US Policy; India and China, Other

Roy Jenne
27 Aug 2001

This is mostly about India. I just hope that both India and China can achieve better economic living standards, and keep military aggression in check.

This set of papers has 6 main items and 13 pages.

1. India and the Pope (Nov 1999, 1 p)

2. America’s new ally: India (Aug 2001, 2 p)
   A good article. This surprised me when I read it. It also was interesting that I read it in the New Republic, a moderate-liberal magazine.

3. Pakistan’s economy (Aug 2001, 1 p)
   Economic reform seems to be going well.

   • And software firms in India.
   • Religious strife

5. Nepal scrutinizes its new Heir Apparent (June 2001, WSJ, 1 p)

India and the pope
Preachers and souls

DELHI

Hinduism can coexist with Catholicism. Hindu nationalists may not want to

WHEN Pope John Paul arrives in Delhi on November 5th for his second visit to India, the country plans to be on its best behaviour. The recently re-elected government, led by the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), promises him “all courtesies and honours” due a head of state. It has muted protests by Hindu groups that object to Christian proselytising. Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Delhi, where the pope is to say mass before some 30,000 people, is to be fitted out with a cross-shaped podium decorated with a painted diya, a earthenware lamp used at Diwali; a Hindu festival that coincides with the visit.

The fusion of Christian spirit and Indian symbol is meant to be a friendly tribute, yet not all Indians will take it that way. Some think the Roman Catholic church and other Christian denominations are bent on subverting Indian culture through making conversions. And many of those have links to the BJP. The pope’s first visit in 1986 was a festive, ten-day jaunt that took him across much of India. This one, a two-day stop in Delhi to put the papal imprimatur on the conclusions of a synod of Asian bishops, takes place “against a backdrop of hate,” says John Dayal, national secretary of the All India Catholic Union.

Hated was evident in 1998 and early 1999, when Hindu gangs attacked Christian churches and congregations in the western state of Gujarat. An Australian missionary, Graham Staines, and his two sons were burnt to death in their car in the eastern state of Orissa. Sporadic attacks continue. In September, a Catholic priest was killed in Orissa by unidentified assailants.

The pope’s visit has stirred Hindu activists who equate Christianity with conversion, which they regard as a latter-day form of colonialism. Conversions “aimed at enslaving the country once again will destroy our culture and resources,” says a leader of the National Cultural Forum, which has sent a protest caravan from Goa to Delhi. Protesters say they do not oppose the pope’s visit but want him to apologise for forced conversions and other “crimes” committed by the Catholic church against the Indian people. Nowhere does Christianity appear to them more threatening than in the north-east, where several states have Christian majorities and Christians have figured among those taking part in the region’s many insurrections and secessionist movements.

Much of this anxiety seems misplaced. The Christian share of the population had declined to 2.3% in 1991, according to the census that year, from 2.4% recorded ten years earlier (Hindu and some Christian groups say “hidden Christians” make the real number much higher). There is little hard information to back up the accusations and denials about what has happened since. Clearly, many Christian groups would like to win Indian souls, but some go about it offensively by denigrating indigenous religions. Much proselytising is said to result in “sheep stealing”, luring Christians from one denomination to another.

Missionaries have had some success in tribal areas, for example in the area of Gujarat affected by anti-Christian violence earlier this year, but they are starting from a low base; in 1991 less than 0.5% of the state’s popu-
America's new ally: India.
Missile Defense's Children

By Lawrence F. Kaplan

D eputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage—a walking anvil who bench-presses more than 400 pounds, served three tours in Vietnam, and clomps around Washington like a bureaucratic pit bull—has been called many things. A marshmallow isn’t one of them. But that didn’t dissuade the prestigious Times of India, in a May article that could just as easily have been written for Teen Beat, from extolling Armitage as “a gentle giant who turns into marshmallow around children.” The piece also gushes that “much of New Delhi has been in thrall of the Bush team’s other great strategist Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz.” And that’s tame compared with the accolades coming from the Indian government, which in recent months has been praising the United States in terms unthinkable a decade ago. Moreover, the Bush administration has returned the compliment—racing, in the face of an increasingly hostile China, to put to rest a half-century of bitter relations with the world’s largest democracy. Quietly, fitfully, but unmistakably, a new alliance is being born.

For U.S. policymakers used to napping through the anti-imperialist diatribes of their Indian counterparts, all this comes as a welcome surprise. Taking their cue from the prewar British left, India’s first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and his successors spent much of the cold war peddling Fabian socialism at home and neutrality abroad, which in practice meant strangling the Indian economy and routinely siding with America’s foes. For decades, no epithet was too coarse for India’s leading opinion makers to employ against the United States, and no amount of garish praise seemed adequate to describe the virtues of the Soviet Union. And with the exception of a brief period during the early ’60s, when U.S. and Indian interests converged in the fight against Chinese aggression, the United States responded in kind—supplying vast quantities of arms to India’s mortal foe, Pakistan.

So what changed? “India placed its chips on the Soviet Union, economic autarky, and military might,” writes the Brookings Institution’s Stephen P. Cohen in his insightful forthcoming book, India: Emerging Power. “It lost all three bets.” Now, craving foreign investment and wary of an increasingly powerful China, a new generation of Indian policymakers is placing its bets on the United States. The most telling example came in May, when President Bush unveiled his missile defense initiative. While the rest of the world carped that the plan would provoke a new arms race, India took a mere six hours to declare its support. And Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh, who less than a year earlier had complained that missile defense “undermines... global strategic stability,” now boasts that New Delhi and Washington “are endeavoring to work out together a totally new security regime which is for the entire globe.”

But if Indian officials seem eager to repair relations with Washington, Bush sounds like he’s ready to move the ranch to Rajasthan. W’s charm offensive began in April, while the rest of the world waited to see whether China would release the crew of the U.S. EP-3. Though barely noticed in the American press, Foreign Minister Singh was in Washington at the time and met with National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice at the White House. According to a senior White House official, the Bush team had agreed the president would “drop by” the discussion. But Bush didn’t just drop by; he pulled a surprised Singh out of the meeting and took him for a stroll in the Rose Garden and then back to the Oval Office, where they talked about missile defense, China, and plans for improved ties. “He was beaming from ear to ear,” says a Bush adviser who saw Singh emerge from the Oval Office. From there, Singh went to the State Department, where he continued the conversation with Colin Powell and Armitage. Finally, he was taken to the Pentagon, where Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld welcomed him with a full honor guard.

A steady stream of U.S. officials has been jetting between New Delhi and Washington ever since. In the last two months, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Henry Shelton has traveled to India twice to shore up defense ties; Armitage has visited to consult on missile defense; and Bush has dispatched Robert Blackwill, one of his senior foreign policy advisers on the campaign trail, to India as his ambassador. More important, the administration has said that it plans to lift sanctions against India (despite grumbling from the State Department’s Nonproliferation Bureau), that it won’t meddle in the Kashmir dispute, and that President Bush will visit New Delhi this winter. And the parade of Indian officials traveling to Washington hasn’t abated either. When it comes to our relations with India, says Armitage, it took the Clinton administration “seven years to get to the point that Mr. Bush has gotten to in two months.”

Actually, that overstates Clinton’s achievement. “The first six years of the Clinton administration are years most Indians would like to forget,” says Gopalaswami Parthasarathy, the recently retired Indian high commissioner to Pakistan. “United States policies were exclusively aimed at curbing our nuclear independence or meddling in our relations with our neighbors.” Relations went from bad to worse in the wake of New Delhi’s 1998 atomic tests, when Clinton slapped sanctions against India and, for good measure, admonished it to “define the greatness of India in twenty-first-century terms.
not in something we’ve left behind.” His administration even joined China in threatening to keep America’s fellow democracy off the U.N. Security Council. During Clinton’s final year in office, ties improved after the president visited India. But, even then, the Clintonites were mostly interested in chasing India’s markets.

The Bush team brings to Washington a very different worldview, one closer to India’s own. Gone is the Clintonite passion for arms control and the empty speaking of a strategic partnership with Beijing. Gone too is the contempt for geopolitics that distinguished Clinton’s approach to the international scene. In fact, geopolitics is precisely what the rapprochement with India is about. “The United States now sees India as an alternative to China,” explains Cohen. “And Indian hostility toward China has become an asset.” The Bush team insists that the thaw in relations with India isn’t about “containing” Beijing. But White House and Pentagon officials concede that it is part of a strategy of “hedging” against the possibility. (Japan has a role to play as well.) “As China’s power grows,” explains a Bush adviser, “a strong India will provide stability and balance.”

China figures in the calculations of Indian policymakers, too. Prevailing wisdom in the United States is that Pakistan poses the greatest threat to India. But that’s not the way Indian policymakers see it. In their telling, the greater peril lies with the fledgling superpower and long-term adversary to their north; in fact, that’s how then-Defense Minister George Fernandes justified India’s atomic tests in 1998. Today, China and India share a disputed border across which they fought a war in 1962; the two countries are engaged in an escalating rivalry for influence in Southeast Asia; China continues to provide Pakistan with weapons and lobbies to keep India off the U.N. Security Council; and Beijing and New Delhi routinely trade accusations about Chinese repression in Tibet and about the haven India provides the Dalai Lama. Not surprisingly, then, as U.S. policymakers fret more and more about Beijing, their Indian counterparts have rushed to offer support. “Nato, the United States, and India will be on one side,” Indian strategist Brahma Chellaney predicts. “China and rogue states, including Pakistan, Burma, and North Korea on the other side.”

And what of India’s longtime adversary and our cold war ally, Pakistan? It’s not an ally anymore. “There’s less and less of a reason for a friendly relationship with Pakistan,” says Richard Perle, a Bush campaign adviser and chairman of the administration’s Defense Policy Board. On his recent visit to India, Armitage lumped Pakistan in with other “rogue states,” declared that our past friendship with the country was a “false relationship,” and worried about its nuclear program while expressing no similar concern about India’s. And administration officials say they intend to keep in place sanctions against Pakistan, even as they lift those on India. This would never have happened during the cold war, when Washington blithely overlooked Islamabad’s procession of military regimes. But today it’s less forgiving, particularly since Pakistan’s current military dictatorship provides aid and comfort to a host of terrorist organizations and to Afghanistan’s ruling Taliban, which shelters Osama bin Laden. It has also aligned itself ever more closely with China and against the United States. Thus, even as Armitage was visiting New Delhi, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji traveled to Pakistan, where President Musharraf pleaded for China’s “active role” in maintaining the region’s “strategic balance,” signed a stack of agreements with Beijing, and inveighed against America’s missile defense plan.

But the rapprochement between Washington and New Delhi isn’t only about global politics; it’s also about domestic politics. American companies like Microsoft and Cisco continue to boost levels of U.S. investment in India. The Bush team also recognizes the growing clout of Indian-Americans. And groups like the Congressional Caucus on India, which boasts 120 senators and representatives, haven’t been shy about weighing in on South Asia policy. Meanwhile, on the Indian side, the spectacular achievements of the growing Indian-American community have made the United States the destination of choice for young elites looking to move abroad. And if America the place appeals to India’s younger generation, so does America the idea. In fact, New Delhi’s new policymakers have little use for either the socialism or the anti-Americanism of their predecessors.

There are, to be sure, exceptions, including many members of India’s political opposition and its intellectual class. One of these, New York Review of Books contributor Pankaj Mishra, rails that India’s embrace of America “is primitivism, pure and unashamed” and condemns its “ravening desire to suck up to the Americans.” But they don’t read The New York Review in New Delhi. And, leftist critiques notwithstanding, the most compelling argument for closer ties between India and America is neither political nor economic. It is moral. India, like Taiwan and Israel, is a thriving democracy surrounded by hostile dictatorships—a multiethnic, multireligious federation that has much in common with our own. And, having finally recognized this kinship, India’s current government views the United States as less an imperialist bully than a fellow democracy and, yes, a strategic partner. Which is exactly what it’s becoming.

THE NEW REPUBLIC: AUGUST 6, 2001: 15
Pakistan

Aug 4, 2001

The Economist

Pakistan’s economy

General discontent

Lahore

But at least the lenders are happy

DEBT and the international dole are nothing new for Pakistan, which owes foreign creditors $37 billion. What is new is that the militarily-led government is making its creditors happy. Pakistan’s “credibility as a borrower has been established,” said a recent report by the World Bank, which plans to lend $200m on soft terms. For the first time in a decade Pakistan has qualified for a second instalment of a loan from the IMF. Indeed, it hopes to get $1 billion a year from the Fund for the next two or three years.

Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan’s uniformed president, has pleased lenders by backing firm measures of the sort demo-

ocratic governments shy away from. The government has imposed a general sales tax on retail trade in the face of protests. It has strong-armed tax evaders, yielding an increase of nearly 50 billion rupees ($785m) in revenue in the fiscal year that ended on June 30th, despite a sharp slowdown in economic growth. State subsidies to the country’s energy industries have been cut by periodically increasing the prices of petrol, gas and electricity.

State-run enterprises are also being knocked into shape. The banks are pruning staff and defaulters are being told to pay or face arrest. Privatisation of the telephone company and other enterprises should raise up to $3 billion in the next 18 months, most of which will be used to cut the foreign debt. The generals have not even spared their own: defence spending has been frozen at about 130 billion rupees, despite a 36% jump in the nominal military budget of Pakistan’s main adversary, India, in the past two years. These measures have helped cut the deficit, to 5.3% of GDP in fiscal 2000 from 6.4% the year before.

Pakistan’s only reward so far for all this virtue is a flow of credit and rescheduling that has staved off default. Economic growth, which averaged about 6% a year in the 1980s and 3% in the 1990s, fell to a dismal 2.6% last year. The downturn has been exacerbated by the austerity demanded by the IMF, which has hurt consumers without lifting the spirits of investors. Foreign investment slumped to a 12-year low of $182m last year. Domestic investment was just 11% of GDP, its lowest level in years.

The economy will not revive until investors return. They are put off in part by such commercial and economic considerations as the slowdown in the world economy but also by doubts about whether the government will stick to its reform programme. It has yet to reform, for example, the corrupt central tax-collection agency.

But it is Pakistan’s erratic history and dangerous neighbourhood that is most off-putting to investors, and the military government has yet to reassure them. It has failed to contain violence among warring sects of Muslims, to repair its relations with India or to curb the Islamic fundamentalism it is importing from Afghanistan, whose Taliban regime it supports.

The National Accountability Bureau, set up to fight corruption, has in fact hounded potential investors. American sanctions imposed after Pakistan tested nuclear devices in 1998 are still in place.

Lastly, although General Musharraf appointed himself president in June in part to see through economic reforms, he has not made clear what sort of government Pakistan will have in October 2002 when, to comply with a court ruling, democracy must be restored. He promises continuity, but investors want certainty.
End Sanctions on India

By GOPALASWAMI PARSATHARYA

NEW DELHI — In November 1988, a group of mercenaries took over the island republic of Maldives, located close to the U.S. base at Diego Garcia, in the Indian Ocean. After consulting the Reagan White House, India used its airlift capabilities to intervene within hours, deploying nearly a brigade of its elite paratroopers to restore power to the democratically elected government on the island.

This was one of the few instances where a shared commitment to democratic values, peace and stability united the world’s most powerful democracy and the world’s most populous one. So what prevents India and the U.S. from coming together once again on the basis of shared values and interests to guarantee peace, stability and cooperation in the Indian Ocean region—a area that has two-thirds of the world’s reserves of oil and a one-third of global gas reserves?

A great irony of the Cold War was that India and the U.S. were regarded as estranged democracies rather than natural allies. While Indian democracy grew resilient during these years, the propensity for excessive state control on economic and business activity stifled individual initiative and retarded economic growth. While India emerged as a country self reliant in agriculture and with a strong scientific base, there was a growing realization that protectionist barriers had rendered large sections of the country’s industry obsolete and uncompetitive.

The economic reforms implemented over the past decade have resulted in an annual growth rate averaging over 6%. But there is a burgeoning national consensus that India should, and must, grow at 7% to 8% annually in the current decade if it is to emerge as a credible power in its neighborhood as the U.S. as it embarks on this effort. This is only natural, as the U.S. is today’s India’s largest trading and investment partner.

Surprising as it may sound, differences between India and the U.S. over India’s nuclear program have resulted in economic, military and technological sanctions being imposed on India over the past three decades. These sanctions were tightened and enhanced when India tested nuclear weapons and announced its decision to develop a “credible, minimum deterrent” in May 1998.

The last sanctions resulted in India being denied loans from international financial institutions, and an embargo on military contacts and scientific and technical cooperation. A study by the International Trade Commission, undertaken at the behest of the Ways and Means Committee of Congress, concluded in September 1989 that U.S. sanctions had a “relatively minimal impact on the Indian economy and that the reputation of American companies as reliable suppliers had been adversely affected by the imposition of these sanctions. The Clinton administration soon came to realize that sanctions on India had not retarded the country’s economic growth or halted its nuclear program. The two countries commenced a wide-ranging dialogue to reconcile India’s security imperatives with valid American concerns about India’s nuclear program.

New Delhi has been delighted by the sensitivity and interest that the Bush administration has shown toward India. Jaswant Singh, India’s minister for external affairs and defense, was warmly received at the White House, the Pentagon and the State Department. Prajayesh Mishra, the national security adviser to India’s prime minister, had wide-ranging discussions with Vice President Dick Cheney and National Security Advisor Condolezza Rice. A series of senior officials from the Bush administration, including Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Henry Shelton, and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick have visited Delhi for high-level consultations. Indian strategists hope that all this will set the stage for intense cooperation in the Indian Ocean region, extending across the sea lanes from Malacca to Hormuz.

It is with these, and broader, considerations in mind that the Bush administration has decided to start working with Congress to lift the sanctions placed on India. The extended dialogue on nuclear issues has helped clear up some American misunderstandings of Indian nuclear policy.

A recent study by the Rand Corp. acknowledges that what India is building is a relatively modest deterrent, one that would give it the capability to retaliate with “certainty and speed” if attacked. The study notes that “as long as India maintains control over Pakistan and China (in the theater) it will adhere to its policy of ‘no first use’ of nuclear weapons. It adds that given India’s disinclination to acquire any extended deterrence obligations in Asia, Indian strategists are confident that there is little or no possibility of nuclear weapons being used by their country in South Asia or elsewhere. India is not a nuclear bull in a China shop. There appears to be increasing understanding now in Washington that New Delhi intends to adopt a low-key and responsible nuclear posture, and to cooperate with others in curbing the spread of nuclear and missile technologies.

The end of the anachronistic sanctions regime against India will be a symbolic, but important, step in laying the foundations for two hitherto estranged democracies to become natural partners in a world order dedicated to pluralistic, democratic, values. The real challenges that democracies such as ours face today are those posed by modern threats, be they of religious, military or international terrorism. A cooperative relationship between India and the U.S. will provide an enduring basis to address such challenges, and to promote peace, prosperity and stability across the strategically vital Indian Ocean region.

Mr. Parsathary, a recent Indian high commissioner to Pakistan, is a visiting professor at the Center for Policy Research in New Delhi. He was formerly the official spokesperson for Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, India’s high commissioner to Australia, and ambassador to Burma.

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On Asian Markets, Biggest Losers From Attacks Have Been a Surprise: India’s Software Firms

By ERIC BELLMAN
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

NEW DELHI—Three weeks after the terrorist attacks on the U.S., the biggest losers so far in Asian markets are in an unlikely sector: Indian software.

Hurt by regional security concerns on top of U.S. recession worries, software companies here have dropped 30% since Sept. 11, outdoing even Asian airlines and Japanese exporters in the speed of their decline. And they probably aren’t done falling, analysts say, as continued uncertainty will keep investors away from companies including Infosys Technologies Ltd., Wipro Ltd. and Satyam Computer Services Ltd.

“After the World Trade Center, I don’t think anyone has clarity about what will be the impact on business,” says Jayesh Parekh, analyst at SMIFIS Securities in Bombay. “We do know that recovery has been postponed for the moment and people will be reluctant to come to this side of the world until the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan is sorted out.”

The fate of India’s software companies, which have flourished because of the free global flow of labor and technology, is one of the earliest indicators of how the terrorist attacks on the U.S. and the conflicts to follow may affect world trade and growth.

In the past decade, India has built a multibillion dollar software industry by using the latest technology to connect its vast pool of talented, inexpensive programmers to customers around the world. Thousands of Indian programmers are working with their clients abroad, doing everything from helping Citibank keep track of its customers to helping Reebok monitor its inventory.

Software stocks used to be the darlings of the Indian market, with the biggest companies listing on the Nasdaq Stock Market. They all plunged with the end of the tech-stock boom, but unlike most Internet companies, Indian software companies continued to be profitable with growing revenue. Expansion was slowing this year, but analysts had still predicted around 40% growth for the year ending in March.

Not anymore.

Earnings will take a direct hit from the further slowdown of the U.S. economy following the attacks. More than 60% of the business at Indian software companies comes from the U.S. Analysts and company executives say they expect orders to be delayed and prices for services to fall.

But what makes the Indian software industry especially vulnerable to war-on-terrorism worries is how it is affected by security concerns.

Investors are worried that it is going to be harder for Indian programmers to travel to the U.S. India’s software companies depend on armies of engineers and salespeople that work on site with their customers. There are an estimated 300,000 Indian people in technology jobs in the U.S. right now. The on-site services are the most profitable part of the software companies’ business, so any new caps or restrictions on the number of visas issued would hurt their bottom line.

Increased security concerns in India may also weigh on profit, analysts say. Fewer potential clients will be coming to inspect the facilities at the software companies as India’s neighbors Afghanistan and Pakistan are expected to be at the center of the first counterattacks against terrorism.

“People usually come to check things like security and bandwidth before they give work to a vendor in India,” but they will want to avoid travel to the region and that will delay or even destroy orders, says Pramod Gupta, a private equity analyst in Bombay. “Clients that were likely to come now will postpone their visits until the instability in South Asia is gone.”

The problem may work in reverse also. Some Indian programmers are reluctant to go to the U.S., analysts say, worried there may be more attacks and more misplaced backlash against Indians in the U.S.

Inexperience is another problem that will hurt Indian software companies. While the top software companies are among the best-managed concerns in Asia, smaller outfits that have never had shares could fall another 15% as a group.

To be sure, the war on terror could also lead to more orders for software services as companies create more backup systems and spend billions of dollars to rebuild destroyed networks in New York. And with many of India’s fastest growing companies trading at price/earnings ratios of less than 20, it may be a good time to buy for investors who don’t mind a roller coaster ride in the stock price for the next six months.

Investors will get a better idea about the fallout from the attacks when software companies start announcing second-quarter earnings next week. But analysts warn that even if the companies are upbeat about the future, it will be tough to dive into their shares because there is a lot of potential bad news that would make them sink further. Bad economic news from the U.S. further terrorist attacks, disappointing news from Afghanistan or tightening of visa restrictions all threaten to hammer stock prices regularly.

Yesterday’s Market Activity

Asian markets ended mostly lower, but Tokyo stocks rebounded from early losses as investors shrugged off the Bank of Japan’s gloomy tankan survey on business.
Witnesses urge halt to persecution

Religious strife embedded in Pakistani, Indian cultures

By Larry Witham
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Nationalism, militant religion and economic rivalry have stirred Hindus in India and Muslims in Pakistan to a new wave of persecuting religious minorities, witnesses told a U.S. human rights panel yesterday.

Hindu nationalists, decrying Christianity and Islam as "foreign" religions that carry out "forced conversions," have instigated street killings and destruction of sanctuaries, according to testimony before the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

In Pakistan, strict Islamic clergy have forced political leaders to legislate discriminatory Muslim laws and create an atmosphere where private scores are settled by accusations of blasphemy, or defaming the name of the Prophet Muhammad.

"There are no rivers of Christian blood in India, but for the first time in 50 years, there is fear," said John Dayal of the All India Christian Council, displaying a remnant of 400 Bibles burned by Hindu nationalists in one incident.

The hearings came as Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, leader of the Hindu nationalist party, ended a five-day diplomatic visit.

In testimony, Mr. Dayal said Indian Christians, who date their presence to 52 A.D., long have been members of India's lower class, so the new discrimination is based both on caste and religion.

If such a caste member joins Christianity, often for schools or social advantage, "he usually loses his job," said Mr. Dayal, one of 14 witnesses.

The strict Islam in Pakistan, which has led some judges to say publicly that Muslims are duty bound to "silence the voice" of blasphemers, is being combated by a freer press and private groups calling for tolerance.

"These organizations are very active and very aware, and are able to mobilize public opinion," said Munir Ahmad of Hampton University. There is also "the emergence of a liberal Islamic discourse" drawing Islam's heritage of rule by law and religious tolerance.

The hearing is the first held by the 10-member commission in its second year of operation. Congress established it to monitor religious liberty abroad and issue an annual May report with recommendations on U.S. policy.

In its first year, the commission held hearings on Sudan and China, though its report covered all nations.

Last week, the commission urged the administration to ask Mr. Vajpayee "to take more effective steps to protect" religious minorities.

The hearings were organized "not to embarrass the prime minister," but because "India is in the limelight," and headlines about religious killings continue, commission spokesman Lawrence J. Goodrich said.

Steven T. McFarland, executive director of the commission, said its members were disappointed that the administration cited only military and trade concerns as the basis for renewed U.S.-India relations.

"Human rights and religious liberty didn't even make the top four priorities," he said.

In testimony explaining the behavior of Hindu nationalists, Arvid Sharma of McGill University said modern Indians have the "perception" that Hinduism does not proselytize, an attribute they resent about Christianity and Islam.

They hold this view, he said, even as Hindu nationalism calls for a "reconversion" of all Indians back to an original culture.

In contrasting the countries, panelists said Pakistan is more open to liberal Muslim experience in the West, while India remains suspicious of outsiders.

Still, "there is obviously less religious freedom in Pakistan because it has ideology written into its constitution," said Ainslie Embree, of Columbia University.

In India, he said, there is not "persecution by the government, but by groups within society."

Sumit Ganguly, a University of Texas professor, said Pakistan could improve religious liberty by taking religion off people's national identity cards and rescind the anti-blasphemy law.

He said India needs no statutory changes, just vigilant application of democratic laws and bans on Hindu political parties making sectarian appeals or to "scapegoat minorities, especially Muslims."
Nepal Scrutinizes Its New Heir Apparent

Who Is Prince Paras?  
To Some, He’s a Hero;  
To Others, a Rogue

By JESSIE PESTA  
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

KATMANDU, Nepal—Is the presumed heir to Nepal’s throne a big-hearted hero who saved young royals during the recent palace massacre? Or is he a reckless driver who caused the death of a popular Nepalese singer?

These two public faces of Prince Paras Bir Bikram Shah, son of the newly crowned King Gyaneendra, are not easily reconciled in the politically charged rumor mill. Katmandu has become after the king, queen and eight other members of the royal family were gunned down a week ago. But how the image of the prince fares this week is crucial to what happens next in the royal saga taking place in this remote Himalayan country.

A palace-appointed panel charged with investigating the shooting is due to issue its report by midweek. Palace accounts have blamed the deceased Crown Prince Dipendra, describing a shooting spree in which the drunken prince sprayed bullets into the royal family, then shot himself in the head. But many Nepalese refuse to believe these accounts, preferring conspiracy theories that often revolve around Prince Paras.

The prince was reviled by the populace even before the shootings, a result of his bad reputation. Now, royals say their dynasty may depend on Prince Paras changing his own reputation. “I have asked him to personally save the monarchy,” says a senior palace figure.

The rumors about Prince Paras bob along on the ocean of gossip that floods Katmandu even in more placid times. Few ordinary Nepalese get their news first-hand from the media or government. Newspapers are unreliable, and more than 70% of Nepalese can’t read, anyway. More than a week after the killings, television broadcasts consist almost wholly of still shots of past kings and of religious images. Radio airs poetry and memorials.

Misinformation flourishes. There are revisionist rumors (Dipendra was seen in town after the massacre!); alarmist rumors (the royal doctor was kidnapped!); even rumors about rumors (people inside the palace walls are writing rumors on pieces of paper and throwing them over the wall!).

“The main news was so unbelievable, you could believe anything,” says C.K. Lal, a columnist at a local English-language newspaper.

More than innocent gossip may be at work here. Young toughs, many with their heads shaved to show mourning for the dead king, describe a loose network of rumor mongers available for hire by politicians and others who might hope to influence public opinion. A half-dozen young men sprawled on wooden chairs in a dilapidated shack last week said that they’ve spread rumors themselves in the past.

One youth, lounging between portraits of rock-music icon Jim Morrison and the Hindu god Vishnu, even names the price: He says putting several thousand rumor mongers into tea houses and on the streets costs as much as 200,000 rupees ($260).

While denying they’ve spread any rumors recently, they are hardly silent regarding Prince Paras, whom they admire as a Robin Hood figure who takes on thugs. In fact, they sit idle now, they say, because their leader has disappeared after being beaten up—by Prince Paras. It happened a few months ago, says one. No, just a few weeks ago, says another. A third has yet another explanation: “I don’t think he’s been bashed,” he says, using their term for a beating. “He went to India to buy some go-carts.”

Getting at the truth behind the accusations against Prince Paras isn’t easy, even for those who try hard. A representative for Gyaneendra declined to comment. “Rumors come and go,” he says. A spokesman for Prince Paras didn’t return calls. Police are of little help.

As about Prince Paras’s driving record, the superintendent of Katmandu’s main police post confirms the accident involving the singer occurred, but declines to say whether the prince was involved. “One man came in and he took responsibility,” he says. “I don’t want to talk about his case anymore.”

Privately, some palace officials say Prince Paras was involved but wasn’t to blame. Indeed, one official says, it was the singer whose vehicle hit Prince Paras’s, while racing back to the bar after dropping his mistress off at home.

“That’s what really happened,” he says.

Many royals paint Prince Paras as the black sheep of the family, a trouble-prone but good-hearted man who’s been misunderstood. Anup Bhandari, a schoolmate, recalls an incident in which he says the prince stood up to an unpopular housemaster several years ago at Budhanilkantha School, an elite academy just outside Katmandu.

Now, royal family members who witnessed the June 1 palace killings say Prince Paras played the hero. One says he shoved four young women behind a sofa, allowing them to escape the hail of gunfire.

But public skepticism runs deep. Asked if he believes the various rumors about Prince Paras, taxi driver Krishna Karki says: “I haven’t seen it with my own eyes.” Does he believe the prince saved the girls? “I haven’t seen it with my own eyes,” he repeats.
China’s trial of faith

The Falun Gong is seen by China’s leaders as the biggest threat to social stability since the pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square a decade ago. Quite something for a sect which claims no political agenda.

REGULAR leaders... who hold meetings which take place late at night and break up by day, whereby the people are stirred up and misled under the pretext of cultivating virtue, shall be sentenced, the principal perpetrators to strangulation, and their accomplices to a hundred blows with the long stick, followed by a lifelong banishment to a distance of three thousand li.” Thus decreed China’s imperial rulers during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) when they found their authority challenged by charismatic preachers and mystics. Facing what they see as a similar threat from the quasi-Buddhist Falun Gong sect, today’s Chinese leaders are responding in similar fashion.

In the past two weeks the government has dramatically intensified what was already a harsh crackdown against the group’s many followers. While police arrested the quietly defiant practitioners who streamed into Beijing’s Tiananmen Square to demonstrate, legislators met at a special session inside the nearby Great Hall of the People on October 30th to pass an anti-cult law under which to prosecute them.

The new law singles out the Falun Gong as the largest and most harmful of numerous Chinese cults. Though providing leniency for mere followers, it provides stiff penalties, including the death penalty, for cell leaders and those who organise demonstrations or communicate with branches of the movement abroad. The day after the law was passed, the courts brought formal charges against four suspected leaders of the group, one of them a former policeman, accusing them of organising a cult and also breaking the state secrecy laws.

A huge police presence has been on hand in Tiananmen Square to handle the small but steady flow of demonstrators who have been coming either to sit in formation or to perform the distinctive hand motions of Falun Gong exercises. Most have acquiesced quietly when taken to police vans, but a few have resisted and been dragged off by their hair. Police have also been busy watching railway and bus stations, checking up on hotels and harassing foreign reporters who try to contact members of the sect.

 Writers for the state-run newspapers, meanwhile, have been searching for new ways to vilify the Falun Gong and its founder, Li Hongzhi, who now lives in New York. The movement’s teachings have been called “an evil force,” which needs to be “exorcised”; and a form of “spiritual opium” that has led many followers to madness. Worse still, says the government, the Falun Gong has deceived people into thinking they can cure disease with meditation alone, and more than 1,400 have died as a result.

Librally mixing elements of Buddhism and Taoism with traditional martial arts and meditative breathing techniques, Mr Li’s teachings are certainly out of the mainstream. He believes in extraterrestrial beings and has even hinted at being one himself. He teaches that a “wheel of law” revolves in the abdomens of those who learn to cultivate it, and that a third eye can be opened in practitioners who reach a certain level.

Those who accept his teachings say the government’s accusations are lies. They claim to seek nothing but fair treatment for themselves and say they harbour no broader political ambitions. All they want is to improve themselves physically, morally and spiritually, and they say that “Master Li” has shown them how to do it with his preaching of “truth, forbearance and benevolence”.

They accuse the government of having twisted the truth about the Falun Gong all along. For their part, Mr Li and some leaders of the group’s Beijing cells, have been caught out trying to spread misinformation about their activities; but, as the Communist Party should understand, this is perhaps unavoidable for a group that has been forced to operate underground.

More importantly, adherents insist they will continue to practise their beliefs no matter what the Chinese government does. They say they will continue to demonstrate until they gain acceptance. The odds on them being able to do so have been growing longer since April, when the group first brought itself to the government’s attention by staging an eerie demonstration in which about 10,000 followers stood silently outside the leadership compound in Beijing.

Shocked by the group’s size, and by its apparently high degree of discipline and organisation, the government quickly began investigating the Falun Gong. In late July it began a crackdown. The authorities banned all the group’s activities and publications, attacked Mr Li as a charlatan, and required any of his followers who were also members of the Communist Party to cut their ties with the Falun Gong.

Mr Li has claimed 70m followers in China (compared with a mere 6m for the Communist Party). His figure is no doubt much inflated, but the government estimate of 2m is also suspect, especially in the light of the ferocity of its counter-attack.

By intensifying its campaign, the authorities are acknowledging that the group is
It's tempting to believe U.S. relations with China entered a benign phase after Secretary of State Colin Powell's visit to Beijing several weeks ago. Mr. Powell displayed his usual diplomatic panache. Three U.S.-based scholars unjustly convicted on spying charges were released from detention.

In the wake of Mr. Powell's departure, China played the trade card, announcing long-awaited approval of a $2 billion order for Boeing 737s.

But it would be folly to think that Mr. Powell's high-profile trip had somehow transformed the delicate nature of U.S.-China relations. On the horizon lie new troubling relations to Beijing's broken promises on the diplomatic front and its apparent determination to remain a weapons-technology lifeline for states with nuclear ambitions.

One promise made by China in November was to stop exporting technology covered under the Missile Technology Control Regime to countries developing nuclear weapons such as Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and North Korea. China isn't a signatory to the MTCR, but it pledged to adhere to MTCR parameters that apply to whole missiles or parts of missiles capable of carrying a 1,100-pound payload over 185 miles. But on May 1 a U.S. satellite spotted a shipment of parts for Pakistan's Shaheen-1 and Shaheen-2 missiles, both of which can travel up to 1,249 miles and carry nuclear warheads—possibly the Sino-Pakistani border.

To put it bluntly, China is fueling an arms race in South Asia. The danger here is that with Beijing's continued help, Pakistan is likely to succeed sooner rather than later in modernizing its nuclear arsenal with plutonium bombs and thus produce small and lighter warheads, which would result in longer effective ranges for its nuclear-armed missiles aimed at India and elsewhere. Moreover, Pakistan is also a proliferator, a conduit through which Chinese weapons technology has been fed to Iran, Libya and Iraq. For example, United Nations inspectors dismantling the Iraqi nuclear program after Desert Storm found evidence that the plan for Iraq's nuclear bomb was a Chinese design provided by Pakistan.

The other promise—made to Mr. Powell himself by Chinese officials in private conversations only five months ago—was that Chinese telecommunications companies would "cease and desist" helping Iraq upgrade its air-defense systems. But senior Bush officials recently announced the Chinese companies have continued their work, in violation of U.N. sanctions.

Improving Iraqi military communications and air-defense systems threatens the ability of U.S. and allied aircraft to carry out their missions to patrol the no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq. And it threatens the ability of reconnaissance and surveillance planes to monitor Iraq's attempts to re-invigorate its chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programs.

If China's latest betrayals ring a bell it's because over the last decade a series of similar commitments by Beijing played no small part in sparking a serious debate in the U.S. about real threats to America's post-Cold War security. It was a debate that erupted into war between the Clinton Administration's state and commerce departments, on the one hand, and the intelligence and security agencies, on the other. President Clinton's decisions to wink at Beijing's broken promises helped Republican Party candidate George W. Bush define his national-security policy and win the White House.

Unlike his predecessor, Mr. Bush isn't likely to look the other way on the newest infractions. Torn between the false choice of engagement or isolation, Mr. Clinton could never resolve the dilemma of how to advance the goals of combating proliferation and enhancing America's security while improving relations with China. When China was caught red-handed violating its promises to limit or cancel missile or missile-part exports, Mr. Clinton often chose to either ignore the evidence or take at face value the excuse that such transfers weren't under Chinese government control. That was as fallacious an argument then as it is now: China's export-control system for dual-use equipment and technology is certainly weak, but the critical arms sales and technology transfers must have the approval of China's top leadership.

It's difficult to see how Messrs. Bush and Powell and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld can make any concessions on the issue of China's aid to Iraqi air-defenses. And if anything, by selling more dangerous missiles to Pakistan, China's leaders have now made it easier for Mr. Bush to build a consensus in Congress on the need for an allied missile-defense system that enhances security cooperation in Asia.

The challenge for the Bush Administration is to address China's missile sales without provoking a crisis both at home and in Beijing. Mr. Bush is sending his arms-control experts to the Chinese capital this week to seek talks. Already debate has begun in Congress over the utility of sanctions, which Mr. Bush can impose under U.S. law against the Chinese companies involved. Despite China's recent misdeeds, there are contrarians in Congress calling for a lighter approach, with some clamoring to reverse 1999 legislation that, citing risks to national security, made it more difficult for U.S. companies to export satellites to China.

Whatever course the debate takes in the following weeks, Mr. Bush and the Congress should search constructively for policies that work to persuade China to behave in a manner consistent with international norms on nonproliferation, arms control and international trade. Relying on any more promises from Beijing would be a mistake.
China’s Oil

Taken hostage

BEIJING
China needs a strategic oil reserve

With no stored-up supplies to speak of, and evidently fearing either a sudden price rise or a disruption of supplies coming in by sea, China has become spoiled by its dependence on imported oil. Although its plans are for a pilfering reserve of only 60m tonnes (440m barrels), the equivalent of a month’s imports, achieving this seems likely to tax the abilities and resources of China’s energy bureaucracy to the full.

In the early 1990s, as China’s economic growth began to surge, hopes were high that new oil discoveries in China, particularly in the far-western region of Xinjiang, would prevent over-reliance on imports. But Xinjiang failed to deliver as expected, and the OPEC oil-production cuts of 1999, which led to a price surge, concentrated senior minds on the urgency of the problem.

At the annual session of China’s Parliament in March, the government said it would work to establish a reserve within the next five years. At the end of June, it got as far as revealing how big it would be.

The past few years have seen a rude awakening for the world’s sixth-biggest oil producer. Long gone are the glory days of 1993, when China became self-sufficient in oil. Last year China’s net crude imports were a record 60m tonnes—more than twice as much as in 1999. Officials predict that by 2010 it will need to import 100m tonnes a year (roughly the same as South Korea’s current imports), and nearly double that amount (exceeding Japan’s current imports) by 2020. By then, China will depend on imports for over 50% of its oil consumption. But many China-watchers say this is a very conservative forecast, and the International Energy Agency (IEA) predicts that China’s net oil imports will be as much as 400m tonnes a year by 2020.

Even taking the conservative figures, the outlook is gloomy enough for those concerned about oil security. More than half of China’s imports come by ship from the Middle East. The fastest route is via the narrow Malacca Strait, which could easily be blocked by an enemy. The potential enemy that China worries about most is the United States, and relations with that country have become as prone to sudden fluctuations as world oil prices. Shipping in the Malacca Strait also face a threat from increasingly well-organised piracy.

But setting up a strategic reserve will require a lot of money and a lot of help from China’s not-so-eager oil companies. By China’s (probably conservative) estimates, it would cost about $2.5 billion to set up a 6m-tonne reserve, including storage and transport. This assumes that oil costs an average of $20 a barrel during the period when the stockpile is accumulated ($20 a barrel was the average for the past five years, compared with $37 today). And this is just the beginning. A senior government analyst, quoted last week by China Daily, an official newspaper, said that China ought to increase its strategic oil reserve to 15m tonnes by 2010. This would still be well below the equivalent of 90 days’ imports that the 26 mostly western countries of the IEA hold or have pledged to hold in their reserves.

The government wants the oil companies to help share the burden. But China’s oil industry has changed dramatically since the late 1990s, when the government decided to create two giant oil companies modelled on western lines in order to make the industry more competitive. These companies were listed abroad last year. They complain that they would find it difficult to explain to shareholders why they should spend money on stockpiles they do not need. To help them, the government is offering tax incentives and cheap loans. But as China Daily put it, “a specific programme is still trapped in the bureaucratic machinery.”

China is also looking at a number of other ways to enhance its oil security. These include investing more in oil exploration and production in different places abroad, importing oil by pipeline, finding alternative fuels, developing futures trading and using energy more efficiently. But military security is high on the leadership’s mind. A strategic oil reserve would provide a visible deterrent to any potential enemy that might consider China’s economy incapable of sustaining conflict. “It’s like a nuclear bomb,” a senior government researcher, Chen Hua, argued last month in the Beijing-based Economic Observer. “Once you’ve made it, it acts as a kind of intimidation.”
China’s Scare Tactics

By Claudia Rosett

With the impending “trial” of Wu Jianmin, an American citizen and the latest U.S.-based scholar detained by Chinese authorities, an ugly pattern is repeating itself. If Beijing sticks to its recent ways, Mr. Wu, like three others last month, will be convicted of spying for Taiwan. Since he will then, in all likelihood, be kicked out of China, what, apart from a very rough spell for him, is there to worry about? Plenty. In interviews I have had with two of the three scholars released last week—Li Shaomin and Gao Zhan—what emerges is an Orwellian picture of a threat to liberal researchers focusing on China, especially to the ethnic Chinese who tend to know the place best.

The central aim seems to be to isolate Taiwan further, and to choke off research that casts Taipei’s democratic government in more favorable light than the communist regime in Beijing. The broader goal seems to be to scare the living daylights out of select members of the ethnic Chinese diaspora—namely, the 1.3 billion citizens of China, but who are viewed as vermin by the communists.

Infor or Else

Beijing’s methods take their cue straight from the more mind-bending ways of the Soviet Union. For details of what Mr. Li and Ms. Gao experienced while in China’s custody, we have to depend on their own accounts. China has supplied almost no solid information beyond the fact that it made accusations and delivered “verdicts.” But it appears on the two tales that China’s aim was not only to strip these scholars of their defenses, to isolate and bully them, to lie to them and humiliate them, but also to tell them that their only hope of freedom lay not in the actual merits of their cases, but quite specifically in their willingness to inform on others.

Mr. Li—interviewed on Wednesday by phone from Hong Kong—described how, during his five months of detention, he was coerced by his interrogators that his fate depended on his having a “good attitude.” He says that when he asked what that meant, they told him, “Your attitude is how well you tell us about others.” He stresses: “I didn’t give them any names.”

Ms. Gao, in an interview on Wednesday at her home in McLean, Va., described similar scenes from her nearly six months in detention. “They wanted to use me for information on people here in the U.S.A.,” she says. “They were asking me to identify names who might have worked for Taiwan or the FBI. They said, ‘You’ve got to tell us, otherwise you are risking the rest of your life.’” Ms. Gao says she refused to give names. The result was that “they brought me names to identify. I would tell them, yes, I know these people, but they are by no means spies.”

The message China’s rulers telegraph through these tactics is not simply that Chinese democrats should directly fear the Beijing regime. It is that democratic Chinese thinkers—anywhere—be better afraid and distrust each other, because any of them, once arrested, can expect brutal pressure to turn against his or her colleagues. There is also an implied threat that the scholar, who has had friendly dealings with Taiwan, even in free countries such as the U.S., risks a stretch in jail.

Mr. Li, for instance, published an article in The Wall Street Journal in 1989, in which he argued that “China ought to learn from Taiwan.” Ms. Gao’s research over the past decade has led her to such findings as this: “Women on Taiwan have more freedom and choice than women on the mainland.”

Here’s how it played out for Mr. Li, who told me of his journey through China’s state security procedures, starting on the evening of Feb. 25, when he arrived at the Hong Kong border crossing for a routine overnight trip into China. As usual, Mr. Li handed his U.S. passport to a Chinese immigration official, who punched in his information, then told him to wait. Three hours later, a group of state security agents showed up and took him by van to a small hotel, where they told him they were detaining him. “I said, for what?” recounts Mr. Li. They said they did not know.

The next day, secret police escorted Mr. Li on a commercial flight to Beijing, telling him only that this would be a short trip and that he could return to Hong Kong the next day. Instead, in Beijing, he was shuttled to a detention house, where security agents began to interrogate him. Mr. Li recalls that they tried to make him feel isolated, telling him: “Don’t hope that the American government will help you. You are a Chinese, born in China. You are not a real American.”

His interrogators told him that he had been “under surveillance” since the early 1990s, adding, “We know everything about you.” His requests to see a lawyer, or even to have access to legal texts, were refused for more than four months—until less than two weeks before his “trial.”

Ms. Gao describes a similar ordeal. Last winter, she went with her husband and five-year-old son to visit relatives in China. On Feb. 11, as they were about to fly home from Beijing airport, they were surrounded by state security agents and hustled off in three separate directions. Her husband, then a U.S. resident, and her little son, a U.S. citizen, were held unincommunicado for 26 days, then deported.

Ms. Gao was taken, like Mr. Li, to a detention house in the vicinity of Beijing; where the interrogations also began right away. She was watched constantly by four female guards. There was no privacy, even in the bathroom, and no contact with the outside world. When she asked about her husband and son, she was told during her interrogations—conducted under a glaring light—that she must first supply information about what she had done “in relation to Taiwan.”

For the past seven years Ms. Gao has served as treasurer of a U.S.-based academic group called the Association of Chinese Political Studies, which hosts conferences and organizes trips for academics to both Taiwan and mainland China. Her interrogators pressed her repeatedly for details on the funding and membership of this group, saying: “If you don’t have a good attitude, you are going to spend your life in prison.”

After seven weeks, Ms. Gao was transferred to a jail cell. One odd twist, she mentions, is that the jail had a small book collection available to prisoners, including a Chinese translation of Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s “The Gulag Archipelago”—about the Soviet prison camps. This copy was stamped “Use No. 1” on the cover, meaning that to take it out of China could be considered a crime—of the same kind the authorities told her she’d committed in bringing out publicly available research documents years before.

No Explanation

For all the fury, China’s government has not explained publicly just what these scholars are supposed to have done. But that seems to be precisely the brutal point. The less Beijing says, the more useful a message it sends: that what happened to these scholars could happen in China to almost anyone, almost anytime.

The Free World needs to confront such tactics. Letting them go unchecked, or unpunished, invites the quiet smothering of some of the most powerful intellectual forces for the development of Chinese democracy.

Ms. Rosett is a member of the Journal’s editorial board.