

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE AMANA MEDIA INITIATIVE

# AMANA

MAGAZINE

VOL .4 ISSUE 1 , 2010

## SUPERPOWERS IN WOLRD CONFLICTS



**The Second Superpower:  
Civil Society**

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**AMANA Magazine**

AMANA Magazine is published by the Amana Media Initiative (Amana) and is part of the AMAN program 'Peace Actions in Asia', funded by Action Aid. Issued every quarter, AMANA Magazine is circulated across Asia in five languages:

English, Bahasa Indonesia, Bengali, Thai and Urdu.

The views expressed by writers in this publication are not necessarily those of Amana, AMAN or ARF.

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Vol. 4, Issue 1  
Published April 2010

Printers: Active Interprint (Thailand),  
PT Megatama Pressindo (Indonesia), Digital Graphics  
(India), UPOKUL (Bangladesh)

**COVER: Superpowers in World  
Conflicts****DRAWING:** Preeda Dangvijitr

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# LEVELS OF POWER

By M. Abdus Sabur

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“ The greatest evils which affect civilized nations are brought about by war, and not so much by actual wars in the past or the present, as by never ending and indeed continually increasing preparations for war. ”

Immanuel Kant

**T**his world is a complex reality. Peoples and communities of diverse religions and cultures have been seeking and striving for peace and decent living for a long time. In an unjust society, tension and conflict are common. Within the religious and cultural realms there have been traditions and ways of addressing conflict locally, which varied from community to community. But with the emergence of the nation state, judiciary systems evolved to address complaints and conflicts and to deliver justice. At the international level, the UN system, particularly the Security Council and the International Criminal Court, assumed responsibility to maintain peace and establish justice.

At each level, dominant groups and actors exist. A tribal chief, the leadership of a sub-national group, the government which claims to represent the majority population, the superpower in the Security Council – all impose their will on minority and weaker sections of society, whether in the local community or in the international arena.

Dominant and hegemonic powers work through alliances on the basis of give and take in order to fight against a perceived common enemy, such as communism in the past and “Muslim terrorists” at present. This is done in the name of security and development. But in reality we see neither security nor development has been achieved through wars.

During the cold war era, the Non-Aligned Movement, comprising mostly countries from the global south, created some space for developing countries to assert a third position and promote south-south cooperation, but failed to sustain its founding spirit.

Then we have seen the emergence of regional blocs such as the European Union, ASEAN, SAARC and the Organization of African Unity designed mainly to forge economic and development

cooperation. They are at different stages but mostly loyal to hegemonic power.

This issue of AMANA has articles covering the plight of internally displaced Muslims and the complexities surrounding their resettlement in Northern Sri Lanka, the possibility of engaging Taliban in peace talks in Afghanistan, the emerging role of Central Asian countries, an attempt to change Article 9 of the Japanese peace constitution, and the ways that development organizations can fuel the flames of war. All of these actions are somehow influenced by superpowers.

But peace loving people, irrespective of religious and cultural identity, have demonstrated their disapproval of war and stood firmly against aggression, occupation, and genocide and expressed their solidarity with Vietnamese people, with the South African movement against apartheid, with Palestinian people for their statehood, and against wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Thus, we also include an article on the emerging “second superpower”: civil society networks, peace movements, and coalitions of women, youth, students, environmentalists, faith communities and many others actively promoting peaceful change.

In the absence of moral authority among government leaders in small or large countries, this emerging superpower is a symbol of solidarity, a countervailing force and a ray of hope for global justice and peace if it can be sustained.



# 20 Years On ..... Playing Football with Expelled Northern Muslims

By Shreen Saroor



## **A**n unfinished quest for dignity with justice

The civil war in Sri Lanka ended with a grave human tragedy on 17 May 2009 and the war-affected Tamil civilians' plight remains distressing. Many displaced are still living under trees and roadside tents and their kith and kin are still missing. The dead remain unnumbered and the rest among the missing are mostly locked up in detention centers or prisons. However, the government's military victory over the LTTE has brought relief to many, including another minority whose sufferings and exile life in refugee camps have been neglected for over 19 years by many onlookers of the Sri Lankan conflict. The dismissal of the Tiger leadership that ordered the eviction of northern Muslims has brought new hope to the Muslims of being able to return to their northern homes they left in 1990.<sup>1</sup> Even though the LTTE was subject to tremendous criticism for this terrible act of ethnic cleansing, LTTE leader Mr. Pirabakaran was conspicuously silent during the peace negotiations that went on from 2002 - 2005. Strangely, none of the parties engaged in the talks, including the Norwegian mediators, was willing to even consider the right to collective return of the northern Muslims, a non-combatant party, as one of the primary conditions for establishing normalcy in the north. This was the main reason for the low rate of return in comparison to Tamil internally

displaced persons (IDPs) during the last peace process. But given the fact that their only fear for return was eliminated with the end of war, many thousands of Muslims realize that their return is not viewed positively by various players involved in IDP resettlement, including the government.

Recently a group of 17 women from Puttalam (in the North-Western Province), where there are over 70,000 northern Muslims living in exile since October 1990, organised a "go and see visit" to Jaffna district. Most of these young women were babies when they were forced to flee by the order of armed LTTE cadres, leaving behind all that they had. They have only heard from their elders about how they co-existed with the Tamils, how all of a sudden the expulsion happened and how they were robbed by the Tiger cadres while fleeing Jaffna within the 2-hour ultimatum given by LTTE. They have also heard from other Muslim evictees from Mannar, Killinochchi, Vavuniya and Mulaithivu districts of similar expulsion stories even though the LTTE adopted different forms of expulsion in each area. Mubeena, who was part of this group, was five years old when she was chased out but she and her colleagues have always wanted to return and reconnect to their native place. According to Mubeena, until the Muslims permanently return to their northern homes their sufferings will never end and in her



19 years of living in Puttalam she never felt permanency in Saltern Camp II. This voluntary attempt is about seeking justice and the truth behind all the stories and politically motivated rumors they have heard about their return to Jaffna. The report released by these women, while recognizing the voluntary and ad-hoc nature of the return of over 100 families to Jaffna peninsula, highlights one of the major stumbling blocks to their return, which is also a common complaint of the Muslims who have returned to Mannar as well.

### **Donor indifference and ideological games**

The international donors on their part have also articulated that the IDP Muslims are well integrated in Puttalam and their return is not a priority. This notion is substantiated by a controversial survey done by UNHCR in 2004, which says the majority of

functionary in the government has made a categorical statement on evicted Muslims; but the President has failed to recognize the return of the Muslims as one of the priorities in his rapid nation building process (however effective it is) and wanted them to wait until both the presidential and parliamentary elections were over. Given this second class treatment and asking them to continue to wait for the right time, this community feels that it cannot rely on anyone, not even Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services Minister Rishad Badiudeen who is also from the northern Muslim community.

### **Land issues**

Unlike recent Tamil IDPs who have experienced multiple displacements within Vanni (completely controlled by LTTE before the end of the war), Muslims forcibly displaced have lived away

“ A transparent and integrated process of return, in which Muslims and Tamils originating from the same areas return at the same time, is vital to reducing future conflicts. ”

the displaced Muslims prefer to be integrated into Puttalam rather than return to their original homes. According to a local non-governmental organization that works with IDPs in the north, this non-recognition of Muslims' return and lack of attention and resources to provide them with basic facilities make their living conditions deplorable in returned areas and negatively impact any further collective return. In the vicinity of Mohamadiya mosque in Jaffna town, there are 105 families who have returned; authorities under-quoting this number block adequate resettlement assistance from reaching these returned families.

President Rajapakse, as part of his election campaign, participated at the All Ceylon Muslim Congress Northern Convention at Kalpitiya Puttalam on 26 December 2009 and said, “When the innocent Muslims were harassed and forcibly evicted from the north by the LTTE, no one came forward to stop this displacement. Instead of addressing the plight of his own people, Sri Lanka Muslim Congress leader Rauff Hakeem went to the extent of signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the terrorist outfit. Now, with my government putting an end to terrorism, all efforts will be made to resettle the Muslims by May 2010.” Rajapakse has promised to appoint a presidential commission to inquire into the expulsion of northern Muslims at the start of his first term, which is still pending. This is the first time a senior

from war-torn areas for almost two decades. The fact that a few thousand families have already established themselves within the host community should not be used against them to deny or postpone returning rights. In fact it is imperative to recognize the urgency of the northern Muslims' right to return in parallel with Tamil IDPs in order to avoid any further suspicion and distrust between these two communities. Already Muslims who have returned back to Mannar are faced with certain village boundary alterations causing them to lose their community rights to own land. They maintain that such accommodations to IDPs from other areas will result in their villages losing out on resources and infrastructure development in the years to come.

International Crisis Group's Asia Briefing No. 99 released on 11 January 2010 clearly captures this complication. It states, “Any returns by northern Muslims are likely to raise complicated property rights and political issues. A transparent and integrated process of return, in which Muslims and Tamils originating from the same areas return at the same time, is vital to reducing future conflicts. Muslims should be allowed to inspect their properties as soon as possible, prior to any new housing being built. Other mechanisms are also needed to resolve the inevitable land disputes. Local and national politicians must be prevented from manipulating the return of Muslims to sow the seeds of new conflicts between Tamils and Muslims.”

Shreen Saroor is a human rights activist focusing on war related violence against women in Sri Lanka



### **An overdue recognition by the TNA and the Tamil Diaspora's silence**

Until the defeat of the LTTE, the Tamil political leaders, civil society activists and Tamil Diaspora have been mostly silent on northern Muslim issues. On 7 September 2009, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) met with President Rajapakse on minority concerns and for the first time publicly raised the concerns of northern Muslims. The Tamil national polity at large has kept a deliberate stillness on the northern Muslims' expulsion for the very reason that LTTE actions against this minority community can undermine their position against Sinhala majoritarianism and weaken their demand for a separate territory cleansed of other minorities. Yet this recent TNA effort to address expelled northern Muslim issues is being perceived as a kind of solidarity with their cause to recognize the rights of the country's two largest minorities (Tamils and Muslims) against a lack of major commitment to address minority grievances by either of the presidential candidates.

Though TNA has at last shown some openness towards this issue, the Diaspora Tamils and many other Tamil leaders have not demonstrated their solidarity. In July 2009 a delegation of Diaspora Tamils visited the refugee camps in Vavuniya and other areas. They met only Tamil IDPs and Tamil civil soci-

ety members and omitted visits to Puttalam and meetings with Muslim community leaders from the north. Later, when this partiality was highlighted at a media briefing, they admitted the lapse. Tamil Diaspora groups must acknowledge that they cannot achieve a lasting political solution in Sri Lanka without recognizing what happened to the northern Muslims and mobilize resources for their resettlement.

### **A basic human right that should not suffer derogation**

It should be noted that those Muslims who have decided to return have given up their IDP registration in Puttalam, which automatically terminates their entitlement for a monthly food subsidy. Their willingness to give up many years of living in one place clearly shows their desperation to get back and stand on their feet after two decades of humiliation and dependent living. It is also imperative to recognize that evicted Muslims have the right to reclaim their properties and livelihood opportunities in their native places irrespective of whether their families choose to live in displacement or not. Several forces and factors resist their homecoming and make it undesirable, which will lay a foundation for future communal strife between northern Muslims and Tamils and prevent any form of reconciliation taking place between these two communities that co-existed for many thousand years and still share many cultural similarities.

<sup>1</sup>In October 1990, some 75,000 Muslims in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka were dragged into Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict when they were expelled from their northern homeland by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).



# A DIPLOMATIC SURGE FOR AFGHANISTAN

By Lisa Schirch

**A**fter US President Barack Obama's announcement of another troop surge, Afghans have been asking: "Where is the diplomatic surge to address the root causes of Afghanistan's turmoil?"

At the end of last year, I muddled my boots walking around cold but friendly Kabul to ask: "What would US support for a diplomatic surge look like?" After drinking many cups of tea with over five dozen Afghan civil society leaders and government officials, one theme stood out in my notes: Afghanistan needs a coordinated, multi-pronged peacebuilding approach to contribute to the region's complex political chess game.

The slow US diplomacy with the Taliban may result from the conventional notion of first imposing a painful stalemate on the Taliban, bending their will toward negotiation. Yet history suggests successful peace processes require a more proactive, comprehensive diplomatic approach.

The Afghan government's new reconciliation efforts will offer vocational training and jobs to 35,000 former Taliban members. This is a good start. Previous reconciliation efforts aimed to peel off insurgents one at a time, rather than offering economic and security incentives to entire groups.

Diplomacy with the Taliban is an important dimension of addressing the conflict in Afghanistan, but not the only one.

A second dimension is Afghan-led peacebuilding at the local level. The highly functional Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development's National Solidarity Program (NSP) blends locally owned, cost-effective development projects with efforts to increase local capacity for conflict management. The District Development Assemblies (DDAs) and Community Development Councils (CDCs) work through locally elected male and female shuras, or councils, that identify local priorities for building health centres, irrigation systems and schools. This simple yet sophisticated approach is vastly more cost-effective than US-funded development efforts, as it uses existing local channels.

Afghan universities and peacebuilding organisations, some funded by the United States Institute of Peace, an independent US institution which provides the analysis, training and tools that promote stability, help train the shuras in reconciliation and run peace education programmes. Some already operate at capacity.

Many could expand with additional international support.

Next, Afghanistan needs a broader public peace process for civil society to build a national consensus on the country's future, particularly on issues such as corruption, ethnic tensions and how to address the Taliban. We should remember that Americans in the Civil Rights Era, which began in 1954, did not set out to destroy the intolerant Ku Klux Klan – a once widespread white supremacy movement that used violence to resist pluralism – through violent measures. Rather, they made it irrelevant by changing the national consciousness through public discussions and campaigns.

Likewise, Afghans need iterative public forums to discuss and design their national agenda to move forward collectively and peacefully. This agenda will complement and coordinate with official diplomatic efforts.

Finally, Afghan leaders await robust regional diplomacy. Persistent dialogue with neighbouring countries, particularly Pakistan, along with economic, political, security and territorial incentives, is essential. With regard to the United States: "It matters when Secretary Hillary Clinton or Ambassador Richard Holbrooke come to the region. We want to see more of them," say local leaders.

They also say the United States does not have enough diplomats with the requisite training in local cultures and languages, principled negotiation, sustained dialogue and other advanced conflict resolution skills to support a peace process. During my trip, Afghan peacebuilding experts warned against imposing Western-style diplomacy on Afghans: "They need to do a better job of acknowledging and learning ways Afghans traditionally manage conflict, through tribal methods and Islamic ways of fostering good and cordial relations."

Obama could start the diplomatic surge by drinking cups of tea with Afghans in Afghanistan. Then add a few dozen more culturally sensitive diplomats muddying their own boots on Kabul's streets. Next, invite more Afghans to talk about diplomacy with US policymakers.

Most importantly, if this country can risk the financial and human costs of sending 30,000 new US troops to Afghanistan – costing up to a million dollars each – surely it makes sense for US Congress to directly fund comparably cost-effective Afghan-led civilian peacebuilding efforts.



Lisa Schirch is Professor of Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University and Director of the 3D Security Initiative. This article was written for the Common Ground News Service.



By Erkinbek Kamalov

# Voice of Peace from Central Asia

**T**oday when we hear about Afghanistan we imagine the continuing war without end.

The number of skeptics on stabilization and development of this country is increasing day by day, within and outside of the country. Many scholars and practitioners suggest various strategies and approaches to solve the main issue – the Taliban as major destabilization factor.

It is not only possible but necessary to negotiate and compromise with the Taliban to bring peace to Afghanistan. The Taliban is the main adversary of the US-led coalition forces and is also a main internal player and party to the conflict that has significant support or at least sympathy from a segment of the local population.

In this peace building process, Central Asian (CA) countries could play a key role along with other superpowers. The significance of the CA region can be explained by several key factors relating to history, security and resources. Before the establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the region held a place of importance in world geopolitics. Central Asian territories have been at the center of battles and trade routes for centuries. The region played an important role in introducing silk from China to Europe and facilitating trade and exchange along the Silk Road. Britain and Russia have battled for control of this strategic area, which came to act as a buffer zone between “Lion” and “Bear” in the early 20th century.

Central Asia also provides an important link to South Asia. The region is thus a special focus of superpowers, especially in US strategies which look at Central Asia in one context together with South Asia. Central Asian states may access the sea through Afghanistan and Pakistan, and CA states are also similar in terms of religious demographics.

## Peace building potential of the region

Every country in the CA region has experienced both peace and war in a variety of forms. For instance, Kazakhstan is a major economic and political power of the region. This year, Kazakhstan received the OSCE Chairmanship, the first time that a post-Soviet country has chaired this international organization of 56 participating states. Why not use this credit shown by the international community as currency in building peace in Afghanistan along with other CA neighbors?

## Kyrgyzstan

Since mid-2009, then-President Bakiev proposed that Kyrgyzstan serve as a base for permanent dialogue and negotiations to solve conflicts in the Eurasian continent. His peace mission, the so called “Bishkek Initiatives”, is directed at ending the war in Afghanistan and has gained positive feedback from international scholars and world class policy makers. According to this Initiative, the Taliban and all other parties should come to Bishkek to negotiate first a cease fire and then to bring sustainable peace to Afghanistan. Both the United States and Russia have military





“Kyrgyzstan [can] serve as a base for permanent dialogue and negotiations to solve conflicts in the Eurasian continent.”

airbases around Bishkek, which demonstrates Kyrgyzstan's skills in managing a balance of powers within the country. Leadership of the country has good diplomatic relations with another key player, China. Contemporary history provides more examples, such as the Bishkek Protocols that prevented bloody conflict between Azeri and Armenian ethnic groups on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

### Tajikistan

This country experienced a civil war right after its independence from the Soviet Union and Tajik peace building experiences can be directly or indirectly applied to Afghanistan. These two countries are neighbors and have many common cultural values. Here, special attention should be paid to the role of the “Islamic Factor” conceptualized by Dr. Arne Zeifert: the state can and must take Islamic opposition seriously; insurgents can and should work together on an equal basis. This has happened in prevention of civil war in Tajikistan.

### Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan kept absolute neutrality for many years after its independence from the Soviets in 1990. But, during the last few years, we observe that this country intends to play a key role in shaping the energy policy of the region. Turkmenistan is rich in gas and oil and has access to seas. It could use its economic position and serve as one of the key mediators in building peace in Afghanistan.

### Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan has the largest military force and population in the Central Asia region. Its strategic location in the center of CA makes it a preferable hub of trade and communication. National authorities could work with Uzbek ethnic minorities in Afghanistan to promote peace in that country.

Afghanistan has never been defeated by a world power. But this country is in need of external powers which can protect indigenous people from the chaos of drugs and terrorism and protect fundamental human rights. But initiatives should come from all four sides: west, east, north and south. I think peace in Afghanistan is possible if the above mentioned Central Asian countries unify their peace building potential and persuade the entire international community to start negotiation and stop fighting. But many things will depend on how we negotiate with Taliban leaders by using nonviolent means. All leaders of CA countries should put their personal political ambitions aside and start thinking globally. After all, unifying a voice of peace toward Afghanistan is paramount for the security and stability of the entire Central Asian Region as well as the international community.



# The Self-Examinations of One Japanese – Thinking of Article Nine

By Tetsuya Takahashi

**T**he Japanese constitution has been in existence for more than 60 years. However, Article 9 has been targeted for revision ever since its inception but has survived thus far. We might say that historical circumstances and the Japanese citizens' movements have worked together to protect Article 9. On the other hand, ever since 1950 political forces have tried to work around Article 9 attempting to strip it of its meaning.

The Self Defense Forces (SDF) of Japan now represent one of the largest military forces in the world. Under former Prime Minister Koizumi appropriate laws were enacted making it possible for Japan to send its SDF to the Indian Ocean after 9-11 and later to Iraq. This was the result of both a strong request on the part of the United States and a longing within the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to create a fait accompli for using the SDF overseas. Then under the Abe administration there was a clear intent to change the constitution; at this time of crisis, the "Kyujo No Kai" (Article 9) movement among religious and citizens' groups sprouted up all around Japan to protect Article 9.

## The forces that have threatened Article 9

Article 9 represents the right of the people to demand that their government never again go to war. However, over the years the LDP has worked to make Article 9 hollow of meaning. This hollowing out began at the moment the emperor was exempted from war crime responsibilities after the Second World War. For the leaders of the Great Japanese Empire during the war and during the period right after Japan's surrender, the greatest concern was "protecting national polity," which in effect meant protecting the emperor system.

The primary concern on the part of the Japanese government was whether the emperor would be tried for war crimes. The Japanese were concerned that if the emperor were convicted, this would bring the whole emperor system into question. Not only was the emperor the sovereign ruler of the Great Japanese Empire, he also had religious authority as the "Arahitogami" god, and he was commander in chief of the Japanese armed forces.

The emperor and the emperor system were also important issues for the allied forces. While most allied countries wished to either remove the emperor or try him in court, the United States

used its influence to protect the imperial system for two main political aims. First, it was important to gain the immediate support of the Japanese people, and for this it was convenient to use the emperor as a tool. Second, both the Soviet Union and China were increasing their influence in the region and it was important to establish Japan as an ally of the United States and a barrier to communism. The emperor system provided the spiritual base for the anti-communist rightist forces within Japan. In this way the emperor was spared and continued in his symbolic role for decades after the war.

Although the emperor lost his authority after the war, the Japanese government succeeded in protecting the national polity. The same man remained in the role of emperor, unharmed, and thereby created a sense of continuity between pre-war and post-war times. The United States appeared as the savior. The barbarians whom Japan had fought during the war became their new rescuers at the moment of crisis.

The Showa emperor understood this more than anybody. In the period following Japan's surrender, the People's Republic of China was born and the Korean peninsula fell into the grips of war. Communist forces were appearing on the horizon. But at this same time Japan was issuing its new constitution with a peace clause. Article 9 represented Japan's commitment never to make war on Asian soil again. The emperor was relieved that the emperor system remained intact, and yet he was soon disturbed by the political changes happening around Asia. How would the system continue to be protected without the imperial army? At this time, those in authority roles in Japan began to see Article 9 as a hindrance.

The emperor made a very realistic choice at this moment. If Japan could not protect itself, would the United States take on that role? The emperor clearly requested for the US to provide protection. There are public US documents dated Sept 20 and 22 that fill us in on the emperor's "Okinawa Message." This states that, "The Japanese Emperor wishes for the US to continue its military occupation of the Okinawa islands. This would work for the benefit of both countries, and should be considered for a 25 to 40 year period."

The US went on to use "rifles and bulldozers" to strip the land from the Okinawan people, thereby constructing the largest



**“ ARTICLE 9. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. (2) To accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized. ”**

**- From the National Constitution of Japan**

base in East Asia. In this period there were many instances of crimes, violence and disturbance caused by US troops toward the Okinawan people that still continue. Okinawa was used as a launching site for US aircraft in the wars in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. The Showa emperor's Okinawa Message still lies in the background of present day Japan.

Why does the US continue to have bases on the island of Okinawa? The Korean War created the impetus to upgrade the role of the SDF to act as reinforcements for the US military. Today, the SDF are increasing their involvements with the US military, and their role remains the same. Even though Japan possesses Article 9, it continues to house the world's mightiest military forces of the nation that has fought the most wars in the world.

Japan emerged with a peace constitution, but this Peace Nation held meaning only within the framework of its relation to the US. Article 9 also only maintains its meaning within this framework. Behind the facade of the Peace Nation lies the true face of Japan dictated by the US-Japan alliance.

### **A new chance**

I was particularly impressed by Japanese PM Hatoyama when he met with the Korean President Lee Myung-Bak and stated, “The Democratic Party is a party that looks history in the face.” In the past there have been non-LDP prime ministers who have brought the issue of “history of Japan's aggressions” to their dialogues with Asian leaders, and yet they have not been able to venture any further due to strong resistance within Japan.

In Singapore on November 15, Hatoyama referred to the “East Asian Community.” He compared this to the EU, which through its own history was able to overcome hatred and build bonds of trust between nations. His own framework for a new East Asian Community is based on the EU, and thus Japan must

take the kinds of steps Germany took to establish trust with its neighbors. Unless Japan faces its own history, the East Asian Community will never be actualized. There must be a public stance of admitting responsibility for the war in order for a new peace in Asia to emerge.

### **The right to live in peace**

In closing I want to turn our attention to the preamble of the Japanese constitution which states, “We recognize that all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want.” This sentence which outlines “the Right for Peaceful Existence” is often identified with Article 9. However, I would like to focus on the words “the right to live free from fear and want.”

In fact peace does not simply mean the absence of war. Poverty and famine are factors which rob people of the right to live in peace. Joblessness and financial bankruptcy rob people of these securities which make for a peaceful life. It is also a fact that nations have used financial crisis and poverty as a means to involve themselves in war. Poverty is deeply tied to issues of war, and in fact when poverty intensifies so does the crisis of peace.

“The right to a peaceful existence” as declared in the Preamble to the constitution must be understood in this context. As the free market economy becomes stronger, creating a “new poverty” across the world, we must reaffirm the philosophical basis on which Article 9 stands; namely, “the right to peaceful existence.” We must ask ourselves what we can actually do to create a world that assures “all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want.”



# The Second Superpower Rears its Beautiful Head

By James F. Moore

**A**s the United States government becomes more belligerent in using its power in the world, many people are longing for a “second superpower” that can keep the US in check. Indeed, many people desire a superpower that speaks for the interests of planetary society, for long-term well-being, and that encourages broad participation in the democratic process. Where can the world find such a second superpower? No nation or group of nations seems able to play this role.

There is an emerging second superpower, but it is not a nation. Instead, it is a new form of international player, constituted by the “will of the people” in a global social movement. The beautiful but deeply agitated face of this second superpower is the worldwide peace campaign, but the body of the movement is made up of millions of people concerned with a broad agenda that includes social development, environmentalism, health, and human rights. This movement has a surprisingly agile and muscular body of citizen activists who identify their interests with world society as a whole—and who recognize that at a fundamental level we are all one. These are people who are attempting to take into account the needs and dreams of all 6.3 billion people in the world—and not just the members of one or another nation.

Huge numbers of people are now interconnected through cyberspace. This body has a beautiful mind. Web connections enable a kind of near-instantaneous, mass improvisation of activist initiatives. New forms of communication and commentary are being invented continuously.

The Internet and other interactive media continue to penetrate more and more deeply all world society, and provide a means for instantaneous personal dialogue and communication across the globe. The collective power of texting, blogging, instant messaging, and email across millions of actors cannot be overestimated. Like a mind constituted of millions of inter-networked neurons, the social movement is capable of astonishingly rapid and sometimes subtle community consciousness and action.

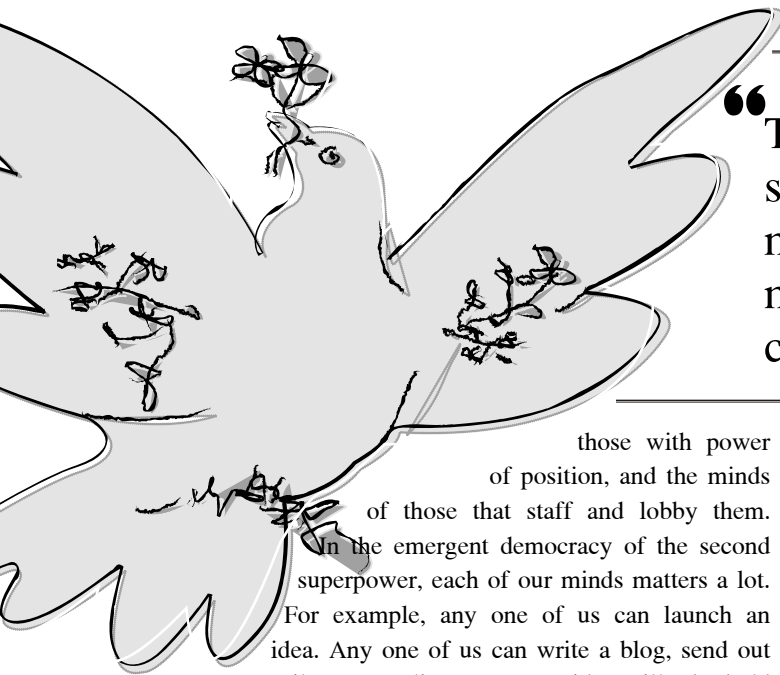
Thus the new superpower demonstrates a new form of “emergent democracy” that differs from the participative democracy of

the US government. Where political participation in the United States is exercised mainly through rare exercises of voting, participation in the second superpower movement occurs continuously through participation in a variety of web-enabled initiatives. And where deliberation in the first superpower is done primarily by a few elected or appointed officials, deliberation in the second superpower is done by each individual—making sense of events, communicating with others, and deciding whether and how to join in community actions. Finally, where participation in democracy in the first superpower feels remote to most citizens, the emergent democracy of the second superpower is alive with touching and being touched by each other, as the community works to create wisdom and to take action.

How does the second superpower take action? Not from the top, but from the bottom. That is, it is the strength of the US government that it can centrally collect taxes, and then spend, for example, \$1.2 billion on 1,200 cruise missiles in the first day of the war against Iraq. By contrast, it is the strength of the second superpower that it could mobilize hundreds of small groups of activists to shut down city centers across the United States on that same first day of the war. And that millions of citizens worldwide would take to their streets to rally.

The symbol of the first superpower is the eagle—an awesome predator that rules from the skies, preying on mice and small animals. Perhaps the best symbol for the second superpower would be a community of ants. Ants rule from below. In the same sense as the ants, the continual distributed action of the members of the second superpower can, I believe, be expected to eventually prevail. Distributed mass behavior, expressed in rallying, in voting, in picketing, in exposing corruption, and in purchases from particular companies, all have a profound effect on the nature of future society. More effect, I would argue, than the devastating but unsustainable effect of bombs and other forms of coercion.

The vital role of the individual is the most important point of all. The shared, collective mind of the second superpower is made up of many individual human minds—your mind and my mind—together we create the movement. In traditional democracy our minds don’t matter much—what matters are the minds of



“The shared, collective mind of the second superpower is made up of many individual human minds - your mind and my mind - together we create the movement.”

those with power of position, and the minds of those that staff and lobby them. In the emergent democracy of the second superpower, each of our minds matters a lot. For example, any one of us can launch an idea. Any one of us can write a blog, send out an email, create a list. Not every idea will take hold in the big mind of the second superpower—but the one that eventually catches fire is started by an individual. And in the peer-oriented world of the second superpower, many more of us have the opportunity to craft submissions, and take a shot.

The contrast goes deeper. In traditional democracy, sense-making moves from top to bottom. “The President must know more than he is saying” goes the thinking of a loyal but passive member of the first superpower. But this form of democracy was established in the 18th century, when education and information were both scarce resources. Now, in more and more of the world, people are well educated and informed. As such, they prefer to make up their own minds. Top-down sense-making is out of touch with modern people.

Overall, what can be said for the prospects of the second superpower? With its mind enhanced by Internet connective tissue, and international law as a venue to work with others for progressive action, the second superpower is starting to demonstrate its potential. But there is much to do. How do we assure that it continues to gain in strength? And at least as important, how do we continue to develop the mind of the second superpower, so that it maximizes wisdom and goodwill?

First, we need to become conscious of the “mental processes” in which we are involved as members of the second superpower, and explore how to make our individual sense-making and collective action more and more effective. This of course means

challenging and improving the mass media, and supporting more interactive and less biased alternatives. But more ambitiously, we will need to develop a kind of meta-discipline, an organizational psychology of our community, to explore the nature of our web-enabled, person-centered, global governance and communication processes, and continue to improve them.

Second, and ironically, the future of the second superpower depends to a great extent on social freedoms in part determined by the first superpower. It is the traditional freedoms—freedom of the press, of assembly, of speech—that have enabled the second superpower to take root and grow.

Third, we must carefully consider how best to support international institutions, so that they collectively form a setting in which our power can be exercised. Perhaps too often we attack institutions like the World Bank that might, under the right conditions, actually become partners with us in dealing with the first superpower. International institutions must become deeply more transparent, accessible to the public, and less amenable to special interests, while remaining strong enough to provide a secure context in which our views can be expressed.

And finally, we must work on ourselves and our community. We will dialogue with our neighbors, knowing that the collective wisdom of the second superpower is grounded in the individual wisdom within each of us. We must remind ourselves that daily we make personal choices about the world we create for ourselves and our descendants. We do not have to create a world where differences are resolved by war. It is not our destiny to live in a world of destruction, tedium, and tragedy. We will create a world of peace.





# Aid Industry is Part of the Problem

By Ida Karlsson

**A**id organisations perpetuate humanitarian disasters. That is one of the conclusions made by war correspondent Linda Polman in her latest book as she describes the world of humanitarian aid.

When there is a major disaster, large and wealthy aid organisations come pouring into the area, according to Polman who has seen the results in a range of crisis areas.

“Should international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) carry on providing relief if warring factions use aid for their own benefit, thus prolonging the war?” she asks.

‘With Friends Like These (De crisiskaravaan) - The untold story of humanitarian aid operations in war zones’ investigates the effects of emergency aid on the course of wars and on the crises themselves. She criticises the aid industry’s multi-billion dollar operations, which she describes as a business in a market of supply and demand, dressed up as Mother Teresa.

“Aid has always been a subject of abuse. Money is disappearing into the wrong pockets,” she says. She discusses “contract fever” and how aid organisations focus on winning and extending contracts and follow the flow of funds. As donors look for other disasters and other countries, the crisis caravan - international humanitarian organisations such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross - sets off again.

The salaries and the danger-and-discomfort bonuses in the aid sector are said to be fostering an international jet set. “In humanitarian territories, restaurants, squash courts and golf and tennis facilities are often reconstructed sooner than bombed-out schools and clinics,” she writes in her book and notes “wherever aid workers go, prostitution soars”.

She also describes how aid is used and abused by governments and rebels. “The military regime is making a lot of profit from the aid in Darfur. Aid organisations pour millions of dollars a year into Sudanese government coffers, because they have to pay tax on every morsel they hand out in aid.”

According to Polman, over 70 percent of the Sudanese government’s money is spent on the army, which sets fire to villages in Darfur and forces people to flee.

She also recalls the situation in a refugee camp in Goma in 1995, in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, when Hutu

extremists were sustained and nursed by humanitarian aid and therefore could continue the war in Rwanda.

“While the West thought it was helping victims of the genocide, it turned out it was the perpetrators who the aid organisations were looking after so well.”

According to her many humanitarian organisations simply ignore the complicated context they are working in - even when wrongful use is made of their assistance.

However, director general of the Dutch section of MSF, Hans van de Weerd, says his organisation disagrees with the general tone of Polman’s book.

“The book lumps all humanitarian aid into one big group. We do not recognise our work at all in the series of incidents mentioned. With our own teams we closely monitor the situation in the field to ensure that aid gets to the most vulnerable people.” He says that MSF is aware that humanitarian assistance can be manipulated. The organisation has carried out several studies to get a better understanding of the diversion of aid in Chad and Darfur, among other places.

“If we notice that our assistance is no longer reaching those most in need, if we can no longer operate in a neutral or impartial manner, we have to revise our activities or even decide to stop providing help,” he says.

In March the World Food Programme, the food aid branch of the United Nations, released a report showing that it is very likely that half of the 250 million dollars spent in Somalia has disappeared into the pockets of war lords, which means a serious injection into the war economy. The report is now in the hands of the United Nations Security Council.

According to a 2005 study by the Centre for Civil Society Studies at John Hopkins University in the U.S., the non-profit sector is an enormous economic force and the fifth largest economy in terms of GDP after the U.S., Japan, Germany and Britain.

“About 37,000 aid organisations in the world spending 130 billion dollars makes it an industry,” Polman says.

She welcomes the possibility of humanitarian organisations being tried by the International Criminal Court. “I would applaud at least the possibility of the option because of the role international aid organisations play in wars.”

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Ida Karlsson is a journalist with InterPress Service. This article first appeared on IPS on [www.ipsnews.net](http://www.ipsnews.net).

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