

## NEEDS UNIVERSAL CONSCIENCE

HISTORY, IN FACT, reflects varied connotations, depending upon how it is interpreted, recorded, and what it may serve to satisfy the interests of certain groups or sects of population. This creates conflicts and causes confrontations among nations disrupting the harmony what we call the essence of humanity. U.S-Iraq war is the recent example.

The paradox is that in many cases, political leaders suffer from their individual ego, personal vendetta, lack of foresight and control over consequences of their misdemeanour. Adolf Hitler is a glaring example. The grim reality is that they claim, in many cases, they run for war because people's consensus demands it, war is to bring peace to the people. But has any war been able to bring peace to the people at large, ever ? No, Never. Rather, one war seeds the genesis of another war, creating more distrust, fear and hatred, social and economical catastrophe.

Scenario of nuclear warfare may be cited. The horror of the events and their consequences caused by the atomic bombs the "Little boy" and the "Fat man" (so nicknamed) in Hiroshima and Nagasaki shocked the world consensus. Prior to the making of atomic bomb, Danish physicist Niels Bohr urged the then President of the United States of America Franklin D. Roosevelt to tell the world about the danger of atomic weaponry and start planning to control atomic energy in order to head off an international arms race. But Roosevelt was more intent on winning the World War II than worrying about its aftermath. Scientists involved in the U.S. atomic bomb programme, including Robert Oppenheimer, also tried to convince U.S. and British Officials of impending threat of postwar arms race and the historic opportunity the bomb provides for global political cooperation. However, to prevent Germany, Japan and Russia from acquiring the expertise or material to make nuclear bombs, President Roosevelt placed the Manhattan

bomb development project under strict secrecy, so secret that his Vice-president Harry Truman, was unaware of the bomb's existence until after Roosevelt's death in 1945.

After Roosevelt, came Truman as the new President of U.S.A. He ordered the nuclear attack on Japan. Later, he also asserted that Americans alone must constitute trustees of the 'new force' and directed the department of state to devise an international control. At this, Oppenheimer commented : "The peoples of the world must unite, or they will perish. This war, that has ravaged so much of the earth, has written these words. The atomic bomb has spelled them out for all men to understand". As a prelude, U.S. under secretary of State Dean Acheson and a scientific group led by Oppenheimer and David Lillienthal prepared a document that demanded an international body to take immediate control over all atomic activities. Acheson insisted that U.S. nuclear authority should be relinquished gradually. To this, Truman's representative Bernard Baruch added a new change. He asserted that the United States must retain its stock of nuclear bombs (which in June, 1946 numbered nine) until the new Agency created a reliable formula for international control and intrusive inspections.

The Soviet Union rejected the Baruch Plan. They feared such a plan might eventually create global atomic disparity and preserve an unrivaled U.S. capacity for nuclear coercion. They also saw intrusive inspections as a threat to their sovereignty. Moscow's nuclear force buildup, starting with its first nuclear detonation in August 1949 and advancing with its thermonuclear weapon test in August 1953, compelled Washington to devise some counter measure to the growing nuclear threat to U.S. territory. After that rivalry between U.S and USSR continued.

In an address to the UN General Assembly on December 8, 1953, US President Dwight D. Eisenhower heralded a new Atoms for Peace campaign designed to "hasten the day when fear of the atom will begin to disappear from the minds of people". He claimed that atomic energy soon could be channeled to improve the "socioeconomic condition of humankind".

But trading of nuclear materials and technology ultimately did not work as expected. Gradually many countries acquired ability to make, either atom bombs, or enough stockpiles of nuclear materials. Even, some of the countries were equipped with accessories, like missiles, telecontrol systems, etc. to target the atom bomb. Unimaginable amount of money and the best human resources involved, sustaining fear and apprehension all over the globe. For God's sake, however, no Nagasaki and Hiroshima was repeated so far.

A rudimentary audit made by Stephen I. Schwartz, a great scholar at the Brookings Institute and director of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Cost Study Project, breakdown of total and estimated U.S. expenditures (in billion dollars of 1996) for nuclear weapons between 1940 and 1996 were as follows :

Building the bomb : 409.4; deploying the bomb : 3,241.0; targeting and controlling the bomb : 831.1; defending against the bomb : 937.2; dismantling the bomb : 11.1; nuclear waste management and environmental remediation : 45.2; victims of the bomb : 2.1; cost and consequence of nuclear secrecy : 3.1; and congressional oversight of the bomb : 0.9. Total 5,481.1 billion U.S. dollars. Meanwhile, many countries are now capable of fabricating nuclear bomb. For this, how much they have spent is not known.

During the past three decades, world has seen confrontation in many countries – Chesnia, Serbia, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait etc. – tons and tons of depleted uranium (DU), which is the waste product of enriched uranium, used as covering material of munitions, tanks and warheads of missiles giving them hard hitting capacity. After strike, they scattered in lands and waters rendering radioactive pollution.

Nuclear blackmarketing. Horrific ! A report of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) expressed more concern in this matter : "With the Soviet collapse and the continued economic distress in the former Soviet Union (FSU), experienced scientists and technicians with the ability to create nuclear explosives are available on hire, and the required technology seems within the grasp of several states known to be seeking nuclear

weapons. If nuclear smuggling enables a renegade state or a terrorist group to enter the 'nuclear club', nuclear terrorism will no longer be unthinkable. Already, criminals have attempted nuclear extortion". The threat is complex. The report observes : "Potential preparators include not only states with nuclear ambition but also separatist movements, terrorist groups, criminal network, and individual thieves, traffickers and corrupt officials – even drug smugglers." Terrorists already have used other weapons of mass destruction against general population – the sarin gas attack in Tokyo's subway in March 1995 is an example. Next time may be nuclear ! The same may prove to be true in the case of chemical and biological weapons.

While discussing about nuclear warfare, once Nobel Laureate George Wald remarked to this writer : "A biased terrorist group, if wants, can smuggle few kilogrammes of plutonium produced during nuclear fission in a power plant and carry it safely in a polythene bag and make piggy atom bombs with the help of jobless frustrated scientists, and project such bombs by means of ordinary hand held launchers. God ! I am antinuclear – even civilian nuclear –".

Wald was true. But it is also a fact that morphine if properly administered, can be a life saving drug, otherwise it can work as a killer chemical. Such is the case with the weapons of mass destruction – nuclear, chemical and biological.

So – ?

Here comes the role of conscience – universal conscience that can feel the consequences of weapons of mass destruction and create an atmosphere of peace and harmony in the people of the world at large. Forget War, and let there be a slogan : "Live and let live". The lesson for later may be learnt from nature. In forests one can see trees, prodigally tall, with trunks of at least five metres in diameter. Crowns are glittering with fresh sunshine. On their branches there are nests of birds, holes for squirrels to live in, parasite and semi-parasite plants, fungus and bacteria – all live a symbiotic life. Being very big and strong, the tree does not shake them off. All live in harmony, in peace. Can we not duplicate this feature in the case of mankind ?

Confrontation comes out of ignorance. Ignorance grows when there is no mutual trust among the people. And lack of trust never establishes human bondage. Fortunately, life now is more mobile. Mass movement from country to country has grown due to tourism, business trips, humanitarian programmes all over the world, and

people at large are exposed to lives of different countries, learn their political, social, ethnic, economical and religious snags that decelerate developments. Mutual understanding grows. This helps to bring World people together. This is the time when an international forum, not like UNO, may be set up with NGOs to infuse human values and understanding through education and socioeconomic promotion, so that people may be convinced that war is always counter productive. Such an effort may make the

world a true "village", where every one may live with good neighbourly relation. What is needed foremost now is to create universal conscience, and for it the young generations in particular (for they are mostly liberal) may act as a good motive force. "Money and resources are meant for man, not for war"— should be the slogan. □

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### **Trial Explosion of the Atomic Bomb**

The first trial atomic bomb was touched off on July 16th, 1945. Sir Geoffrey Taylor, one of the group of British scientists who worked at the New Mexico atomic bomb laboratory, was twenty miles away from the 100-foot tower on which the bomb was mounted and described the explosion in these words, "We were provided with a strip of very dark glass to protect our eyes. This glass is so dark that at midday it makes the sun look like a little undeveloped dull green potato. At exactly the expected moment, I saw, through the dark glass, a brilliant ball of fire which was far brighter than the sun. In a second or two it died down to a brightness which seemed to be about that of the sun, so realizing that it must be lighting up the countryside I looked behind me and saw the scrub-covered hills 22 miles away from the bomb lighted up as though by a midday sun. Then I turned round and looked directly at the ball of fire. I saw it expand slowly, and begin to rise, growing fainter as it rose. Later it developed into a huge mushroomshaped cloud and soon reached a height of 40,000 feet."

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