

Discontinuity in Current World Affairs

by Maj. Gen. Vinod Saighal (ret.)

India's General Saighal delivered an abridged version of this presentation to EIR's seminar in Berlin on Jan. 12, which was published in our Feb. 11 issue. Here, he expands on his views on the "discontinuity" in world strategic affairs—a point which Lyndon LaRouche took up in the seminar dialogue. LaRouche underlined the factor of mass insanity in producing discontinuities and revolutions. "The government of the United States today, the present government, is a case of mass insanity. That's where the discontinuity lies," LaRouche said. But the discontinuities themselves create the opportunity for revolutionary change of a positive nature. That is most urgently true, in the case of the United States today.

I must compliment Mr. LaRouche for his presentation. I've been reading his papers over the years, and to the best of my knowledge, in the last hundred years of U.S. politics, I have never come across any Presidential contender having articulated his views so concisely, cogently, and clearly. I have a slight difference of opinion with him, because the past is not going to project into the future at this point in time. In fact, the new book I am working on, is titled *The Future as Discontinuity*. The globe is facing a discontinuity.

Kautilya, a few thousand years ago, in his *Arthashastra*, said, it is the nature of power to assert itself. And we've been seeing this throughout history. What the United States is doing now, is nothing out of the ordinary. The difference is, at this point in time, as never before in history, power is concentrated at a single point on the globe. Any decline in this power, is going to affect the globe. So therefore, at this point in time, regardless of what evil that has overtaken the United States, a catastrophic decline of U.S. power is in nobody's interest: not of America, America's friends, and America's adversaries. I have said that in almost all my books, which have sold more in the U.S.A. and Canada, and the West generally, than in India.

Now, I am going to be flagging off two points: the impending financial crisis, and externalities that impinge on the likely U.S. decline, which translates into a temporary global decline—unless we're prepared for it.

The Elites Can Delay a Financial Breakdown

Taking first the financial crisis: Don't you think, ladies and gentlemen, that the powers that control the U.S. establishment today, as so clearly brought out by Mr. LaRouche, are

aware that their policies, their economic policies, are pushing the United States into a head-long decline? Do you think they're not aware of it? Do you think there's not a deliberateness to it? The answer is: They're aware of it! And they are preparing to take over and benefit from a global collapse!

Today, the United States is hugely indebted to the powers that hold the global financial reserves: China, Japan, Saudi Arabia. Do you not think that these countries know that these reserves—in the case of China going up to \$800 billion—are not worth the paper they're written on? Does Japan not know it? Does Saudi Arabia not know it? But, they are all part of the global system. The governing elites of China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, have been co-opted into the system. So, they're not in a position to pull the rug from under the feet of the United States, and bring in that collapse—because a collapse of the United States *ipso facto* translates into a collapse of China's ambition to be a global power by about 2025. So, China is not going to do it. Although these U.S. Treasury receipts may be worthless pieces of paper, China is using those assets to build itself as a global power. The same is the case with the others I'm referring to. Where I differ with Mr. LaRouche is: The collapse is not necessarily imminent; the decline can be artificially stretched for some time.

Once again, who are the people pushing for this decline? I think Mr. LaRouche knows them. Today, in the United States, they are putting their money into an area which is already defunct—as known to them. The National Missile Defense (NMD) effort, over the period of its life-span of 25 years, is going to cost \$1.2 trillion. Kindly see, who are the people who have bought up and control the firms and entities that are going to support this NMD system. They speak of an axis forming around China, India and Russia threatening the United States.

Ladies and gentlemen, as I have written in my books, this triangular relationship is a laudable enterprise—but it's a non-starter. Just go to the establishments who run China, India, and Russia. Take the establishment that runs India. Where do you see India sacrificing its bilateral relations with the United States in order to augment this triangular relationship, beyond a point? Where do you see the Russian establishment, in the ascendant after the Yeltsin years, going to sacrifice its bilateral relations with the Atlantic community, to build up China and the triangular relationship? Go to Beijing: Where do you see, in the establishment currently running China, the bilateral interests of China being sacrificed to build up the triangular relationship? I don't see it, at all.

In the manner which Mr. LaRouche proposes this triangular relationship, I'm all for it. But, look at the people who are running China. their wards, their sons and children. Do you know how many billions of dollars they've invested into joint enterprises with people from Taiwan and the United States?

We must appreciate the subtle change that has taken place in the outlook of the middle classes who have been slowly

sucked into the maws of free market capitalism in one country after another. The essence of capitalism being self-indulgence, conspicuous consumerism, and instant gratification, parts of society experiencing greater affluence have joyfully taken to the “who cares what happens tomorrow” syndrome. Something similar is happening at the other end, due to extreme deprivation by people who are starving and who do not know where their next meal is coming from.

Will U.S. Society Implode?

My greatest worry, is an implosion of U.S. society; America’s demoralization over the longer term, if its policies that are being followed in the Middle East continue for any period of time. In September 2003, when Abu Ghraib was not yet known, en route to a conference here in Berlin, I was passing through London and the BBC asked me to come for a live presentation. I said, when people talk about American casualties and the body bags—there were 600 U.S. casualties at that time—this means nothing. For people who are ready to invade another country, 600 casualties are no casualties; 50,000-100,000 casualties might be different. *But*, I said, the problem that America is going to face, is the psychological disorientation that has come about in the people you have deployed in Iraq. A psychological disorientation deriving from what they were told about Iraq, and what is happening there in reality—and this I said before Abu Ghraib.

The psychological disorientation has already gotten into these 150,000 people in Iraq. Once they go back to America, it will diffuse through the bloodstream of American society and will demoralize America. Throughout America’s history, there have been parades in New York and Midwestern towns when the soldiers returned from foreign wars. They were welcomed back as heroes. This time, when the soldiers go back from Iraq, there are going to be no yellow ribbons on the trees. They’re going to slink back! They will not be welcomed as heroes. You’ve destroyed them psychologically in Iraq—which in turn is psychologically wrecking and demoralizing America. Throughout America’s history, there have been parades in New York and Midwestern towns when the soldiers returned from foreign wars. They were welcomed back as heroes. This time, when the soldiers go back from Iraq, there are going to be no yellow ribbons on the trees. They’re going to slink back! They will not be welcomed as heroes. You’ve destroyed them psychologically in Iraq—which, in turn, will psychologically wreck and demoralize American society.

‘Vertical’ and ‘Horizontal’ Proliferation

Although proliferation of nuclear weapons remains a strong possibility, I would advise all concerned to concentrate now on limiting the more dangerous vertical proliferation rather than on horizontal proliferation. The P5¹—U.S., Russia, U.K., China, and France—better start honoring their com-

1. The UN Security Council’s Permanent Five nuclear powers—ed.

mitments under Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty here and now, or become P5 among P10, P20, or even P30.

Coming from India, a few words on the the new-found nuclear status of India might be in order. The world was aghast when India exploded its first nuclear device in 1974. The country waited a full quarter century before announcing its nuclear status to the world in 1998. This time around, the shock was greater. The land of Buddha, Mahavira, and Gandhi had seemingly abandoned *ahimsa* and joined the bandwagon of nuclear might. The dismay within India was perhaps as great. Why did it come about? Many in India felt that the 21st Century milieu simply did not allow space for practicing Gandhian pacifism in a stand-alone fashion. The situation around the world made it an impractical proposition—more so, if the vision was not shared by other nations. Weakness in any society, in any age, was an invitation to being subjugated, India’s history demonstrated it to be undeniably so. Not being able to stand up to the onslaughts of terrorism, unilateralism, or capitalism, as well as the sponsored threats from neighbors, becomes an indefensible proposition—morally, or otherwise. It is axiomatic that durable peace demands a just and equitable international order. [Indian President] Dr. Kalam, referred to as the father of India’s missile program, is a humanist par excellence. Yet he has no doubt that India should be a nuclear weapons power.

In any case, other threats of equal or higher magnitude than proliferation of nuclear weapons have come into being. Post 9/11 and post-Iraq, this aspect can hardly be in doubt, especially when people have started wondering whether democracies are able to control the war-making power of their executives. Recent examples are an indication that national leaders increasingly tend to arrogantly disregard the *vox populi*. Fear of terrorism has provided the excuse for moving beyond democratic constraints and for abrogating international protocols. In a few short years, the descent has been steep enough to throw the residual vestiges of rationality, logic, and good sense that governed the conduct of diplomacy and international relations out of the window. These have no appeal for today’s wielders of power.

As I said, attention has to focus on the vertical proliferation spiral that is being propelled by the direct penetration of the governance process and the media networks by what President Eisenhower called the military-industrial complex, in one country after another. The developments in the U.S. are not surprising. The oil lobby and the military contractors need no longer put pressure on the Administration, since they *are* the Administration. There are similar trends elsewhere in the world, including in the European Union. Today unbridled capitalism, which has become the handmaiden of environmental degradation, nuclear proliferation, and the militarization of space, has become a “rogue” process. In other words, it is a runaway process that might no longer be amenable to control.

A Window of Opportunity

The climactic event that took place on 11 September 2001, shook the U.S.A. and the world. After three years, the world has to move on. Not everything should turn around 9/11, nor should the world become hostage to that single event. Undoubtedly, 9/11 was a major incident, but one ought to carefully look at the 9/11 Commission report and the exposures of deliberate falsifications that took place at the highest levels of governance in respect to what really happened on that day.

Now, there are other issues that have come center-stage, crying for the attention of the world. The world is facing a situation whereby one strong individual or a coterie of individuals in control of the levers of power of a state, can jeopardize the ecological future of a country, region, or the planet without there being a mechanism in place to effectively put a halt to the ecological decline. When taken collectively, the rapid ecological depletions taking place on Earth represent a potential for habitability-eclipse for humans and various life-forms that is several orders of magnitude higher than any nuclear exchange that might take place between lesser powers or an asymmetric exchange between a superpower and a lesser adversary.

In fact, it could be safely assumed that the Cold War type of nuclear destruction that could have devastated the planet can be practically ruled out, unless the U.S.A. pushes China to take the same route over the next 20-30 years.

At the same time, there is a window of opportunity: The great Eastern civilizations can take the lead in the search for global solutions. This is not intended to diminish the centrality of the U.S.A. to effective resolution modes. The world's unstinting support to the United States was unequivocally demonstrated after the 9/11 attacks in the U.S.A. Even now, no world power can be viewed as hostile to America, a golden opportunity to sit together and resolve issues that threaten global harmony.

Today only two entities threaten each other and the world with the threat of weapons of mass destruction, these being the superpower U.S.A. and its principal adversary, the shadowy radical elements out to hit the U.S.A. wherever they can. At least for the next 10-15 years, the nuclear exchange at the lowest kiloton yields is more likely between these two adversaries.

Yet, we have to ask the question: What would have been the quantity of munitions expended had the U.S. military been effectively contested in Iraq? Account needs to be taken of their toxic potentiality for the Iraqis and for the coalition troops, as well as the ecology of the entire region.

"I am strongly in favor of using poisoned gas against uncivilized tribes. The moral effect should be good . . . and it would spread a lively terror." That is Winston Churchill commenting on the British use of poison gas against the Iraqis after the First World War. Some 80 years later, the use of deadly, inhuman weapons—depleted uranium (DU)—did

spread lively terror in Iraq, even though the rest of the world failed to see the moral effect. Many scientific bodies and military hierarchies would have been aware of the Gulf War Syndrome, especially when almost a third of the 700,000 U.S. soldiers who served in the First Gulf War are now collecting disability payments. Yet not a single government had seen fit to debate this issue before considering the dispatch of troops to Iraq, where these weapons have been extensively used.

Sri Aurobindo, the great philosopher-sage, a little before his death, had presciently warned humanity on the need for urgent remedial action. In April 1950 in a Postscript Chapter to *The Ideal of Human Unity*, he wrote: "The indwelling deity who presides over the destiny of the race has raised in man's mind and heart the idea, the hope of a new order which will replace the old unsatisfactory order, and substitute for it conditions of the world's life which will in the end have a reasonable chance of establishing permanent peace and well-being. . . . It is for the men of our day and, at the most, of tomorrow to give the answer. For, too long a postponement or too continued a failure will open the way to a series of increasing catastrophes which might create a too prolonged and disastrous confusion and chaos and render a solution too difficult or impossible; it might even end in something like an irremediable crash, not only of the present world-civilization but of all civilization."

The digression, not being a descent into pessimism, should serve to highlight the urgency for immediate action, to very simply resume the destiny of humankind from the handful of people who have taken control of the levers of power in the superpower and some nations around the world. An enlightened leader with the attributes required to reverse the dangerous decline might not find it possible today to come to the fore and win election to the office of the President of the United States. The interests that have taken an iron grip over the Washington establishment, the media, and wealth formation will simply not allow such a species to co-exist.

Yet, as I said, the challenge before the world is not so much to diminish U.S. power—a catastrophic decline at this juncture not being in anybody's interest—but to change U.S. mindsets and channel America's amazing vitality toward productive ends—ends that will allow for the speedy revitalization of the planet. Once again, the globe is facing a discontinuity.

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