

DGHS, Julius Hackethal, and others, claim that they “only” provided the deadly poison to their victims, i.e., placed it within their reach. Since the death-candidates then allegedly took the poison “on their own,” all such cases were ranked as unpunishable “complicity to suicide”—although the procurers of the poison knew, of course, what a horrible death cyanide poisoning causes.

Not least on account of such “verdicts,” public opinion presumes that the right of a citizen to self-determination includes, in denial of natural law, the “right” to kill oneself. Thus, it is no surprise that the demand of the euthanasia lobby to legalize “death upon demand” already finds considerable public acceptance.

The next step of the euthanasia lobby is now to apply the demand of “free death for free citizens” also to people who can no longer speak for themselves. Since people have a firm notion of what an “existence worth living” means, those people who can no longer express themselves should not suffer. Relatives and acquaintances, physicians, or society in general, should represent their “interests” in place of the people themselves. Many handicapped people already see this situation as life-threatening. This is by no means a new phenomenon: At the beginning of the euthanasia program of the Nazis, the talk was of “relief” and “self-determination.” In 1920, Judge Binding and neuropsychiatrist Hoche demanded legally permissible killing of the severely ill who wanted “relief,” and that included “incurably retarded” and unconscious people.

Another consequence of the debate on self-determination is the so-called “patient’s testament” [living will]. Previously, it was chiefly the DGHS which went around with these papers, which stipulate that the signer will forgo medical intervention in certain situations. Now even the Hamburg Medical Chamber, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Bavaria, and the German Hospice Aid felt called upon to advertise for patients’ testaments or to proliferate them. Initially the issue of these patients’ testaments was to “protect” a dying person from the measures of a physician to prolong life; the texts have been changed in the meantime so that the people forgo any form of help under circumstances felt to be unbearable.

In the United States, the “right to die” for many indigent elderly and sick people has become a “duty to die” because of scarce medical resources (and some politicians say so, straightforwardly). In the 1980s, a working paper circulated in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services pointed out how many billions could be saved with such patients’ testaments, and some American health insurance companies offer their customers reduced fees if they agree to sign such a patient’s testament.

The Federal Medical Chamber does not yet consider patients’ testaments binding. They are merely taken as a point of reference. How long this will last is questionable in view of the Supreme Court judgment.

Perry visits Asian subcontinent to help ease tensions

by Ramtanu Maitra and Susan Maitra

The recent trip of U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry to the Asian subcontinent has been hailed as a great success in India, but has failed to generate similar enthusiasm in Pakistan. The underlying theme of his trip was to discuss the security concerns in the region and, more urgently, to exhort both nations not to escalate bilateral tensions any further.

The Pakistan half of Perry’s trip on Jan. 10-11 focused around two issues which seem to concern the Bhutto administration most in defining its relationship with Washington at present. These are the sale of 38 F-16 fighter-bombers for which Pakistan has made partial payment already, but which the United States, based on the Pressler Amendment which curbed the sale of all arms-related hardware to Pakistan beginning in 1991, refuses to deliver; and, resolution of the Kashmir conflict.

Discontent in Pakistan

On the first issue, the U.S. defense secretary told Islamabad that it would be a subject of discussion of the U.S.-Pakistan Consultative Group, an institution which has been moribund for more than five years and was resurrected during Perry’s visit. At the same time, Defense Secretary Perry indicated that the final solution to the problem lies in the sale of those paid-for F-16s to a third country. The money so raised could then be used to pay Pakistan back.

On the Kashmir issue, it soon became clear that Perry was reluctant to come up with any new formulation. However, his virtual silence has been construed by some in the Pakistani media, as well as in government circles, as a quiet American endorsement of the British view expressed earlier in the week by visiting British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd.

Hurd’s comments on the Kashmir issue had poisoned the situation within Pakistan. The British foreign secretary went on record saying that among the necessary steps to be taken was ending the external support to Kashmiri militants, which has been interpreted in Pakistan as Britain joining voices with India in claiming that the “Kashmiri uprising” was not spontaneous, but rather fueled from the

outside by Pakistan.

In addition, Hurd vocally supported a political process in Kashmir that would include elections, in order to elect "genuine people who have credibility." The later statement also irked Islamabad because it supports the Indian position that the Indian part of Kashmir is now ready to hold elections, a claim which Islamabad officially rejects.

Some new moves

A news item in the Indian daily the *Asian Age* a few days after Perry had gone back to Washington, indicated that there were indeed some moves initiated by Washington to cool the heads of all in Kashmir. The article said that while the release of some of the Kashmiri leaders from prison met with the approval of Defense Secretary Perry, Washington is quietly backing the Saudi Arabian initiative to bring India and Pakistan to the negotiating table, hopefully to break the logjam which, according to Washington, is threatening peace in the region.

Particularly interesting is the fact that the Saudi diplomatic effort is centered around bringing Narasimha Rao's government in India, Benazir Bhutto's government in Pakistan, and the representatives of the Kashmiri people from both sides of the Line of Actual Control which divides Jammu and Kashmir, to the negotiating table to start tripartite talks for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. It has been pointed out that some Kashmiri leaders are already in Saudi Arabia having discussions with various Islamic leaders in the region.

This also coheres with the recent statement of U.S. Ambassador to India Frank Wisner, a former colleague of Defense Secretary Perry in the Pentagon prior to his appointment to India. While speaking at a public gathering, Ambassador Wisner said that he would like to see the United States play a "strong and encouraging" role in the resolution of differences, like those concerning Kashmir, between India and Pakistan.

Satisfaction in New Delhi

Despite reports of adverse reactions within Pakistan following the visit, Defense Secretary Perry himself has made it a point that differences between Pakistan and the United States are not of a serious nature. He emphasized the "even-handedness" of the Clinton administration in dealing with India and Pakistan, and said that the purpose of his visit to Pakistan was to promote "broader security dialogue" aimed at helping the United States and Pakistan to "understand each other's position better."

The Indian half of Defense Secretary Perry's visit on Jan. 12-14 was not mired in controversy. On the contrary, there is every indication that New Delhi is deeply satisfied with the outcome of the visit and considers it a definite step forward in enhancing military and bilateral relations with Washington.

The Indo-U.S. defense cooperation agreement signed during Perry's visit has highlighted the broad parameters of defense cooperation through "civilian-to-civilian cooperation, service-to-service cooperation, and cooperation in defense production and research."

One of the more significant aspects of the agreement is the spelling out of defense research and production cooperation as an integral part of the bilateral defense relationship between the two nations. The agreement talked about expanding cooperation in defense research and production under the supervision of a Joint Technical Group composed of senior professionals from the two countries.

Security concerns

In addition to the agreement, Perry's trip to India has made it clear to New Delhi that while, for the Clinton administration, the signing of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty by both India and Pakistan and the imposition of a missile control regime in the subcontinent remain clear objectives, Washington is also aware of the facts of life as may exist in South Asia.

This became evident during Perry's discussions at the official level, where he did not touch upon these subjects. At a public ceremony, on the other hand, Perry admitted that he recognizes that China remains a nuclear concern for India, and went on to say that nuclear issues were political conflicts which needed to be sorted out first.

During the official-level talks, it has been reported that Perry and the Indian officials identified strategic areas of mutual concern.

Although all the concerns have not been made public, it has been reported that the stability of West, Central, and Southwest Asian states; Persian Gulf oil security; the future internal dynamics in China, Southeast Asia, and the Indian Ocean area; and international terrorism and narcotics-trafficking were the focus of attention. There is no telling at this point in time whether both sides have worked out any strategy to deal with these, or any other security concern, through mutual cooperation.

The immediate outcome of Perry's visit indicates that Indo-U.S. defense cooperation will be strengthened over the coming days. Prior to Perry's arrival, Adm. Richard C. Macke, commander-in-chief of the U.S. Pacific Command, had made it known that he was working with three Indian defense services to concretize plans for joint exercises and training. The cooperation that started in 1990 between the U.S. and Indian armies, navies, and air forces has already helped to establish service steering groups, exchange of high-level officers, and the holding of joint exercises, and, in essence, has forged a closer relationship between the Indian and U.S. military. With the signing of the agreement during Perry's trip, it is expected that the cooperation will not only diversify to engulf other security areas, but will also strengthen bilateral relations.