimate," he said.

The Mediterranean Dialogue was not taking place in a vacuum. It was established soon after the Oslo accords and the Israeli-Jordanian Peace Treaty. "You could say that, it was the Age of Optimism in the Middle East. I am an optimist by nature, but I am also a realist. So I attach particular importance to the changing



regional dynamics and what they mean for the longer term security of the region."

Rasmussen said new threats had become more prominent in the wider region. Issues such as nuclear proliferation, ballistic missile proliferation or terrorism constitute problems not only for the Middle East but also for the NATO.

NATO's New Strategic Concept that was adopted in Lisbon (in November 2010) makes it very clear that the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery, threatens incalculable consequences for global stability and prosperity. During the next decade, NATO expects proliferation to be most acute in some of the world's most volatile regions.

The NATO chief perceives the rapid increase in the deployment of conventional ballistic missiles a clear danger. Currently, over 30 states have or are in the process of acquiring such weapons. And some of them can already strike NATO Allies.

Against this backdrop, the decision to develop a Missile Defence Capability, taken at the NATO Summit in Lisbon, underlines the commitment by the Alliance to acquire the necessary means to address these threats.

A new and different challenge emerging across the region, Rasmussen said, was the need to address the demand of Arab societies for democratic reforms. "We monitor the situation very closely -- Egypt and Tunisia are valued members of the Mediterranean Dialogue. I have urged all parties to engage without delay in an open dialogue, to ensure a peaceful, democratic and speedy transition with full respect of human rights."

For over 30 years, Egypt has played a key moderating role in the region. And the NATO wants that Egypt remains "a force for peace and stability". ■

. . . NATO has taken the decision to further expand its practical cooperation with the Mediterranean. It is extending the range of activities together with all Mediterranean partners: from around 700 to more than 1600. "When it comes to cooperation projects, there is no longer any distinction between the Mediterranean countries and the Euro-Atlantic partners," the NATO chief said.

'Aid Should Not Sustain Repression in Ethiopia'

An Interview by Karina Böckmann*



Western nations and multilateral agencies disburse aid mechanically rather than intelligently; no one cares what happens to the money; and the level of cynicism in aid bureaucracies is simply atrocious, says a distinguished Ethiopian journalist Eskinder Nega (right in picture) who along with his wife Serkalem Fasil (left in picture), also a journalist, has suffered behind bars.

"There is an international standard of good governance -- multi-party democracy and fair elections -- to which all countries should be held accountable. This is not a call for rich nations to meddle in the internal affairs of poor countries," he says, adding: "Strict adherence to democratic standards in the

dispensing of aid-money will inevitably trigger the internal dynamics to meet those standards."

Eskinder Nega was jailed seven times and tortured because he reported fraud in parliamentary elections in Ethiopia in 2005. Serkalem Fasil gave birth to a child while in captivity, which she was allowed to see only sometimes. She was charged with treason in 2007 but acquitted in response to international pressure. The 'International Women's Media Foundation' (IWMF) conferred on her an award the same year for her courage as a journalist.

Karina Böckmann interviewed the journalist couple by E-Mail against the backdrop of a public debate on development cooperation with Ethiopia, unleashed by a Human Rights Watch (HRW) report 'Development without Freedom - How Aid Underwrites Repression in Ethiopia' released in October 2010.

The importance of the report is underscored by the fact that between 2004 and 2008, international development aid to Ethiopia doubled to more than US\$3.3 billion annually, making this landlocked country in the Horn of Africa one of Africa's largest recipients of funds from the rich Western nations and multilateral agencies.

Question: How would you describe the current human rights situation in Ethiopia?

Serkalem Fasil and Eskinder Nega: In one word: horrible. Ethiopia has been Africa's star backslider since 2005, when, as had happened in Burma, an opposition victory in the nation's first real multi-elections was reversed by brute force. The absence of a strong civil society and free press -- both suppressed in 2005 has hastened the descent. The civil society and the free press had both by and large served as checks on the traditionally unre-

Q: How many dissidents and journalists are in prison right now?

Eskinder Nega: No precise figures on the exact numbers have ever been tallied. But that they have always run into thousands -- mostly into tens of thousands -- for the entire span of the two decades that the EPRDF (Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front) has been in power is an established fact. A dis-

Q: Though many of your colleagues have left the country, you continue to hold on. Why? What are your motives/expectations/hopes for your country in the coming years?

Serkalem Fasil and Eskinder Nega: Hope has kept us in the country. Optimism about the future was stirred by the success of multi-party democracy elsewhere in Africa -- Botswana, Ghana, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Senegal etc. We have come to believe not only in the possibility of democracy but also in its irremediable destiny for us as a people and a nation. The ups and downs we go through, both as individuals and as a nation, to get

Ethiopia is in fact one of the most aid-dependant countries in the world and received more than US\$2 billion in 2009, but its major donors have been unwilling to confront the government over its worsening human rights record.

Two months after the HRW report was released, executive director Kenneth Roth admonished the Addis Ababa based Development Assistance Group (DAG) -- comprising 26 bilateral and multilateral development agencies -- for its failure to "initiate a credible and independent inquiry" into "serious allegations about the misuse of donor-supported programs for repressive purposes by the government of Ethiopia".

Also the European Union team, monitoring the May 2010 polls, criticized in its November report the ruling party's misuse of state resources during the election campaign. Ethiopia's ruling party won more than 99.6 percent of parliamentary seats in an election that, according to European observers, "fell short of international standards".

Following are extracts from the interview:

strained power of the Ethiopian state. Low-level insurgencies in the Oromo and Somali regions have entailed disproportionate responses by the military; in one instance, charges of scorched-earth retaliation in the Somali region has been corroborated by HRW satellite images. Ethiopia is now consistently rated as one of the worst offenders of human rights in the world by all international rights groups.

turbingly high number of these have either been sentenced -- mostly without a fair trial -- either to death or life imprisonment. Ethiopia has sentenced more political prisoners to death than the entire sub-Saharan African countries (minus Rwanda and Sudan) combined (which is also true of life sentences.)

there are not only unavoidable, as every precedent throughout the world amply demonstrates, but in the grand perspective of things, they are exactly the ingredients that give the ultimate prize -- democracy -- real value. We are highly privileged to be part of this history. We cannot envision ourselves giving it up for anything else. ☺

*Karina Böckmann is editor-in-charge at IPS-Inter Press Service Germany, a member of the media network of Global Cooperation Council and Globalom Media, for which she conducted this E-Mail interview.

Q: In the last elections the ruling party led by Prime Minister (PM) Meles Zenawi bagged 99.6 per cent of the seats. A result too good to be true . . . ?

Serkalem Fasil: Yes, to say the least. In the ultimate height of absurdity, the PM has adamantly insisted that the one seat for the opposition in the 547 seat Parliament -- a consequence of his party's 99.6 "victory" -- actually means more democracy than ever. Mind you, he did not blink when he uttered those words. I am fascinated that he has the strength to look at himself in the mirror every morning after saying that. I know I wouldn't.

Q: Being former political prisoners and critics of the government of Meles Zenawi, what are the problems you are facing day in and day out both as private persons and as professional journalists?

Eskinder Nega: I have been imprisoned seven times for my work as a journalist. During the imprisonments, I had my shoulder dislocated; was tortured; beaten; and roughed up. My wife, Serkalem Fasil, gave birth to our son in prison under appalling circumstances. Our son, premature and underweight at birth, was denied an incubator. Each incident has had exactly the opposite of the intended effect -- that is, it made us more not less determined. Such is the power of the truth on average people, whom we embody by sentiment, disposition and upbringing. The lesson: the truth is more powerful than the might of the state.

Q: Are you being harassed?

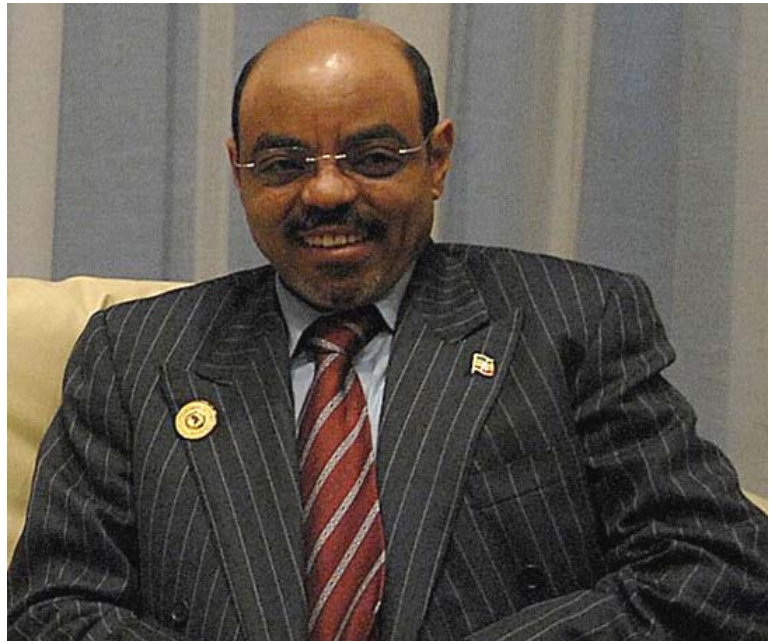
Serkalem Fasil and Eskinder Nega: Let's just say that the police-state version of the paparazzi have high interest in us. Fortunately, our name-recognition and international exposure affords us some level of protection -- our only protection. Many others could not say the same. They are by far worse off than we are. It wouldn't be fair to speak of our plight when many others are suffering more.

Q: You published three independent newspapers that were closed down in November 2005 because of critical reports about the election process at that time. Is there any chance for you in the near future to work as journalists again?

Serkalem Fasil: We hope so. But if not, we will not be dissuaded. The struggle will continue --broadened and intensified peacefully and legally -- until we are able to do so. Time is on our side. The truth is on our side. We will win in the end.

Q: Ethiopia is something like the donors' 'darling'. A boon or a bane?

Eskinder Nega: There is an international standard of good governance -- multi-party democracy and fair elections -- to which all countries should be held accountable. This is not a call for rich nations to meddle in the internal affairs of poor countries. Strict adherence to democratic standards in the disbursing of aid-money will inevitably trigger the internal dynamics to meet those standards. There shouldn't be country specific standards; which would invite the loathed prying. Rather, the standard for good governance should be the same for all countries; which



would make it impartial. No country has beaten poverty with aid-money. Ethiopia will not be the first to shatter this record. . . . In the meantime, as HRW has eloquently expressed it, tyranny is being subsidized by donor countries.

Q: International media see Prime Minister Zenawi as a man with a Janus head: on the one hand supporting development and on the other violating basic rights. Do you agree?

Serkalem Fasil: Even after a twenty years reign by PM Meles Zenawi, Ethiopia has yet to feed her hungry millions. The country is still food-aid dependent -- 37 years after receiving the first shipment. There is no precedent for this -- past or present -- in world history. PM Meles has led Ethiopia for more consecutive hunger stricken-years -- --twenty years -- than any other leader in history. What kind of a "development record" is this? Certainly, not the kind any sane person would be proud of. How the Kenyans -- who have half the population but export twice as much -- must be amused at our "development"! The international media has missed the real story.

Q: German federal development minister Dirk Niebel (during his visit to Ethiopia January 11-14) has promised more aid to support Ethiopia's development efforts. How do you evaluate the visit of minister Niebel referring to human rights in Ethiopia?

Eskinder Nega: The policy imperative in the West is to mechanically disburse aid-money; not distribute it intelligently. Though aid had started with lofty and estimable goals, profound disappointments has led to its degeneration to little more than the soothing of the guilt-ridden conscience of the rich in a wretchedly wanting world. No one really cares what happens to the money -- it hasn't changed the world, and it's not expected to. The level of cynicism in aid bureaucracies is simply atrocious -- apathy reigns undisputed. And I fear that Dirk Niebel has been overwhelmed by the cynics. Paradoxically, the world needs more not less aid money. It is capable of doing good. It just needs to be separated from inertia and cynicism. ■

"The struggle will continue --broadened and intensified peacefully and legally -- until we are able to do so. Time is on our side. The truth is on our side. We will win in the end."

Combating Poverty with Clean Energy

By Bernhard Schell

Fighting poverty by promoting sustainable development and mitigating climate change is one of the priorities of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for 2011. With this in view, he is calling for a global revolution that would benefit some 1.6 billion people in developing countries still lacking access to electricity.

Addressing the Fourth World Future Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, on January 17, Ban said: "Our challenge is transformation. We need a global clean energy revolution -- a revolution that makes energy available and affordable for all."

This, he added, is essential for minimizing climate risks, for reducing poverty and improving global health, for empowering women and meeting the Millennium Development Goals (eight anti-poverty targets with a 2015 deadline), for global economic growth, peace and security, and the health of the planet."

Ban said that the decisions taken now will have far-reaching consequences. The prevailing fossil fuel-based economy is contributing to climate change -- and global energy needs are growing rapidly.

Several studies point out that in twenty years, energy consumption will rise by 40 per cent, mostly in developing countries, where 1.6 billion people still lack access to electricity, and where 3 billion people rely on traditional biomass fuels for cooking, heating, and other basic household needs.

The Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Energy and Climate Change, set up in 2009, has recommended two "bold but achievable" targets for 2030 -- universal access to modern energy sources and a 40 per cent increase in energy efficiency.

"To achieve this, we must invest in the intellectual capital that will create new, green technologies. We need to increase private and public spending on research and development, and Governments need to create the right incentives," said Ban.

"So let us pledge to invest wisely. We need to get our priorities right. People everywhere should be able to enjoy the health, educational and social benefits that modern energy sources offer," he

said, adding: "We are on the brink of an exciting, sustainable future. Clean energy for all."

Ban's call could not have come at a more opportune point in time. In December 2010, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 2012 as the 'International Year for Sustainable Energy for All' with the aim of promoting new and renewable energy technologies, including measures to improve access to such technologies.

The year 2012 also marks 20 years since the Rio Earth Summit adopted Agenda 21, a blueprint for sustainable development, an issue Ban has made one of his top priorities.

"As we look forward to the Rio+20 Conference, let us be aware that clean energy and a low-carbon economy are among the keys to unlocking the door to a safer, more peaceful and prosperous world for all.



"We count on you -- leaders of governments, civil society and the private sector -- to turn this vision into reality. Together, we can change the lives of billions of people," the UN Secretary General said.

Addressing a forum of young future energy leaders, Ban stressed the need to "get serious about sustainable development".

He pointed out that in addition to the 3 billion people who still rely on traditional biomass fuels and coal, 2 million people, mostly women and children, die every year due to indoor air pollution -- nearly double the number of deaths worldwide from malaria. "This is unacceptable and it is avoidable. It is time to close the global access gap," he said.

Ban also praised the Abu Dhabi authorities for their Masdar Initiative, a project intended to showcase a sustainable, clean-energy future. Its centerpiece is Masdar City, a green, planned community located in Abu Dhabi, built by corporations including the Abu Dhabi

Future Energy Company, and funded by the United Arab Emirates Government.

Ban's call for a global revolution to meet world's energy challenges does not come out of the blue as evidenced by the United Nations-backed involvement in cook stoves, which holds the promise of saving lives, uplifting health, improving regional environments, reducing deforestation, empowering local entrepreneurs, speeding development, and helping to stem global climate change.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has joined international efforts to dramatically boost the efficiency of some 3 billion cook stoves across Africa, Asia and Latin America, with the aim to protect women's health and provide significant environmental benefits.

The Global Alliance for Clean Cook Stoves was launched in September 2010 on the margins of the General Assembly summit to review progress on the global anti-poverty targets known as the Millennium Development Goals.

Part of the Clinton Global Initiative spearheaded by the UN Foundation, the Global Alliance aims to cut the estimated 1.6 million to 1.8 million premature deaths linked with indoor emissions from inefficient cook stoves.

This initiative will also contribute to reducing deforestation by curbing the large quantities of wood and other biomass used to make charcoal, and by households switching to alternative fuels, including cookers powered by solar energy.

"In addition to meeting the health targets of the Millennium Development Goals, especially among women and children who are often the most exposed to indoor air pollution, the Alliance may have wider and indeed global benefits," said UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner. ↴ ↻



"Inefficient cooking stoves are estimated to be responsible for approximately 25 per cent of emissions of black carbon, particles often known as soot, of which 40 per cent is linked to wood burning," he said.

According to research under the UNEP-supported Atmospheric Brown Cloud project, black carbon could now be responsible for between 10 to 40 per cent of current climate change.

Emissions of black carbon may also be accelerating melting rates of glaciers in mountain ranges such as the Himalayas, with the dark particles absorbing sunlight and raising ice temperatures. In addition, black carbon -- a key component of brown clouds in some parts of the world -- is contributing to dimming and reducing the amount of sunlight hitting the ground in polluted parts of the globe.

For example, some major cities in Asia may be up to 25 per cent dimmer or darker than they were half a century ago. Reductions in visible light may also be harming agriculture, again with implications for poverty and for combating hunger under the MDGs.

Such initiatives as the African Rural Energy Enterprise Development (AREED) have compiled lessons learned with respect to cook stoves. AREED's most successful project to date has been in Ghana, where start-up funding and support has been provided to a local company called Toyola Energy. The company manufactures a stove which uses charcoal 40 per cent more efficiently than conventional cook stoves.

"From its beginnings as a simple tree-sheltered operation in a community outside Ghana's capital Accra, Toyola Energy has grown dramatically, increasing sales from 3,000 to over 35,000 units per annum within four years," said Steiner. "By 2010, the company had supplied over 50,000 households in six regions of Ghana with improved energy-efficient stoves, and expanded their market to neighbouring countries."

Toyola Energy has also generated 200 jobs, directly and indirectly, while its stoves have reduced carbon dioxide emissions by some 15,000 tons annually. A key factor in its success was its partnership with UNEP, which is able to raise donor awareness and co-funding, and to provide needed policy reforms to assist small- to medium-sized enterprises.

Without such financial support, clean energy systems, including more efficient cook stoves, can be too expensive for the



AREED countries | www.ared.org

rural poor, despite fuel savings and the multiple health and environmental benefits. A cook stove can cost up to \$5 or much more -- way too costly for someone living on less than \$2 a day.

UNEP was confronted with this reality when it was looking to bring solar power to rural India, where many banks considered loans to the rural poor too risky. With support from the UN Foundation and the Shell Foundation, UNEP's Solar Loan Programme made those loans affordable.

Between 2003 and 2008, there were 100,000 stoves in areas with no electricity grid which were able to acquire solar power. The initiative proved so successful it is now self-financing. Today, 20 banks with networks of 2,000 branches are offering competitive solar loans.

UNEP is also supporting a black carbon and cook stoves demonstration project called 'Project Surya' in rural areas of India. Having completed its pilot phase in a rural village with 500 households and some 2,500 people, Surya's demonstration phase began in 2010. It will last two years and involve two to three rural areas spread from north to south India, each with a population of 15,000 people. Pilot phases are also being developed for other developing countries, such as Bhutan, Nepal and Kenya. ■

The Clean Energy Australia report provides a snapshot of the industry for 2010. It includes new modelling that predicts the creation of more than 55,000 clean energy jobs over the next decade, many of which will be in regional areas.



www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au



UN Security Council

Beyond the Illusion of Security Council Reform

By Ramesh Jaura

Some nine months after President Barack Obama backed India for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, he may spring a surprise at the General Assembly opening session in September 2011 that would initiate a process paving the way for the promise becoming a reality.

Addressing both Houses of the Indian Parliament on November 8, 2010 in New Delhi, Obama said: "The just and sustainable international order that America seeks includes a United Nations that is efficient, effective, credible and legitimate. . . . That is why I can say today -- in the years ahead, I look forward to a reformed UN Security Council that includes India as a permanent member."

The need for a reformed Security Council is rather compelling not only because the global balance of economic and robust military power is undergoing a profound change. Also the thrust of the desire of the G4 (Brazil, Germany, India and Japan) to be on par with the P5 that include Russia, Britain, France and China is so dominant that the U.S. as the sole superpower can ill afford to block it.

The gyrations in the Arab world are confronting the international community with a situation that the P5 alone cannot master. While the three western powers of the P5 led by the U.S. are being forced by the unexpected revolution under way, particularly in Egypt, to undergo apprenticeship training in exerting soft power, the G4 by virtue of their respective historical experiences are invariably in a position to play a significant role in bringing about a paradigm shift.

The need for a paradigm shift was underlined on March 21, 2005, by the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan called on the UN to reach a consensus on expanding the council to 24 members, in a plan referred to as "In Larger Freedom".

He gave two alternatives for implementation, but did not specify which proposal he preferred. In any case, Annan favoured making the decision quickly, stating: "This important issue has been discussed for too long. I believe member states should agree to take a decision on it -- preferably by consensus, but in any case before the summit -- use of one or other of the options presented in the report of the High-Level Panel".

The two options mentioned by Annan are referred to as Plan A and Plan B:

- Plan A calls for creating six new permanent members, plus three new non-permanent members for a total of 24 seats in the Council.

- Plan B calls for creating eight new seats in a new class of members, who would serve for four years, subject to renewal, plus one non-permanent seat, also for a total of 24.

The summit mentioned by Annan is the September 2005 Millennium+5 Summit, a high level plenary meeting that reviewed Annan's report, the implementation of the 2000 Millennium Declaration, and other UN reform-related issues.

Irrespective of some of the considerations, the authors of the Special Report of the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) are urging Obama to "use a high-profile public speech, such as at the UNGA opening session in September 2011, to declare U.S. openness to a modest expansion of the UNSC contingent on demonstrated evidence of aspirants' capacity and willingness to contribute to international peace and security".

The authors of the report Kara C. McDonald and Stewart M. Patrick say: "After initial consultations and agreement with P5 partners by the United States, the president's speech should outline the road map and criteria for this UNSC enlargement, and serve as a launching pad for U.S. consultations with aspirant countries on initiatives that will help them demonstrate the qualifications for permanent membership. Such initiatives might include demonstrating leadership in nonproliferation talks, climate change negotiations, or the advancement of human rights."

Kara C. McDonald is a Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Department of State, and currently serves as the U.S. deputy special coordinator for Haiti. McDonald was an international affairs fellow from 2009 to 2010 and director for United Nations and international operations at the National Security Council from 2007 to 2009.

Stewart M. Patrick is senior fellow and director of the International Institutions and Global Governance program at the Council on Foreign Relations.

CFR president Richard N. Haass explains in a foreword to Special Report the crux of the logic: "The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) remains an important source of legitimacy for international action. ➔"



UN Security Council

Yet despite dramatic changes in the international system over the past forty-five years, the composition of the UNSC has remained unaltered since 1965, and there are many who question how long its legitimacy will last without additional members that reflect twenty-first-century realities."

The UN Charter, as amended in 1965, creates a 15-member council -- ten of which are elected keeping the regional balance in mind -- with the authority to impose binding decisions on all UN member states.

A part of the reality, according to Haass is: "There is little agreement . . . as to which countries should accede to the Security Council or even by what formula aspirants should be judged. Reform advocates frequently call for equal representation for various regions of the world, but local competitors like India and Pakistan or Mexico and Brazil are unlikely to reach a compromise solution. Moreover, the UN Charter prescribes that regional parity should be, at most, a secondary issue; the ability to advocate and defend international peace and security should, it says, be the primary concern."

Haass rightly points out that the U.S. has remained largely silent as this debate has intensified over the past decade, choosing to voice general support for expansion without committing to specifics. President Barack Obama's recent call for India to become a permanent member of the Security Council was a notable exception, he avers.

Haass sums up the argument of the report: "American reticence is ultimately unwise. Rather than merely observing the discussions on this issue, they believe that the United States should take the lead. To do so, they advocate a criteria-based process that will gauge aspirant countries on a variety of measures, including political stability, the capacity and willingness to act in defense of international security, the ability to negotiate and implement sometimes unpopular agreements, and the institutional wherewithal to participate in a demanding UNSC agenda." The authors further advise that this process be initiated and implemented with early and regular input from the U.S. Congress; detailed advice from relevant Executive agencies as to which countries should be considered and on what basis; careful, private negotiations in aspirant capitals; and the interim use of alternate multilateral forums such as the Group of Twenty (G20) to satisfy countries' immediate demands for broader participation and to produce evidence about their willingness and ability to participate constructively in the international system.

However, the authors fault in that they plead for a multilayered process of consultation in which Washington and other P5 members do not abandon taking the lead. The need of the hour is for the P5 entering into an interactive relationship with aspirants to permanent Security Council membership to wipe out all traces of the still dominant culture of deriving power out of the barrels of guns.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said in November 2010: "A clear and widespread deficit of democratic oversight and accountability exists across the entire nuclear weapon life cycle, even in open and democratic societies. . . . While the management of most countries' nuclear arsenal has evolved to include a wider range of democratic mechanisms, secrecy prevails."

With a special emphasis on civilian control and democratic accountability, the SIPRI report titled 'Governing the Bomb' illuminates the structures and processes of nuclear weapon governance of eight nuclear-armed states -- the U.S., Russia, Britain, France and China as well as Israel, India and Pakistan.

"While the USA is the most advanced in terms of democratic oversight and accountability, it still keeps much secret and outside of oversight," states Bates Gill, SIPRI director. "It is also interesting to note that in other democracies, such as India, Israel and Pakistan, nuclear weapon issues are highly guarded secrets, with the Israeli case being perhaps the most extreme of the three."

The findings further demonstrate that whether a given nuclear weapon state is democratic, quasi-authoritarian or a dictatorship does not determine the decisions it will take regarding non-proliferation, disarmament or a potential use of its nuclear weapons.

This is of particular significance in regard to the controversy about Iran's nuclear ambitions.

The SIPRI case studies show the need to look beyond "who is pushing the button" and clarify the roles and responsibilities of all institutions and actors involved in nuclear weapon governance: the core security actors, the executive, the legislature, the judiciary and civil society.

The nuclear issue occupies a central position in debates about the reform of the Security Council, particularly as the P5 build the official nuclear club which feels encroached upon by India, Israel and Pakistan -- countries that are believed to be in possession of a destructive nuclear capacity. ■

"A clear and widespread deficit of democratic oversight and accountability exists across the entire nuclear weapon life cycle, even in open and democratic societies. . . . While the management of most countries' nuclear arsenal has evolved to include a wider range of democratic mechanisms, secrecy prevails."



Peace Impulses from Okinawa

By Ramesh Jaura

Living in Berlin, one tends to view the world from a European perspective, and focus only on the lessons Europe has learned from the Second World War in the last sixty-five years. Visits to East Asia, however, not only help to adjust one's lenses but also provide new insights. Japan is a distinguished example of a country that has been undergoing a bottom-up process of change.

The credit for this goes to the Japanese civil society, which is engaged in transforming the lingering anguish of the havoc wrought by the brute Battle of Okinawa and the nuclear bombardment of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki into a powerful peace movement transcending barriers of race, creed, colour and nationality.

A leading civil society organization involved in the process of transformation is the Soka Gakkai (Society for the Creation of Value), a lay Buddhist organization, which has come to be associated with the name of Daisaku Ikeda who joined the organization in 1947. He took charge of Soka Gakkai as its president in May 1960, two years after the death of his mentor and predecessor, Josei Toda, who opposed the policies of the wartime government and suffered persecutions and imprisonment.

Ikeda encountered Toda in the chaos of post-war Japan, when he was in the process of rebuilding the Soka Gakkai, which he had founded together with fellow educator Tsunesaburo Makiguchi in 1930 and which had been all but destroyed by the militarist government during the war. Toda was deeply convinced that the philosophy of Nichiren Buddhism, with its focus on the profound potential of the individual human being, would be the key to bringing about a social transformation within Japan.

One of Ikeda's first initiatives after assuming the presidency was to establish an organizational structure to encourage and facilitate more frequent interaction between the Soka Gakkai members abroad. Within his first four years as president, he had travelled to North and South America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Oceania, laying the foundations for an overseas organization that today has 12 million members in 192 countries and territories.

It was against this backdrop that Soka Gakkai representatives from 51 countries and territories gathered on the island of Guam on January 26, 1975 and set up the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), with Ikeda as its founding president. The site of some of

the bloodiest fighting of Second World War, Guam was symbolically chosen as the venue of this meeting to launch a new movement for peace.

Since then, the SGI has developed into a broad global network with affiliated, independent SGI organizations in 84 countries and territories. In addition to teaching the practice and philosophy of Nichiren Buddhism, local SGI organizations promote the causes of peace, culture and education in their respective societies, while the organization has also developed large-scale international public exhibitions on such issues as building a culture of peace, nuclear abolition, sustainable development and human rights.

YOUTH PEACE SUMMIT

The Soka Gakkai youth play a crucial role in fostering peace initiatives in Japan and abroad. A significant platform for interaction is the youth peace summit held every year alternatively in Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Okinawa.

Such summits provide young men and women an opportunity to discuss appropriate ways and means of promoting peace. These include antiwar publications, video recordings of atomic bombing and war victims' experiences as well as peace education exhibitions, lectures and surveys.

Soka Gakkai's Youth Peace Conference (YPC) and Young Women's Peace and Culture Conference (YWPC) provide an impressive platform for young people. Encounters with them in Hiroshima, at the Soka University in Tokyo, and at the Okinawa Training Center gave me an idea of the passionate and unflinching dedication of young men and women to promoting peace in both word and deed. ☺



BUILDING BRIDGES

Peace activities by the youth have been supplemented by SGI president Ikeda's staunch commitment to building bridges with wartime Japan's antagonists in the Pacific War as part of the Second World War. He laid the foundation for such efforts on September 8, 1968. During an address to some 20,000 members of the Soka Gakkai's student division, Ikeda called for the normalization of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations and outlined steps toward achieving this.

The backdrop to this was that Ikeda's eldest brother, Kiichi, was drafted, to be followed by three other brothers as the years passed. Kiichi was killed in the war, but his description of his disgust at the Japanese military's treatment of the Chinese people left a lasting impression on Ikeda.

China was still perceived as an enemy nation by many within Japan and was isolated within the international community. Ikeda's proposal drew condemnation, but it also caught the attention of those, both in China and in Japan, who were interested in restoring relations between the two countries.

Ikeda also began to engage in dialogue with political figures during the 1970s. This was a time of deep tensions between the superpowers, with the threat of nuclear annihilation hanging over humanity. During 1974 and 1975, he visited China, the then Soviet Union and the USA, meeting with Zhou Enlai, Soviet Premier Aleksey Kosygin and U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in turn, in an effort to break deadlock and open channels of communication in order to help prevent the outbreak of war.

Such interactions -- undertaken as a Buddhist leader -- are unique but evoke memories of the policy of reconciliation pursued by Germany's legendary social democratic leader Willy Brandt in his capacity as foreign minister and chancellor of western Germany, which not only resulted in a thaw in bilateral relations between the erstwhile aggressor and perpetrator of holocaust but also paved the way for the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and subsequent peaceful unification of two German states.

A hallmark of Ikeda's peace philosophy is his commitment to dialogue. He has met and exchanged views with representatives of cultural, political, educational and artistic fields from around the world. Among the individuals with whom Ikeda has published dialogues are the British historian Arnold Toynbee, former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev, theologian Harvey J. Cox, futurist Hazel Henderson, Brazilian champion of human rights Austregésilo de Athayde, Chinese literary giant Jin Yong and Indonesian Muslim leader Abdurrahman Wahid.

PEACE PROPOSALS

In 1983, Ikeda started writing his proposals for peace, which he has continued to publish annually on the anniversary of the SGI's founding, January 26. These proposals offer a perspective on issues facing humanity, suggesting solutions and responses grounded in Buddhist philosophy.

They include specific agendas for strengthening the United Nations, including boosting the capacity for involvement of the civil society, which Ikeda regards as essential to the establishment of a peaceful world. The proposals frequently illustrate the crucial importance of dialogue as a means to break through deadlock in world affairs.

According to Ikeda's biography posted on the web, the inspiration for championing peace emanated not only from his wartime experiences as a young man but also from the declaration calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons that his mentor Josei Toda had issued in 1957, one year before his death. ☺



Ramesh Jaura (centre) with Katsuhiro Asagiri of IPS Japan|Global Perspectives (right of centre), interpreter Makoto Higasa (left of centre) and Masayoshi Toubaru of Soka Gakkai Okinawa Training Center (right) at Okinawa World Peace Monument., accompanied by his colleague (extreme left).



Himeyuri Peace Museum and the Himeyuri War Memorial built in honour of the 194 schoolgirls and 17 teachers mobilized as assistant nurses during the Battle of Okinawa in 1945.

Pupils from two girls' schools were joined together and named the 'Himeyuri' nurse corps, and sent out to work as field nurses during the battle. Tragically, only five of them survived the carnage known as "the typhoon of steel".



Cornerstone of Peace, memorial to all those who died in the Battle of Okinawa

Toda denounced nuclear weapons as the embodiment of evil, insisting that their use must be condemned, not from the standpoint of ideology, nationality or ethnic identity, but from the universal dimension of humanity and humankind's inalienable right to live.

OKINAWA WORLD PEACE MONUMENT

Along with the Soka University, the Min-On Music Museum and the Min-On Concert Association, the Okinawa Training Center and the Okinawa World Peace Monument are a tribute to down-to-earth spiritual excellence impacting day-to-day human life.

Masayoshi Toubaru's eyes glow as he explains that what is Soka Gakkai Okinawa Training Center today was built in

1977 on the site of a dismantled U.S. Air Force MACE B nuclear missile base. (MACE B is a tactical missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads. In the 1960s, the missiles were deployed at several sites in Okinawa.)

The U.S. launch pad was converted into the World Peace Monument in 1984. The colossal concrete mass measuring one meter by nine meters, and with a wall 1.5 meters thick, was used as a launch pad for nuclear missiles targeted at China. "It was president Ikeda's idea to leave the site untouched as a perpetual reminder of the horrors of war," warm-hearted Toubaru adds. Since its establishment, several foreigners, including Chinese, have visited the centre.

PEACE MUSEUM

Okinawa also hosts the Himeyuri Peace Museum and the Himeyuri War Memorial, built in honour of the 194 schoolgirls and 17 teachers mobilized as assistant nurses during the Battle of Okinawa in 1945. Our guide has heart-rending stories to tell, which are hidden behind the bare fact that students from two girls' schools were joined together and named the 'Himeyuri' nurse corps, and sent out to work as field nurses during the battle. Tragically, only five of them survived the carnage known as "the typhoon of steel".

The Peace Museum shows a personal perspective of the girls' lives before and during the battle. Exhibits feature photographs of many victims, their personal effects, reconstructions of the appalling conditions, and testimonies from survivors in an appeal against the misery of war.

"The typhoon of steel" expresses the ferocity of the fighting, the intensity of gunfire involved, and the sheer numbers of Allied ships and armoured vehicles that assaulted the island. More than 100,000 civilians are reported to have been killed and wounded. Also, many civilians are reported to have committed suicide at the behest of the Japanese military which told them that they should do so rather than surrendering and being taken prisoner.

Eyewitness accounts which we heard during our visit to Okinawa in September 2010 confirmed that civilians were given hand grenades to blow themselves and their families up. Induced by the propaganda, many civilians also jumped off cliffs to kill themselves. Such cases are called 'mass suicide'. Approximately one-quarter of the civilian population died as a result of the battle.

WAR MEMORIAL

A visit to the Cornerstone of Peace (Heiwa no Ishiji), a secular war memorial for the victims of the Battle of Okinawa, provides an additional insight. Located in Mabuni, the area of the last fighting in the battle, it is one of the important monuments in Okinawa Senseki Quasi-National Park, erected in 1995 in memory of the 50th anniversary of the battle and the end of the war.

Similar to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C., the memorial on the shores of the Pacific Ocean remembers the names of those that died in the battle. However, as our guide tells us, it is unique in that it seeks to list all the names, military and civilian, from all countries involved. As of June 23, 2010, the number of names inscribed in the granite stones in the shape of folding screens was 240,931. We learn that Daisaku Ikeda has been documenting Okinawa's excruciating destiny in 'The Human Revolution', an epochal work that presents a novelized version of his reminiscences stretching over decades:

Ikeda writes: "During World War II, Okinawa had been sacrificed to protect Japan proper and, as the only site of battle to take place on Japanese soil, it experienced the horrible tragedy of losing nearly one-fourth of its population. After the war, Okinawa was once again sacrificed to the interests of the mainland when it was placed under the control of the United States and made the location of that nation's military bases. In some villages, nearly 90 percent of the land was requisitioned for that purpose. Furthermore, Okinawa was designated the 'Keystone of the Pacific' in accord with the U.S. Far East strategy, and had four MACE-B mid-range ballistic missile bases built on it. The island was also considered vital as a refueling station for nuclear submarines.

"People living near the bases continue to suffer due to the environmental destruction caused by U.S. military manoeuvres as well as by the crashes of military jets and transport planes." The opening passage of the epochal work reads: "Nothing is more barbarous than war. Nothing is more cruel . . . Nothing is more pitiful than a nation being swept along by fools." The underlying concept of the book is that "a great human revolution in just a single individual will help change the destiny of an entire nation, and, further, will enable a change in the destiny of all humankind" and to transform the former battlefields into a genuinely happy society. ■

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Reminiscing the Battle of Okinawa

By Haruko Oshiro in Okinawa



"There was a hell called war in my youth. As long as live, I would like to speak out about the importance of peace and education so that we have no more war," says 88-year old Haruko Oshiro in a poignant eyewitness account of the desperately tragic situation confronted by Japanese in Okinawa toward the end of World War II. Following are excerpts of the eyewitness account translated from Japanese into English by Makoto Higasa.

[. . .] In my youth, every day was coloured with war. I had no doubt about Japan winning the war because I was taught that Japan was the kingdom of god. We were ready to fight anytime against the enemy and we wore baggy work pants in preparation for the war. In order to prepare for the war I took the lead in participating in bamboo spear training. Everyone was burning the tip of bamboo sticks to make use as a weapon but I felt unsafe so I tied a sickle to the end of the bamboo.

In the summer of 1940 I was engaged to a young man I met in a youth group. I knew that he was going to the frontlines in six months but I wanted to make him feel safe and have hope that he would come back safe. We promised each other that when he came back safe we would be married.

I will never forget the day November 5, 1944: it was the day that I received notice that my fiancé had died on the battlefield in Burma. I was so shocked that my whole body shook. Because I was told that the wife of a Japanese soldier should never cry even though her husband might die in the war. I couldn't cry in front of other people.

"I BIT MY LIP SO HARD . . ."

My sadness welled up from the bottom of my heart and I bit my lip so hard to contain my emotion so much that my lip was bleeding. I could not accept my fiancé's death so at night I went to his tomb where the plain wood box of my fiancé's ashes should lay.

But when I opened the plain wood box there were only three small rocks inside. I could not believe what I saw. During that time there was construction project under way at Ie-Jima, the most important airport to the east.

Since most men went to the frontline, many women were helping with the construction. Believing that Japan would certainly win the war no matter how hard the work might be we didn't mind. However this huge airport project became the main target for U.S. soldiers. On October 10, 1944, 90% of Naha City was destroyed due to an air raid. Day by day bombardment by warships and bombing by air hit hard in Okinawa as the war became more severe.

A decision was made by the Japanese military that if U.S. soldiers landed on Ie-Jima and gained the advantage of the airport there, it would result in a very dangerous military situation and so we were ordered to destroy the construction that we had risked our lives to build and we were told to dig holes so that U.S. soldiers' tanks would be trapped in the holes.

Offshore, there were countless enemy warships, torpedoes crossing the ocean and bombs from the air and there were fighter planes flying at low altitude. I decided that if I was to die I wanted to die where my family resides. Together with four other women we decided to escape from the Ie-Jima aboard a small boat headed toward the main island of Okinawa.

We reached the seashore and in order to avoid the air raid we were all hiding under the shade of Japanese Sago palm trees and bushes. It took three days to get to home only to find our houses were all burned to the ground. Somehow I was able to find my family and after living in a trench for about four or five days we saw U.S. soldiers coming down from the mountain. In those days Americans

were considered brutes and they were considered a great threat to women. We cut off our hair and smeared our faces with soot from the bottom of pots and pans to make ourselves look ugly to avoid the American soldiers. But I was soon captured and became a prisoner of war.

"SISTER, THANK YOU FOR COMING."

A few days before we were captured, my young sister left the shelter of the trench because her one year old daughter was crying so much and she didn't want our whole family to be caught by the soldiers. She headed to a nearby grave to take shelter. However, I was informed that a grave had been attacked and I felt uneasy and went to look for my sister.

I heard a frail voice behind me, saying, "Sister, thank you for coming." I then found a person whose face was swollen and covered with dirt mixed with blood; her internal organs protruding from her kimono. I couldn't recognise who she was but the pattern of her kimono caught my eye. It was the same kimono that I had given to my sister.

Knowing that it was my sister I asked where her daughter Sa-chan was. She was half conscious and replied that she was killed in the grave. My sister was probably trying to breastfeed her baby when the attack occurred as her breast was smudged with milk. American soldiers took my sister away by truck while I was looking for a straw mat to carry her. That was the last time I saw my sister. No news about her was heard until her ashes were found after the war in a shelter of a nearby village. She was identified because of the pattern of her kimono. Her daughter Sa'chan's ashes were never found.

My family along with other villagers were taken to a concentration camp as prisoners of war. The ten of us in our family lived in a shack and had to look for food at the bottom of a dangerous valley where there were habu snakes.

One day when we were looking for food, we found seven young Japanese soldiers. They said they were running around to escape from American soldiers. Listening to these young soldiers made us feel like helping them somehow. Okinawa was occupied by the U.S. military forces on June 23 but we didn't know that the war was over. Believing that these Japanese soldiers would one day play an active role, we sheltered them. However, ten days later we were found by the U.S. military forces. The seven Japanese soldiers were deported and we had to face military trial for harbouring them.

I was prepared to be sentenced to death. My fiancé died in the war and I had no dream or hope whatsoever for the future. I had nothing to fear. I thought that my fiancé would welcome me with open arms saying, "You fought so well for the country." I was filled with patriotic spirit.

The day I knew the war was really over, was on August 15, 1945 when the trial was concluded, I heard the Imperial broadcast. Then I knew that Japan was not the country of god. I knew that Japan was in embroiled in a foolish war. I was sentenced to one year in prison on the day of the end of the war. [. . .] ■

Note: The complete account is available at:

www.indepthnews.net/news/news.php?key1=2010-09-29%2019:14:23&key2=1

Harmonizing Business with Employees and Society

By Taro Ichikawa



Masaki Ishihara

"Everyone but me is my mentor." True to that maxim, constant communication with employees is his tenet. "I feel a sense of gratitude for all those who are working in my company. I want my employees to share with me not only a sense of commitment and responsibility but also a sense of pride and happiness as colleagues," says Masaki Ishihara (in picture left).

Ishihara is the president of 'Hinomaru Kyuso' -- the Sun Flag Express -- headquartered in Takamatsu City in Japan's Kagawa Prefecture, which deals with transportation of ordinary cargo, logistics of packaging as well as transportation, storage and administration, haulage of food-stuffs, and development of transportation systems.

The company was set up in July 1957 and today employs 45 persons in managerial positions, 170 workers and 136 part-time workers. In 2006, it obtained the prestigious G-mark. (As of 2009, 17.9 percent of 63,122 truck companies in Japan had been awarded G-mark.) The company was set up in July 1957 and today employs 45 persons in managerial positions, 170 workers and 136 part-time workers.

In 2006, it obtained the prestigious G-mark. (As of 2009, 17.9 percent of 63,122 truck companies in Japan had been awarded G-mark.) Ishihara expands upon his tenet in a New Year message: "No company can survive unless it co-exists and shares its prosperity with the society and continues to provide advanced training and education to its staff. We have to look at ourselves from the perspective of a socially accepted idea and common sense."

Ishihara sees his corporate social responsibility also towards environment. 'Hinomaru Kyuso' owns ten large trucks, 60 ordinary trucks, 17 small cars, 14 other vehicles and five forklifts.

"All our trucks are equipped with digital tacograph. As in the case of other trucking companies which introduced drive recorder, the introduction of digital tacograph had a positive impact on drivers who are making concerted efforts towards eco-friendly and safer driving," Ishihara tells IDN-InDepthNews.

"As a result, the number of road accidents has decreased, and fuel consumption has diminished. Digital tacographs are equipped with GPS system so that we can track down entire route of each vehicle and record all aspects of each truck on the road. This makes driving smarter, safer and fuel efficient," he adds.

AFTER THE WAR

Ishihara was a salaried worker, and when he started working in the trucking business at the behest of his father, he felt that the overall social status of trucking was rather low. "Meanwhile, I believe that the transportation industry sustains a vital part of modern day life. Time is fast changing and we must adapt ourselves to new challenges both as trucking industry on the whole and individual trucking companies in particular."

Ishihara fondly recalls his father, and the founder of Hinomaru Kyuso, Shogo, who was born in 1916. He graduated from Japan's Takushoku University located in Tokyo and worked for Mitsubishi Mining Company before being drafted and dispatched to China during World War II. While serving in the army, he was on temporary leave from the company.

At the time of Japan's defeat in August 1945, he was an army lieutenant stationed in north China close to the then Soviet border, and asked the Japanese troops to cross the border hoping that they would have a safe haven there. But he was not aware

that the Soviet Union had abandoned its neutrality as agreed in the Soviet-Japan treaty. He was taken prisoner and put in a concentration camp in Siberia.

Returning home after being released, he resumed his work at the company but soon quit the job. He did not like the new working environment where his former subordinates had become his superiors during his absence from the company.



While he was having a drink at a bar, he met a friend of his, an official working for the Ministry of Transportation who recommended that he should start up a new transportation company. In those days, one had to obtain a truck license to start up a new transportation company and the official assured his support. So Ishihara's father started a transportation company with four tricycle motor bikes dealing with construction materials.

After graduating from a university in Kyoto, the son Ishihara -- the eldest of three brothers and sisters -- took to a job at a credit union bank. He explains the reason: "I had watched the transportation industry in the post-war reconstruction phase, when many drivers used to be rather coarse and drank a lot of alcohol, since my childhood. I had, therefore, no intention to join my father's company in those days."

But some 20 years ago, Ishihara was asked to return home as his father got laryngeal cancer and started receiving cobalt-beam therapy. Fortunately, he recovered from cancer but the son ended up working for him. ☺

CONSTRUCTION BOOM

That was still during a period of construction boom. So the company dealt mainly with construction materials. But after the completion of The Great Seto Bridge that connected main lands of Honshu and Shikoku -- one of the four main islands and the smallest one in Japan. The Hinomaru Kyoso Company is located in Kagawa prefecture one the Shikoku side of the bridge -- the construction boom subsided.

"I developed a sense of crisis about continuing to deal with construction materials but my father did not want me to change his policy. He was then vice president of Kagawa Trucking Association and no longer actively involved in business operations. I respected his wish and the company continued to handle construction materials as long as he was alive. After his death, some ten years ago, I changed the company's policy," says Ishihara.

He explains: "While continuing to mainly deal with construction materials, I introduced three vehicles to deal with foodstuffs. But in those days, we were simply transporting goods, let us say, from point A to point B. But one day I attended a seminar in Tokyo about 3PL (third party Logistics) which had become popular in the United States.

"As price competition became severe and we needed to distinguish ourselves from other competitors, I was convinced that 3PL would secure our company's future. Initially it was difficult to make our staff understand the need of introducing a new system of operations but fortunately, we soon found out a client, a food company which commissioned us for a job."

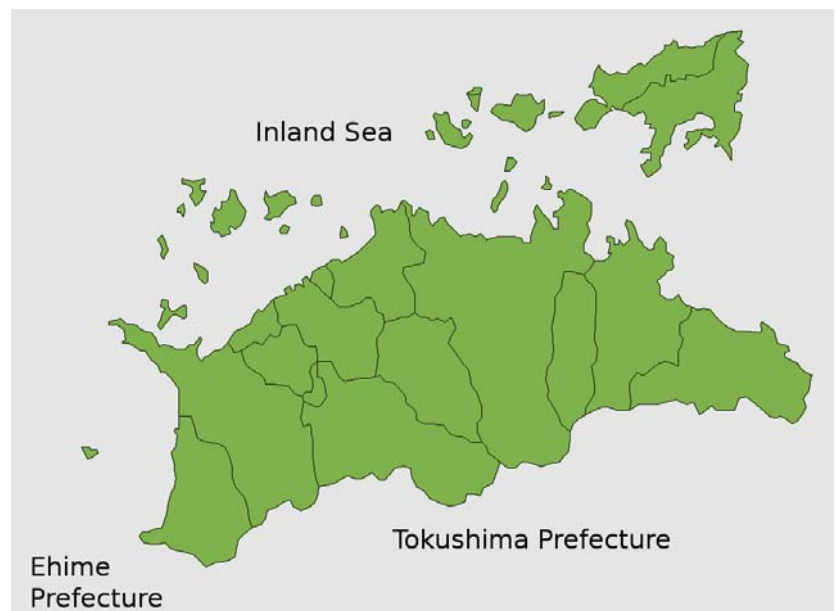
Another change he made was to abolish long-range transportation and concentrate on operations on the Shikoku Island. The problem of transporting cargo long distance such as Tokyo and Osaka was that we were having hard time finding cargo on our way back. On top of that, transportation companies based in Tokyo and Osaka often carried cargo with dumping prices on their way back from local destination to Tokyo and Osaka.

This made local transportation company more difficult to compete with prices. On Shikoku Island, which comprises of four prefectures, we have strong networks including logistics centres with refrigerators so that we can provide efficient transportation service with competitive prices for example by loading different client cargo in one truck instead of running three trucks.

But the Hinomaru Kyuso Company continues to handle transportation of newspapers, father Ishihara had started. In fact, transporting newspapers such as Seikyo Shimbun, Komei Shimbun, Shikoku Shimbun, and Ehime Shimbun have become our main operation along with dealing with foodstuffs as well as Third Party Logistics operation. ■



Kagawa Prefecture Office



India Makes Headway in Indigenous Atomic Power Programme

By Clive Banerjee

The inauguration of India's latest nuclear reprocessing plant by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on January 7, 2010 emphasizes once again the country's commitment to developing a largely indigenous atomic power programme.

The facility at Tarapur in the West Indian state of Maharashtra will break down highly radioactive used nuclear fuel to extract uranium and plutonium for reuse in fast neutron reactors. It comes as a welcome addition to several reprocessing plants in India -- all operated by the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) -- at Tarapur, Trombay and Kalpakkam.

Small plants at each site were supplemented in 1998 by a new one of 100 tonnes per year at Kalpakkam, and this is now being extended so that it may handle carbide fuel from the Fast Breeder Test Reactor.

The new plant also has a capacity of 100 tonnes per year, and another entirely new facility is under construction at Kalpakkam.

BARC, named after Dr. Homi Bhabha, the country's pioneer in nuclear research, operates under the umbrella of the Government of India's Department of Atomic Energy.

"We have come a long way since the first reprocessing of spent fuel in India in 1964 at Trombay," said Prime Minister Singh at the inaugural ceremony attended by the country's senior nuclear scientists and engineers. "The recycling and optimal utilization of uranium is essential to meet our current and future energy security needs," he added.

Non-India sources confirm that India has a flourishing and largely indigenous nuclear power programme and expects to have 20,000 MWe (megawatt electricity) nuclear capacity on line by 2020 and 63,000 MWe by 2032. It aims to supply 25 percent of electricity from nuclear power by 2050.

"Because India is outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty due to its weapons program, it was for 34 years largely excluded from trade in nuclear plant or materials, which has hampered its development of civil nuclear energy until 2009," says the World Nuclear Association (WNA) in its latest dossier on 'nuclear power in India'.

It adds: Due to these trade bans and lack of indigenous uranium, India has uniquely been developing a nuclear fuel cycle to exploit its reserves of thorium. Now, foreign technology and fuel are expected to boost India's nuclear power plans considerably. All plants will have high indigenous engineering content. In fact, India has a vision of becoming a world leader in nuclear technology due to its expertise in fast reactors and thorium fuel cycle.

The backdrop to the country's ambitious nuclear power programme, says the London-based WNA, is that electricity demand in India is increasing rapidly, and the 830 billion kilowatt hours produced in 2008 was three times the 1990 output, though it still represented only some 700 kWh per capita for the year. With huge transmission losses, this resulted in only 591 billion kWh consumption.

"Coal provides 68% of the electricity at present, but reserves are limited. Gas provides 8%, hydro 14%. The per capita electricity consumption figure is expected to double by 2020, with 6.3% annual growth, and reach 5000-6000 kWh by 2050," the dossier informs.

Atomic power supplied 15.8 billion kWh (2.5%) of India's electricity in 2007 from 3.7 GWe (of 110 GWe total) capacity. After a dip in 2008-2009 this is expected to increase steadily as imported uranium becomes available and new plants come on line.

The forecast for the year ending March 2010 was 22 billion kWh. In 2010-2011 24 billion kWh is expected. For 2011-2012, 32 billion kWh is now forecast.

Nuclear experts say that India had achieved some 300 reactor-years of operation by mid 2009. "India's fuel situation, with shortage of fossil fuels, is driving the nuclear investment for electricity, and 25% nuclear contribution is foreseen by 2050, when 1094 GWe of base-load capacity is expected to be required. Almost as much investment in the grid system as in power plants is necessary," says the WNA.

India committed almost US\$ 9 billion in 2006 for power projects, including 9.35 GWe of new generating capacity, taking forward projects to 43.6 GWe and US\$ 51 billion. In late 2009 the government said it was confident that 62 GWe of new capacity would be added in the 5-year plan to March 2012, and best efforts were being made to add 12.5 GWe on top of this.

But only 18 GWe had been achieved by the mid point of October 2009, when 152 GWe was on line. The government's five-year-year plan for 2012-2017 was targeting the addition of 100 GWe over the period. Three quarters of this would be coal- or lignite-fired, and only 3.4 GWe nuclear, including two imported 1000 MWe units at one site and two indigenous 700 MWe units at another.

The U.S. audit, tax and advisory services firm KPMG said in a report in 2007 that India needed to spend US\$ 120-150 billion on power infrastructure over the next five years, including transmission and distribution (T&D). It said that T&D losses were some 30-40%, amounting to worth more than \$6 billion per year.

The target since about 2004 has been for nuclear power to provide 20 GWe by 2020, but in 2007 the Prime Minister referred to this as "modest" and capable of being "doubled with the opening up of international cooperation."

However, the World Nuclear Association says, that even the 20 GWe target will require substantial uranium imports. Late in 2008 NPCIL -- the Nuclear Power Corporation of India, a public sector enterprise under the administrative control of the Department of Atomic Energy -- projected 22 GWe on line by 2015, and the government was talking about having 50 GWe of nuclear power operating by 2050.

Then in June 2009 NPCIL said it aimed for 60 GWe nuclear by 2032, including 40 GWe of PWR capacity and 7 GWe of new PHWR capacity, all fuelled by imported uranium. This target was reiterated late in 2010.

The Atomic Energy Commission however expects some 500 GWe nuclear on line by 2060, and has since speculated that the amount might be higher still: 600-700 GWe by 2050, providing half of all electricity.

These projections are grounded in the fact that nuclear power for civil use is well established in India. Civil nuclear strategy has been directed towards complete independence in the nuclear fuel cycle, necessary because it is excluded from the 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty NPT due to it acquiring nuclear weapons capability after 1970. Those five countries doing so before 1970 were accorded the status of Nuclear Weapons States under the NPT. As a result, India's nuclear power programme has proceeded largely without fuel or technological assistance from other countries. Its power reactors to the mid 1990s had some of the world's lowest capacity the technical difficulties of the country's isolation, but rose impressively. ■



Despite Nuclear Boom China Lags Far Behind USA

By Taro Ichikawa in Tokyo

China, the world's most populated and second largest economy, has made big strides in the past four decades. But it is lagging far behind the world's largest economy, the USA, and will continue to do so in the next ten years despite ambitious plans to build atomic reactors, according to analysts.

Presently, China has 13 nuclear power plant units in operation with 10,048 Megawatt (MW) net electricity output compared to 104 in the U.S. with 100,683 MW net electricity production. World wide there were 441 atomic power plants in operation in October 2010.

China plans to raise the nuclear share in electricity production in the quest for clean energy to satisfy its energy hunger -- triggered by continuing economic growth of about 10 percent each year. Twenty-five plants are under construction and 54 planned in the next years.

"The successful reuse of irradiated nuclear fuel, developed at a CNNC plant in the country's remote northwest, is likely to be key in China's efforts to diversify its energy mix, especially away from highly-polluting coal," the Bangkok Post reported on January 4, 2010, quoting experts.

CNNC is the established China National Nuclear Corporation pushing for indigenous technology.

The World Nuclear News (WNN) reports that China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) has indicated the intention to raise China's nuclear power share from the current less than 2 percent to 6 percent by 2020 -- compared to 20 percent in the U.S. -- thus requiring an increase from 9.1 Gigawatt of installed capacity to 70 GW to 80 GW, more than France at 63 GW. (GW comprises 1,000 MW).

Chinese official sources say that nuclear and solar are being looked to as alternatives to coal power in due to increasing concerns about air quality and global warming.

Presently, most of the electricity in China (not including Taiwan) is produced from fossil fuels (80 percent from coal, 2 percent from oil, 1 percent from gas in 2006) and hydropower (15 percent). Two large hydro projects are recent additions: Three Gorges of 18.2 GW electrical (GWe) and Yellow River of 15.8 GWe, says a dossier on 'nuclear power in China' by the World Nuclear Association (WNA).

It points out that rapid growth in demand has given rise to power shortages in China, and the reliance on fossil fuels has led to much air pollution.

"The economic loss due to pollution is put by the World Bank at almost 6 percent of GDP. In 2009 power shortages were most acute in central provinces, particularly Hubei, and in December the Central China Grid Co. posted a peak load of 94.6 GW."

According to the WNA, additional reactors China has planned, "include some of the world's most advanced, to give more than a tenfold increase in nuclear capacity to 80 GWe by 2020, 200 GWe by 2030, and 400 GWe by 2050".

Besides, China is rapidly becoming self-sufficient in reactor design and construction, as well as other aspects of the fuel cycle.

The World Nuclear News reported on January 5, 2011 that the CNNC had received governmental approval to begin preliminary work on four new nuclear power reactors: two at the existing Tianwan site in Jiangsu province along the East Coast of the country and two at the new Xudabao plant in Liaoning province in the southern part of China's Northeast.

The significance of the decision to build nuclear power reactors in Jiangsu province is underlined by the fact that it is one of the wealthiest among the provinces of China, boasting the second highest total GDP (Gross Domestic Product), after Guangdong Province on the southern coast.

According to the 'China Perspective', the government has worked hard to promote the solar industry and hopes that by 2012 it will be worth 100 Billion RMB (about 15 billion USD). The economic reforms of Deng Xiaoping have greatly benefited southern cities, especially Suzhou and Wuxi, which outstrip the provincial capital Nanjing in total output.

GDP per capita in Jiangsu province was 44,232 yuan (6,682 USD) in 2009. But there is a great geographical disparity, and southern cities like Suzhou and Wuxi have GDP per capita around twice the provincial average, making south Jiangsu one of the most prosperous regions in China, analysts say.

Jiangsu's nominal GDP in 2009 was 3.41 trillion yuan (USD 499 billion), making it the second largest GDP of all the provinces and an annual growth rate of 12.4 percent. Its per capita GDP was 44,232 yuan (USD 6,475). In 2009, the share of GDP of Jiangsu's primary, secondary, and tertiary industries were 6.4 percent, 54.1 percent, and 39.5 percent respectively.

The Liaoning province is well known for its extraordinary historical fossils. In fact the first widely acknowledged feathered dinosaur, 'Sinosauropteryx prima', was discovered in Liaoning and unveiled at a scientific conference in 1996.

Other notable discoveries have been an intact embryo of a pterosaur, 'Repenomamus robustus' -- a cat-sized mammal who ate dinosaurs, and 'Sinornithosaurus millenii', nicknamed "Dave the Fuzzy Raptor". Between 2006 and 2010 the province expected to create ten cities with a population of 200,000-500,000, and ten with a population of 100,000-200,000, taking its urbanization rate to 63 percent in the upcoming years. ■

China Keen to Strengthen Sway over North Korea

By Taro Ichikawa in Tokyo

China is deeply concerned about stability in North Korea and therefore availing of every opportunity to affirm its diplomatic support for Pyongyang, much to the chagrin of Japan, South Korea and the U.S., says a new report.

The latest instance of China's support for North Korea was when it fired artillery at South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island in the Yellow Sea off the countries' west coast on November 23, 2010, setting houses on fire.

In response, the three countries have intensified trilateral coordination on North Korea. They rejected China's call for emergency consultations in the Six-Party format involving Russia, following the Island shelling, which underlined widening differences on threat perception and management.

The six-party talks aim to find a peaceful resolution to the security concerns as a result of the North Korean nuclear weapons programme, which started as a result of Pyongyang withdrawing from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2003.

A report released simultaneously in Brussels and Seoul on January 27, 2011 traces Beijing's anxiety back to 2009 in the aftermath of reports of Kim Jong-il's failing health, a disastrous currency reform (in November that year) and uncertainties surrounding leadership transition.

"It hopes that its increased support for Pyongyang during the succession process will result in closer political ties and make the next generation of leaders more amenable to Chinese-style economic reform," says the report by the International Crisis Group based in Brussels.

According to the report, while support to North Korea is subject to internal debate in Beijing, traditionalist and conservative forces dominate policymaking and are supported by nationalist public opinion.

"The approach to the North (Korea) is also powerfully shaped by rising concern about a perceived U.S. strategic return to Asia and opposition to greater American regional military and political presence," the report adds.

Concomitant with its national interests, as Beijing perceives these, China continues to strengthen its political and economic ties with North Korea. In the previous two years, the frequency of high-level visits has increased dramatically, including unprecedented two trips by Kim Jong-il in 2010.

Beijing's policy towards North Korea continues to be fundamentally shaped by historical and security considerations: "Korean War comradeship, together with the desire to preserve the North as a buffer against the U.S. and avoid a regime collapse that would trigger a flood of refugees into China," says the report.

This might sound logical in Beijing but the report warns: "China is undermining its own security interests by downplaying North Korea's deadly provocations in the Yellow Sea."

Beijing's increased solidarity with Pyongyang and reluctance to censure it for the deadly Yellow Sea clashes has significantly strained relations with South Korea, Japan and the U.S.

Seoul was offended by tardy condolences for the sinking in March 2010 of the vessel Ch'ōnan and the warm welcome Kim Jong-il received immediately following South Korean President Lee Myung-bak's visit to China.

The Crisis Group looks into the implications of North Korea firing artillery at South Korea's Yeonpyeong Island in the Yellow Sea off

the countries' west coast on November 23, 2010, setting houses on fire. South Korea returned fire. Subsequently, the South Korean military said it was on highest non-wartime alert.

Initially China downplayed the Island shelling and criticised U.S. military deployment and exercises with allies in North East Asia, notes the analysis. However, the subsequent spike in inter-Korean tensions altered its threat perception and led it ultimately to tone down criticism of the U.S., send an envoy to Pyongyang and join with Washington in calling for talks between the North and South.

During President Hu Jintao's visit to the U.S. from January 17 to 21, 2011, China agreed to a joint statement that emphasised the importance of North-South dialogue and expressed concern for the first time regarding North Korea's uranium enrichment programme.

"The joint statement signed by Presidents Hu and Obama during the Chinese leader's Washington visit . . . was welcome, but its practical effect remains to be seen, since China continues to shield Pyongyang and support it politically and economically," says the report titled 'China and Inter-Korean Clashes in the Yellow Sea'.

But, it adds, China has ground to make up if it is to recover credibility as an impartial broker in the Six-Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear program.

"China's refusal to hold Pyongyang to account for its deadly attacks on South Korea prevents a unified international response," says Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt, Crisis Group's North East Asia Project Director. "It invites further North Korean military and nuclear provocations and the increased militarisation of North East Asia."

Crisis Group's Asia Program Director Robert Templer sees in Beijing's responses to the deadly clashes in the Yellow Sea "a test of its willingness to act as a responsible stakeholder in regional security".

He adds: "China's influence in Pyongyang makes it crucial for international efforts to address North Korea, but its policy of supporting the government instead of holding it to account heightens the risk of further military and nuclear provocations."

The report explains that China's growing power and foreign policy confidence are important factors underlying its ambivalence about the Island incidents.

"After the sinking and what it viewed as a biased and flawed international investigation, it drew on its increased leverage to dilute the Security Council statement. And despite North Korea's undeniable responsibility for the Yeonpyeong Yōnp'yōng Island shelling, it blocked Security Council action," says the report.

The report adds: "In the past, Beijing's willingness to at least calibrate its responses to North Korean provocations was seen by the West as essential for moderating Pyongyang's behaviour. Over the past year, however, Beijing has not only escalated its claims to disputed territories in the South China Sea and Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, but also increasingly resisted external pressure over Iran as well as North Korea."

It feels under less pressure to yield to external demands and increasingly expects quid pro quos from the West in return for cooperation on sensitive third-country issues. ■

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'Don't Abandon Somalia'

By Jerome Mwanda in Nairobi

Twenty years after the Somalia President Mohamed Siad Barre was ousted on January 26, 1991, the country in the Horn of Africa remains embroiled in an endless cycle of civil war, religious conflict and clan violence, and has come to be known as a failed state.

The present government led by President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed is in command of only a few pockets of the capital Mogadishu with the vast majority of the country now in the hands of Islamist insurgents known as the Shebab.

"Somalia is one of the world's most intractable crises. For twenty years conflict over power, resources and land has destroyed lives, created hundreds of thousands of orphans and devastated communities," Mark Bowden, the UN humanitarian coordinator in Somalia, said on January 24.

At the same time, the United Nations and the international aid agency Oxfam have warned that drought is likely to exacerbate the humanitarian crisis which has already affected two million people.

This is all the more reason, the UN says, for the international community not to abandon Somalia, "The Somali people need our support more than ever," Bowden said in a statement, adding: "The international community must step up its support to the people of Somalia if we are to protect the gains we have made and prevent many more people from slipping into crisis and Somalia from becoming one of the world's few chronic catastrophes."

The statement pointed out that the UN would soon launch a new five-year plan for Somalia called 'the United Nations Assistance Strategy for Somalia (UN-SAS), setting out humanitarian and development goals.' The UNSAS will set out the humanitarian, recovery and development objectives of the UN in Somalia for the next five years.

The UNSAS aims to increase availability of essential social services, provide livelihood opportunities and build Government institutions that are able to provide security and justice for all Somali people.

"As we reflect on the tragic consequences of two decades of conflict, let us reaffirm our commitment to building a lasting peace which matches the resilience of millions of Somali people who continue to work towards a better future," Bowden added. He pointed to a rise in the numbers of children being educated, the success of immunisation campaigns and of growth in life expectancy as proof that Somalia should not be regarded as a hopeless case.

Bowden said despite decades of conflict, many of Somalia's development indicators have improved since 1991 as the UN and local partners have increased support for the provision of essential social services to vulnerable communities.

"Progress is possible even in these difficult circumstances. Across the country, increasing numbers of children are enrolling in schools, health clinics are opening, and the economy led by the agricultural, banking and telecom sectors is growing rapidly."

UN supported immunization campaigns have kept Somalia polio-free since 2007 and the incidence of Malaria has been reduced by 57 percent between 2005 and 2009.

In the last three years the UN with local partners has also scaled-up nutrition services by over 300 percent for the treatment of acute malnutrition among the most affected infants. "While indicators of Somali welfare remain low, they have shown a marked improvement since 1991 despite continuing conflict. Life expectancy has grown, access to health facilities has almost doubled, infant mortality has dropped and extreme poverty has plummeted," Bowden said.

He said despite significant signs of progress much more needs to be done as the Somali people need UN support more than ever. "The international community must step up its support to the people of Somalia if we are to protect the gains we have made and prevent many more people from slipping into crisis and Somalia from becoming one of the world's few chronic catastrophes," he said.

Oxfam said in a media release January 24 that drought is worsening the crisis in Somalia and that the new catastrophe should be the final "wake-up" call for the international community as millions are at risk of hunger.

WORST DROUGHT

"Somalia is suffering its worst drought in years and failed rains are already devastating half a million lives. An ongoing conflict in the country -- now in its 23rd year -- together with the drought has pushed hundreds of thousands of Somalis beyond their ability to cope," Oxfam said.

It went on to say that the central and southern regions are suffering the worst effects, where some areas have received between zero and 15 percent of their usual rainfall. In the Gedo region of the south, the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) is reporting 25 percent of the population to be acutely malnourished.

FSNAU is a network in Somalia that gathers and analyses essential food security, livelihood and nutrition data that informs both emergency and development interventions.

In the nearby Juba regions, that number rises to 30 percent. Livestock herds have been decimated, forcing destitute pastoralists to migrate to towns and villages in search of aid. The failure of the Deyr rainy season, normally October to December, has left severe food and water shortages that are expected to get worse in the coming months.

"The region has been hit very hard," said Zachariah Imeje, Program Officer for Oxfam. "Drought and hunger are so severe, that thousands have fled the relative security of their villages and headed to Mogadishu. They are desperate enough that they will risk the fighting and shelling there, in order to find food."

"More than two million people in Somalia were already living in crisis. Additional support will be needed for them to cope, or this drought could push them over the edge into an even more acute catastrophe," said Imeje.

The ongoing conflict makes access to the worst hit regions difficult. In some areas, access for humanitarian organisations seeking to reach those in need continues to be severely restricted due to the security situation. ■



Elites Bear Huge Responsibility

By Tumenta F. Kennedy*



The African continent has never been poor in materials and human resources, but people continue to be trapped in the "poverty of the spirit". The impoverishment of vast parts of the national populations in African countries is a reality the diplomats and elites are confronted with and have to handle in their everyday conduct.

A reasonable portion of Africa's population at the 'bottom of the economic pyramid' does not find itself in a

position where it can secure its basic needs. "Institutionalized social security" or public mechanisms either do not exist or are often inefficient in securing a minimum financial base for two-thirds of the population. Even though this portion of the population is poised with lots of creative spirit and unique innovations, there are far from adequate tools to allow them the opportunity to contribute to their countries' economic development.

Hence, their productive potential and capacity is wasted. These wasted capacities constitute what may be termed as the "Sleeping or Death Capital". In combination with the role of the extended family filling the gap, one cannot escape the conclusion that poverty or unemployment is a time bomb for African societies and further contributes to the erosion of ethical behavior.

"If the poor and the jobless do not come 'through the front door'; they would come 'through the back door', often as thieves." It is this dynamics that participants in a recent workshop in Berlin were concerned about. Said one of them:

"At one point I figured that at least, if I cannot give money to everyone of the extended family and the village I could give them some of my skills by teaching them and enabling them to move up but no one came. They wanted money only.

"As an educated person, serving my country, going home to the village, a fisher village in the north of the country is difficult since people will be expecting me to be the salvation to all their financial hardships. Everyone is asking for money while my salary is limited."

The latter comment leads us to the second major hurdle: the functional efficacy of financial services together with safety nets. The reality in many African countries is that the organization people normally would go to in order to get money (financial services), is either non-existent or not adapted to the local realities as in giving funds to poor people.

In the absence of any alternative, the African elites are exerting pressure to fill this gap and perform such functions. Sometimes if they do not provide for the basic needs of the communities, they are often branded as wicked, selfish, or even attacked. The societal solidarity principle based on the moral appeal, recommends elites to continuously act against their self-interest to the extent of being corrupt or collecting side payments.

Drawing insights from what may be termed "economic ethics", a methodology whereby one uses economics tools to solve moral problems, the 21st century African diplomats need to be visionaries and have strategies to rebrand their nations as well as seek to encourage economic entrepreneurship by creating connections for people to start building their own businesses, creating jobs for others, hence making people to increasingly need less government in their life.

This entails understanding the responsibility of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), social businesses, small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs), and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in fostering national development strategies.

As my mentor ambassador Andrew Young puts it, government officials should understand that "you can make more money (honestly) from a growing economy, than you can steal from a dying economy".

'COPY-PAST APPROACH'

African countries nowadays are facing the consequences of the 'copy-past approach' that was pursued upon independence in the majority of the newly independent African countries. Institutions were imported from other countries -- often those of the former colonial powers, without the then African elites taking necessary steps to adapting the institutional mechanisms such as governing principles, guidelines, rules of the game, and morals and values making up the institutions in question to the realities of their own societies.

This makes it very challenging to carry out sound ethical judgment on the action of decision makers.

The base of ethical judgment and moral decision making is the correlation of the morals, ideals/visions of a community -- common goals, values, shared convictions, e.g. peace, justice, solidarity, freedom, democratic understanding -- and their real life condition of actions (behaviours of others, competencies, scarcity, poverty of the spirit, competitions, rivals, functioning institutions, self interest, trust etc).

This would allow for an environment, where the pursuit of these ideals and obeying the rules are mutually beneficial for all members of the community; conversely, creating a positive sum game situation. If this is not the case, the conflicts and inconsistencies deriving from designed institutions that do not respond to the needs of the communities supposed to obey them make it difficult or at times even impossible to sustain ethical decision-making and moral conduct for all of the members of that community.

While, at first sight, this might sound like a free ticket to reluctant conduct and neglected responsibilities, the second sight suggests differently. It is the constraint to 'think out of the box', that produces some of the key 21st century challenges to African diplomats and elites. ☺

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While the general understanding is that morality and self-interest do not go together, this new generation of African leaders, needs to be equipped with the skills to understand that where "immoral behaviours" are rewarded and moral behaviours are not rewarded, morality cannot be sustainable without self-interest.

'OUTSIDE THE BOX'

On the other hand, self-interest alone cannot be sustainable without morality. In my view, morality and self-interest are indispensable ingredients to "transformational leadership in Africa". African elites are vested with the responsibility to think outside the box of the prevailing institutions and to transform/adapt their institutions -- formal and informal -- to coincide with and reflect their social, political, economic, cultural and institutional realities.

They also have to reinforce institutions to serve as orientation or reflect the "applied" moral ideals, values and conducts of the people. Such institutions will allow for a "positive sum game" when it comes to the pursuit of one's own interest under morally appropriate behaviour, thereby responding to one of the prevailing root causes of problems of corruption or lack of accountability and transparency.

Hence loosening the links to the dominant institution allows a new more dynamic institution to form that is encouraged to 'think outside the box'".

TRIPLE IGNORANCE

We need a more charismatic and proactive leadership in the African continent. The present lack of proactive action and transformation with the theory of triple Ignorance x^2 syndrome (ignorance, of ignorant of ignorance,) affecting decision makers: accordingly there continues to be a methodological ignorance, hindering all interacting partners to incite self-reflection on the condition of action before interacting or taking action.

We don't know, that we don't know, that we don't know, that African governance institutions do not correlate with the realities of the people. The lack of awareness prevents people from taking unconventional action to reinforce the transformation, establishment or adaptation of prevailing institutions.

Instead, enormous energy is invested in fighting malfunctions of a non-applicable system of moral ideals and values. According to the triple ignorance explanation, most African policy makers do not know that they don't know that policy-makers from western institutions do not know that their proposed governing mechanisms are incompatible to the African reality. Hence, the "social group of policy makers" continues to generate its own view of the world (Africa), developing a thought style that sustains the pattern of interaction.

African elites, as a way forward, have to think and reflect beyond the boundaries of existing and pre-established institutions rather than surrendering at the sight of the non-compatibility of institutionally expected behaviour.

Instead of allowing the realities of everyday conduct to compromise one's own moralities or belief system, one has to search for ways to which realities, institutions and their own ethical conduct can move toward the same direction -- win-win: moral behaviour as a factor of self enrichment.

Aligning institutions and realities is an enterprise that is unique to each country and community, a one fit-all-solution

does not exist. What many Africans need is not a 'handout' which makes them lazy, but 'hand-lifting', enabling conditions, which gives them a vision and a purpose in life that enkindles the creative flame burning in their heart. This is what may be termed 'political entrepreneurship'.

While this is a major challenge, below an example that serves as a concluding optimistic glance into the future of African elites:

A young politician in Tanzania campaigning to eradicate wide-spread corruption was elected to the parliament of a country to represent his community. Upon assuming office, he was confronted with people from his constituency demanding for both moral and financial support.

While he spent time giving audiences to his people and provided financial assistance to some, he soon saw the 'shopping list' and expectations growing exponentially and the problems people presented him worsening. His moral ideal of solidarity with the people in need soon collided with the limitations of his salary.

With people considering his financial support as due in exchange for their vote, he found himself in a moral dilemma between two evils: either steal and redistribute and be re-elected but to be corrupted, or not to steal, not to redistribute but consequently risk not being re-elected.

As a political entrepreneur understanding the 'functional interrelationship between moralities, expectations and self-interests', the young Tanzanian parliamentarian was able to think 'outside the constraining box of two possibilities' putting him into the moral dilemma.

He decided for a completely different option: transparency towards and engagement of the community with respect to both, his conduct and the dilemma. Highlighting his salary and the financial support he had given to community members, it was clear that he was not in a position to provide any more funds to any of the community members.

While this was obvious to the community he asked them to agree and sign a petition mandating him to steal (corrupt) the public money to meet the demand of his constituency. It is here that people saw the limits to his capacities and understood the ethical challenges he was undergoing.

Based on this, the debate could be transformed and responsibilities of individuals and politicians allocated based on the realities of the community. While he never got a mandate to be corrupt, he was mandated to provide an environment for the community to unleash their untapped potential. In 2010, he was re-elected for a second term to the parliament of his country and remains as role model for African leaders. ■

According to the triple ignorance explanation, most African policy makers do not know that they don't know that policy-makers from western institutions do not know that their proposed governing mechanisms are incompatible to the African reality. Hence, the "social group of policy makers" continues to generate its own view of the world (Africa), developing a thought style that sustains the pattern of interaction.

Memorable Encounters in Ghana

By Yuki Sakaguchi in Tokyo



Akwaaba, which means "welcome," was the first word I came across upon my arrival in Ghana. Many people identify Africa with words that have negative connotations, such as poverty, conflict or disease. However, there is much more

to this vast continent than such associations. This is what I learnt during my one-year study visit to Ghana. I found so much hope and potential there.

Fifty years ago Daisaku Ikeda, the founder of Soka University -- where I am a student -- and president of the lay Buddhist organization, Soka Gakkai International, said: "Those who have suffered the most will become the happiest ...The 21st century will be 'the century of Africa'."

I share these sentiments. In order to better understand Ghana, it is necessary to consider the country's political history and the living standards of its ordinary citizens.

Ghana was the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence on March 6, 1957, and Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972) its first president. Nkrumah's leadership skills had been honed during the many years he led the struggle for independence. His social background, lack of financial means and the hardships he experienced trying to support himself as a student, had further equipped him with an understanding of and ability to relate to the people.

Although he suffered some criticism from the educated elite during his time in presidential office, he remained a man of action for the people and, because of the kind of leader he was, continues to be highly respected until today. He could not maintain his struggle for the happiness of his people due to a military coup and his resulting banishment in 1966.

But the fact remains that due to Nkrumah's perseverance, Ghana is currently a peaceful democracy and one of the oldest democracies in the whole of Africa. In fact, Ghana is a prime example of a people's victory.

Despite this, the lot of the Ghanaian people is far from faultless. Due to the lack of infrastructure to support continuous electric and water supplies, people face electricity interruptions and water shortages every day and, because of the lack of job opportunities, serious financial problems.

Furthermore, women are often denied their rights and suffer because of some remaining tribal customs. For example, when I went to a village in the northern part of Ghana, I met a woman whose mouth was held shut by a padlock. Traditionally, she is not allowed to use her mouth unless her husband decides to

unlock the circular part of the lock mounted on her top lip from the one on her bottom lip. This is regarded by men as an attractive and desirable physical feature for a woman to have and is the style in this particular village.

In the northern part of Ghana, known as Tongo, I met the chief of a village who had 18 wives and 300 children. Whilst being shown around the village by one of the chief's subjects, I noticed about 30 women sitting under a tree, a long way from the chief's palace, and learned that women are only permitted to enter the chief's palace when he allows them to do so.

However, such customs aside, there is an astounding sense of community and a profound focus on human-to-human interaction in Ghana, which is evident in the way people communicate. This, I believe, is Africa's key asset and will be essential to its future development.

The interaction between people is amazingly close. Ghanaians shake hands when greeting one another and continue to do so at numerous times whilst in conversation. Friendliness is interwoven into their culture. Every time I walked through town I was greeted many times with the words "Obruni (foreigner), how are you?" by people I didn't know. I decided to count how many times I shook hands with my friends and how many people greeted me on the road. I found that I shook hands more than a hundred times and approximately 30 people actually stopped to converse with me.

However, it is not the number that is important, but rather the essence of these greetings. I had so many dialogues with people I met on the road and these dialogues taught me so many important things. I had conversations with elderly people about the future of Ghana, about the power of culture and potential of art with a painter, and with children about their dreams. These dialogues on the road were the moments that I best understood Ghana and its culture.

Having asked so many of the children that I met on the street what their dreams were I realized that many of them dream of being football players. However, most children are unable to pursue their dreams because of economic constraints and the lack of opportunity. These chance interactions with children made me think about their struggles and shed light on my mission -- to make their dreams come true -- and I decided to start up Tsubasa Football Academy.

Although the Academy does not have its own school building or pitch yet, 50 students are training there and working towards the realization of their dreams.

It was through talking to all those "teachers" I met on the road and learning from their many lessons that I found my mission. Now, I am able to contribute to the culture that taught me the true meaning of community spirit. I am determined to help make the 21st century the century of Africa. ■



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Of Zubin Mehta, Berlin Musicians and Nature Conservation

By Corina Kolbe

Zubin Mehta, a renowned Indian conductor of western classical music -- who commutes between the major music centres in Europe, the United States and Israel -- remains emotionally attached to the country of his birth, particularly the diversity of its nature.

It was logical therefore that his eyes lit up when he was asked to conduct Europe's first charity concert in Berlin to promote nature conservation in the threatened north-eastern Himalayan region.

"Everyone should know the incomparable beauty of India's landscape," said the 74-year-old maestro, who directed the benefit concert on January 16, 2011 in Berlin, to support WWF's sustainability projects in the Indian states of Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

WWF (World Wildlife Fund) is a leading global organization dedicated to protecting endangered wildlife and environments.

The concert was a 'climate initiative' of the musicians of Berlin's reputed 'Staatskapelle', who have founded the 'Orchestra of Change' ('Orchester des Wandels') -- with another reputed conductor Daniel Barenboim as its patron -- and the Foundation 'NaturTon' (Nature's Original Sound).

The 'Orchestra of Change' wants music lovers to be environment friendly and hopes that musicians around the world will emulate them. The initiators of the Foundation support CO2 tax on air travel, plead for the use of recycled paper by administrations, favour environmentally safe cleaning of their tail coats, and demand free of charge public transport tickets for concert-goers.

"When they asked me whether I would lead the concert, I agreed happily," said Zubin Mehta who was born into a Parsi family in Bombay (now Mumbai) in 1936. "We (Parsis) worship the elements of nature and pray for a clean earth, clean water and clean air. That's part of our philosophy of life."

Following are excerpts from the interview conducted shortly before the concert and first published in Hamburg-based 'Zeit Online'. It was conducted in German, a language in which Zubin Mehta is highly proficient -- not the least because at the age of 18 he left Mumbai for Vienna where he eventually entered the conducting programme at the Academy for Music.

Q: The benefit concert supports the environmental group WWF's projects in the eastern Himalayas, because the nature in India is under serious threat. Is that because the emerging economy has undergone such a rapid industrial development?

Mehta: In my view, the problem is rapid population growth. As more and more villages are transformed into cities, more and more forests are disappearing. Unlike China, India is a democratic state, which does not dictate how many children a family should have. For this reason, it will not be possible to halt the demographic development. Besides, though India is a high-tech country, it is plagued by enormous social contradictions. 800 million of the 1.2 billion people in the country can neither read nor write.

Q: As a musician, you speak a universal language. Is this not an ideal condition to sensitize a large number of people also for global concerns such as climate change?

Mehta: Yes. You should never underestimate the power of music; it transcends all frontiers. When I conduct performances with Beethoven's music to Jewish and Arab audiences in the Middle East, peace pervades concert halls. We artists must do more to ensure that people living in crisis situations find an access to each other through music.



Q: Berlin is witnessing you conduct Beethoven's 'Leonore Overture number 4' as backdrop to a new piece of the modern-day Indian composer Naresh Sohal. You are building a bridge between times and cultures poles apart.

Mehta: You are referring to 'The Divine Song', a large piece for narrator and orchestra based on text at the heart of the '**Bhagavad Gita**', a sacred Hindu scripture. The text is very descriptive; it is recited by Swiss film and stage actor Stefan Kurt in German. It is a dialogue between Arjuna, the great warrior of the Indian epic 'Mahabharata', and Krishna, the god of culture. In this case, Arjuna is the pacifist. Krishna argues, however, that enemies must be destroyed. This is also a very topical issue of our times. In addition, I am presenting the 'Eroica' by Beethoven, who initially celebrated Napoleon as a hero and then turned away from him when he crowned himself Emperor and betrayed the ideals of the revolution.

Q: What kind of audiences does the Western classical music draw in India?

Mehta: Lots of people attend such concerts in Bombay, where my father founded the first symphony orchestra in the country in 1935. About 18 million people live in Bombay, of which maybe 10,000 are interested in Western music. Most of the people love Indian music. Western music is a borrowed culture. I wish the people knew both well.

Q: The 'Mehli Mehta Music Foundation' in Mumbai, named after your father, offers an educational programme aimed at making young people familiar with the Indian and Western classical music.

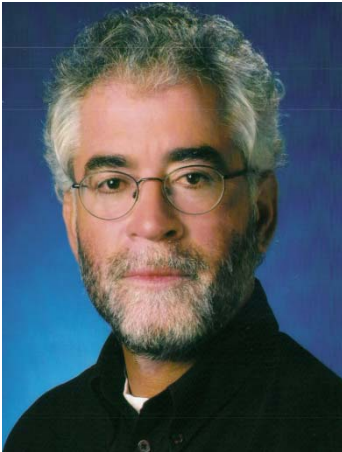
Mehta: Presently 200 children and adolescents are learning how to play violin and piano. Another 200 are still on the waiting list. At the moment we have neither enough space, nor a sufficient number of teachers. But I hope that we can eventually set up a conservatory.

With the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, I am also trying to introduce Israeli Arabs in the north of the country to music. Members of the orchestra, which I led for many years as music director teach more than 250 young Arabs and also train teachers in **Shwaram** and Nazareth; and I have a dream that at some point in time Israeli Arabs will be playing along with others in the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, perhaps already in the next five or six years. ■

Cancel the Licenses to Steal and Kill

By Julio Godoy

The legend has it that in 1948 U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, confronted with the ruthlessness and corruption of the Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza, said that the latter was a "son of a bitch. But he is our son of a bitch". Historians dispute until today, whether Roosevelt was referring to Somoza or to yet another corrupt U.S. ally in Latin America, the Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo. In any case, both Somoza and Trujillo were indeed "sons of a bitch".



But they were also visceral anti-Communists, and this alone made them qualify to be close allies of Washington. Both remained "our sons of a bitch" until their bitter end -- Trujillo was assassinated in 1961, probably by a group controlled by the CIA., and Somoza's son and heir as ruler of Nicaragua was chased out of power in 1979 by the Sandinista revolution, and eventually killed one year later in Paraguay by a Nicaraguan hit commando.

guyan hit commando.

"OUR SONS OF A BITCH"

But the U.S. never learnt the Trujillo and Somoza lessons. Although it is not known whether U.S. presidents -- or European governments, for that matter -- ever made similar comments about Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak or Tunisian kleptocrat Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, there is no doubt that all of them considered the two as "our sons of a bitch" during the last 30 years

Both Mubarak and Ben Ali qualified to be Western allies for their ruthless fight against Islam, both adopted mild positions towards Israel -- and that was enough, in the eyes of Washington and Paris, to neutralise their inaptitude and rampant corruption. All French governments since 1987, for instance, always praised Ben Ali as guarantor of stability, peace and economic growth on the Southern Mediterranean shore. They also dismissed the accusations against Ben Ali's corruption and brutality as exaggerations, or simply ignored them.

One year ago, when the book 'La Regente de Carthago', by two French journalists, was released, providing evidence of Ben Ali's reckless corruption, the official France ignored it. Actually, Paris did not need be told by third parties of Ben Ali's banditries.

Two nieces of Ben Ali's infamous wife Leila Trabelsi -- she is referred to as the corrupt "regent of Carthago" in the the book -- were directly involved in the robbery of yachts from ports in Southern France. Those several yachts were later located in Tunisian havens, and registered there under the Trabelsi nieces' names!

When the revolt threatened Ben Ali's power in mid January, the French government did not have any other reflex but to offer the dictator police units to "pacify" the country. Only when the dictator himself admitted his defeat and escaped Tunis, did France realised it had been supporting a regime constituted by thieves and torturers.

But the European and U.S. complicity with the Arab dictators goes beyond ignoring their deeds. Ben Ali, Mubarak, and others were able to stockpile a fortune with the help of French and Swiss banks and administrations.

According to the French anti corruption group 'Sherpa', Ben Ali's riches amount to at least five billion U.S. dollars, including numerous luxurious real estate properties in Paris and elsewhere in France. As Sherpa's leader William Bordon decently puts it, "This fortune cannot be the fruit of Ben Ali's lawful income as president of Tunisia."

Ben Ali's corruption may be peanuts compared to Mubarak's greed. According to official Swiss figures, the local banks manage Egyptian trust accounts for some 4,000 billion U.S. dollars. No wonder Mubarak -- this loyal friend of us, this brutal enemy of his own people -- is so fiercely clinging to office.

For all their talk about the pre-eminence of Western values, the decades-long complicity of European and U.S. governments with dictators does not end at the Mediterranean southern shore.

During the past 10 to 20 years, notorious thieves such as the late Omar Bongo of Gabon, Teodoro Obiang of Equatorial Guinea, Denis Sassou Nguesso of Congo Brazzaville, and even the former Communist foe José Eduardo dos Santos of Angola -- curiously, all of them ruling oil rich countries -- enjoyed the unconditional support of Paris, Washington, London, and Berlin, just as Trujillo and Somoza did 50 years ago.

The Western toughness towards Iran appears, in the face of this Western complicity with dictators and thieves in the Persian vicinity, not to speak of the Western tolerance of Israeli policy, as the proverbial case of double standards. It is this hypocrisy that also undermines all European and U.S. efforts for a stable peace and stability in the area.

Even in the fight against corruption, the West has failed. Only under the pressure of the street revolts in Tunis, and of such groups such as Sherpa in Paris, did the French or Swiss justice hesitantly moved -- often too late -- to freeze the dictators' accounts and sometimes proceeded to restitute the fortunes to their countries of origin.

Guess where the former French president Jacques Chirac now resides: In a Paris palace owned by the Lebanese tycoon Hariri family, which has ruled the land of cedars on and off for the past 20 years. Chirac does not pay a cent -- the Hariris graciously allow him the dwell there free of charge, out of pure friendship, obviously.

Whether Europe and the U.S. will finally learn their lessons from their collusion with thieves and murderers -- only because they are killing "our" enemies and stealing other people's money -- remains to be seen. If the past experience -- back in the days of Trujillo and Somoza -- is an indicator, the most likely answer is 'no'. ■

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How to 'Iran-ise Egypt... and Others'

By Fareed Mahdy* IDN-InDepth NewsViewpoint ISTANBUL (IDN) - The recipe for pushing Egyptians and Arabs toward extremism is simple and has been tasted for decades. Its ingredients are easy to prepare and digest; they are already pre-cooked and the kitchens of both Western mainstream media and foreign ministries are full of them. No problem. Just pick up the old menu of the "free world against communist devil". It has three main dishes:



Wake-up Call for G20 to Banish Bribery

By Jutta Wolf IDN-InDepth NewsReport BERLIN (IDN) - Tunisia and Egypt should serve as a wake-up call to the Group of 20 (G20) industrial and emerging economies to put into practice long overdue decisions to root out corruption in public life. Transparency International (TI) and Global Witness, backed by 76 other organisations from around the world have warned.



New Vaccine Launched to Protect Babies Against Pneumonia

By Jerome Mwanda IDN-InDepth NewsReport NAIROBI (IDN) - An innovative financing mechanism called the Advance Market Commitment (AMC), has helped to make the rollout of new-generation pneumococcal vaccines possible within a year of their introduction with Italy, Britain, Canada, Russian, Norway, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation together contributing US\$ 1.5 billion



Egypt Has Much to Celebrate While Questions Linger

By Ernest Corea IDN-InDepth NewsAnalysis WASHINGTON D.C. (IDN) - Twenty-one years to the day on which Nelson Mandela emerged from the darkness of 27 years in a South African prison, Egypt's Hosni Mubarak packed his bags and departed with his family from the darkness of 30 years of his own dictatorial regime.



Security Council Discovers Linkages between Poverty and Peace

By J Chandler IDN-InDepth NewsAnalysis TORONTO (IDN) - Better late than never: Following this axiom, the UN Security Council which normally debates country-specific and war-and-peace issues such as Sudan and the Middle East, decided to widen its horizon and discussed in a high-level session some of the root causes underlying conflicts around the world.



NATO Ready to Facilitate Middle East Peace

By Bernhard Schell IDN-InDepth NewsReport AMMAN (IDN) - As uncertainty and suspense about an emerging new Egypt and its impact on the Middle East grip the international community, the Euro-U.S. military alliance NATO has offered to serve as a facilitator, though in a rather circumspect manner.



UN Keen to Reinforce Disaster Reduction Strategies

By Richard Johnson IDN-InDepth NewsReport GENEVA (IDN) - Poverty, rapid urbanization and the impact of climate change resulted in 950 disasters in 2010, making it one of the deadliest years in more than a generation.



Africa's New Face to the World

By Eskinder Nega IDN-InDepth NewsAnalysis ADDIS ABABA (IDN) - Perhaps it would be a blatant exaggeration to say that Jean Ping, Commissioner of the African Union, had imperiously held his chin up when he spoke. But that he spoke earnestly, deliberately, and with the best stately poise he could muster is hardly in doubt.



African Democracy Alien to Ban Ki-moon

By Okello Oculi * IDN-InDepth NewsViewpoint ** ABUJA (IDN) - The United Nations secretary general Mr Ban Ki-moon is a strange type of democrat. Speaking to the press at Addis Ababa outside the meeting of the African Union he spoke thus: "I am concerned that differences of opinion are now surfacing among the African Union. This is not desirable at this time in preserving the integrity and fundamental principle of democracy." His notion of democracy does not value "differences of opinion". It stands at variance to Mwalimu Nyerere's view of the workings of...



Beyond the Illusion of UN Security Council Reform

By Ramesh Jaura IDN-InDepth NewsAnalysis BERLIN (IDN) - Some nine months after President Barack Obama backed India for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, he may spring a surprise at the General Assembly opening session in September 2011 that would initiate a process paving the way for the promise becoming a reality.

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TOWARD A NUCLEAR FREE WORLD



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G-20

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Plenary meetings, events, and major thematic debates from the 64th session of the UN General Assembly.

2 – 27 August 2010, Geneva
[Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, seventy-seventh session](#)

2 – 27 August 2010, UN Headquarters
[Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, twenty-sixth session](#)
9 August – 24 September 2010, Geneva
[Conference on Disarmament, third part](#)

16 August – 3 September 2010, Vienna
[Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, Working Group B and informal/expert meetings, thirty-fifth session](#)

16 – 20 August 2010, Vienna
[United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, fifty-seventh session](#)

23 – 27 August, Geneva
[Meeting of experts of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological \(Biological\) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction](#)

30 August – 3 September 2010, UN Headquarters
[UNDP and UNFPA, Executive Board, second regular session](#)

7 – 9 September 2010, UN Headquarters
[UNICEF Executive Board, second regular session](#)

13 – 17 September 2010, Nairobi
[Open-ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on Forest Financing](#)

Advisory Board Members' View of the World

[ROBERTO SAVIO](#) [TOSHIKI KAIFU](#) [LUC GNACADJA](#) [INGE KAUL](#)

AMBASSADOR ANWARUL K. CHOWDHURY

The Global Cooperation Council now has an Asia-Pacific Chapter in Tokyo

#

[Women Essential for Sustain](#)



Former UN Under-Secretary General Joins Advisory Board: Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the United Nations has joined the Advisory Board of Global Cooperation Council. Accepting the invitation, he writes: "I look forward to supporting and contributing to the efforts of the Global Cooperation Council to promote genuine international cooperation based on equality and fairness as essential elements of an increasingly globalizing world."

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UNCCD Executive Ssecretary Joins GC COUNCIL Advisory BOARD

Mr. Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, has accepted the invitation of the Executive Committee of the Global Cooperation Council to join the Council's Advisory Board. UNCCD is along with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) the outcome of the Earth Summit June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



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FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN GC COUNCIL ADVISOR
Mr. Toshiki Kaifu, who served as [Prime Minister of Japan from August 1989 to November 1991](#), has accepted our invitation to join the Advisory Board of Global Cooperation Council. Other members of the Board include Dr. Roberto Savio, Chair World Social Forum's Commission for Communication, President Emeritus of Inter Press Service - Italy, and Dr. Inge Kaul who served at the UNDP from 1981 to 2005 in different capacities. Mr. Toshiki Kaifu, assumed the office of the President of the World Federalist Movement of Japan on April 6, 2010. [JAPAN: PRIDE AND CAUTION](#)

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Guarding Environment with a Paper-and-Pencil Project

Asia-Pacific already has the largest number of motorized vehicles in the world and if the present trend continues, the region would in the coming years have more automobiles than Europe and North America combined.

Overcoming Hazards - Striving for greater Safety

Nowadays they are trucking hazardous cargo. They carry fine chemicals and ethanols, imported by trading companies, to client factories in Tokyo and surrounding five prefectures, known as the Kanto area. But there is a long and exciting human story behind today's Goshu Transportation Company. The short of the long story is that before Yoshio Emori founded Goshu in 1969, its predecessor Emori Oil Co. Ltd was running 27 gas stations in Saitama and Tokyo.

Trucking Safe with Ecology in the Pouch

Like the kangaroo pouch pocket that provides a place of shelter for the young after they are born, the truckers of Tokyo's legendary Nagai Transportation Company move their cargo with great care. No surprise therefore that the kangaroo is the logo of the company that celebrates "60 years of good faith and gratitude".

Read in Japanese at <http://www.polyglot.indepthnews.net>

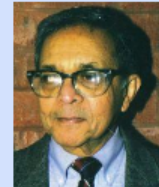
Redefine Japan-U.S. Alliance for Global Denuclearization

By Masayoshi Hamada* IDN-InDepth NewsViewpoint TOKYO (IDN) – Japan is serving in the rotating presidency of the UN Security Council in April, ahead of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons scheduled for May 2010. Amidst growing momentum toward a world free of nuclear weapons I believe Japan has the moral responsibility to spread word about the harrowing effect of nuclear weapons as the only sufferer of nuclear attacks .

'JAPAN HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE A CONSTRUCTIVE GLOBAL PLAYER'
TARO ICHIKAWA INTERVIEWS NEW KOMEI PARTY CHIEF NATSUO

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SOUTH ASIAN OUTLOOK
GLOBAL AFFAIRS MEDIA ACADEMY

TOWARD A NUCLEAR FREE WORLD

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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Confronting the Bliss of Ignorance about Africa
Somalia hit the top of the chart for the third consecutive year when the 2010 Failed States Index was recently unveiled by Foreign Policy magazine and the Fund for Peace. Several African states followed Somalia in the first 20 listed. They are considered the worst failures. The index was compiled on the basis of 12 criteria: demographics, refugees, illegitimate governance, brain drain, public services, inequality, group grievances, human rights, economic decline, security forces, factionalised elites, and external intervention.

Rendezvous with Planet Earth
2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity. And we all have a rendezvous with Planet Earth this year. In order that as many of us as possible feel encouraged to make it to the venue at the right point in time, the United Nations has launched some of the most innovative initiatives.

The Brave New World of Robert Zoellick
Thirty-three years after the World Bank president Robert McNamara proposed the establishment of an international commission to break the deadlock in North-South relations, his successor Robert B. Zoellick has proclaimed that in the new system triggered by a multi-polar world, North and South are only points on a compass, not economic destinies.

Aid Beyond Prejudice and Pride
By Eckhard Deutscher* IDN-InDepth NewsSpecial – Part 1 PARIS (IDN) – "Africa is drowning in aid money." "Too much aid goes to the private pockets of corrupt regimes and towards a bloated development

