PROSPECTS

Even though there have been several spectacular developments during the last three years (which are being adverted to later which augur well for peace), there still prevails in the world today a sense of fear and isolation justified to a great extent by the trends discernible from events and developments mentioned in the preceding Chapters. Nevertheless, there is that "central peace subsisting at the heart of endless agiation" which sustains mankind even in this all pervasive climate of despair. If a feeling of great discontent with the state of affairs can lead to cynicism it can also lead men of great sensitivity to a programme of action to pull mankind out of the morass into which it has led itself and to put it back on its rails.

The conclusions thrown up by the preceding Chapters which are briefly recapitulated below make it clear that the situation though quite complex and challenging is not altogether hopeless.

The state, the scope and lethality of armaments is now a fact of life and their effect on the security environment of the world is enormous. It is clear that they have achieved a sinister character which threatens the very survival of humankind in a direct explosion and indirectly imposes on mankind demands in all their
economic, social, spiritual, political and cultural activities and on preservation of environment such as could cripple and devastate the planet.

It has been made abundantly clear by events over the last four decades that the security of even the most powerful nations is not guaranteed. In fact the developments have added to the insecurity of all nations irrespective of their geographical location, their cultural or historical backdrop or their strength. It is mankind itself, in fact the entire living world, which is threatened with extinction.

Disarmament is a problem of global dimensions affecting every human being, rather all living species, in more ways than one. Negotiations at bilateral or multilateral levels serve only a limited purpose, quite insignificant when perceived against the enormity of the problems thrown up and no patch work solutions will do which do not take into account the interests of all living beings.

Again related to the question of disarmament and security are a number of other issues like the concepts of unlimited sovereignty, the nation state, the prevailing economic order, the existing negotiating structures, the confused and uncertain picture of a world without arms, and issues related thereto, which pose formidable constraints to the achievement of a peaceful world.
India's stand on disarmament sounds somewhat peculiar, born as it is out of its past traditions and its present day realities. While advocating complete global disarmament, it has to pursue this concept within the parameters of its peculiar geographical, economic, social and cultural environment. The limitations imposed by the hard realities which it faces lead often to the initiation of actions which seem contradictory and can ostensibly, with some justification, lead to the criticism that it is vicariously pacifist and follows double standards. This is a situation which confronts not only India but several other nations at the same time. While advocating disarmament they have to take into account their peculiar problems, internal and external, limitations and constraints of their cultural, social, economic and religious background, their geographical location and host of other factors. As long as the nation states exist, pressures internal and external, national or global will have to be taken into account. Any quest for a just and a peaceful world or a world order which is expected to endure must take cognizance of the immensity of the hurdles involved, and try either to supplant the existing shape of things or to reconcile the conflicts, of some 165 odd states of the world which they face in their individual as well as collective entity. A formidable task indeed which calls not only for long, sustained and painstaking efforts but a revolutionary approach by men gifted with vision and imbued with loyalties transcending the narrow confines of their own states or interests or issues.
The means which need to be employed to establish a just and durable order require careful selection. The goal, however, distant and the path, however, perilous and arduous, means have to be devised and tailored to the needs of the situation. Challenges born of developments, have to be accepted and met. There is not much scope for controversy over the goal and recent trends and developments hopefully indicate also the direction along which progress is possible.

The prospects of achieving such a world of which various models have been discussed earlier would depend indeed on the selection of tools and means and a constructive action plan at various levels. Patience and tolerance and a sympathetic understanding of the others' point of view would have to be the guiding principles of such a quest.

While a redistribution of resources between the rich and the poor is a diffusible proposition, in more ways than one, particularly, having regard to the fact that it was largely through their long domination of a large part of the world and/or through manipulation of tariffs and pursuit of other similar policies that the rich nations came to acquire their riches, which enabled them to grow richer, in practice such a proposition can hardly hold either the prospect of acceptance or the promise of an enduring settlement. What the poor nations need are opportunities, assistance to tackle and solve their problems, the technical know how of the rich
nations and a reorientation by the rich nations of their existing practices and policies which would enable the poor nations to stand on their feet and regain their lost confidence and not alms or dole which in any case cannot be so large or adequate as would enable them to turn the corner. The experience so far has shown that such aid as has indeed been given by the richer countries to the under-developed or developing countries has not been altruistic but based on several other considerations including considerations of quid pro quo. Movements like the Bhoodan and Gramdan in India are distinguishable in the sense that the appeal was to the same people for their own kith and kin and had religious overtones: even so the results achieved were limited.

To believe that one side would give up arms unilaterally and embark wholesale on a course of disarmament while the other does not reciprocate and carries on with its policy of confrontation would also appear to be too simplistic and naive. A beginning nevertheless has to be made. From times immemorial man has pondered over the problems and saints, philosophers and kings have come out with solutions. In the seventh century before Christ, Budha was moved by the miseries of humanity and taught infinite compassion, forbearance and love. In 256 B.C. Asoka embarked on a war against the Kalingas, the great maritime power of the times. Rock Edict XII reveals that it was a most sanguinary battle. Asoka was struck with remorse at the useless carnage
which the campaign involved. In his own words "a hundred thousand people were deported, a hundred thousand killed and many times that number perished".¹ In a truly human document he announced his repentance and his faith that the only true conquest is the conquest of self and set himself out to establish a commonwealth of Dharma in the world. Six centuries later came Christ who preached the Sermon on the Mount and forbade not only murder but also hate. Love for the neighbour was central to this message. There has been no dearth of saints and sevants or of philosophers and kings who have preached and advocated the great truths that universal welfare is the ultimate goal of all human endeavour and what is required is a unifying and pacifying love for all mankind.

It was left to Gandhi to show that the great moral precepts preached by religions were not precepts intended to be practised for individual advancement only but could be practised on a much larger scale for settlement of both national and international problems. Both in South Africa and in India, he demonstrated the efficacy of moral and spiritual truths. He considered all human beings as one family, regardless of differences in sex, colour or race. Any exploitation of man by man, or of a group by another group was contrary to his faith or to the eternal truths which are supposed to guide human conduct. For him there could be no conflict between nation and nation that could not be resolved as in a family,

¹K.M.Panikkar, SURVEY OF INDIAN HISTORY (Bombay, the National Information and Publication Ltd., 1947) pp.38.
without the use of violence. For the application of the principle of non-violence to national and international problems, he worked tirelessly among his own people, preparing them for sacrifice, expecting them to abjure violence in thought, word and deed and to develop the capability to love the other side, even an exploiter, while fighting the wrong in him. He advocated and showed greater consideration for people who differed from him or who belonged to other faiths and nationalities. While claiming that he was a citizen of the world, he did not cease to be a nationalist. Knowing that citizens of a nation have many things in common, he found it convenient to serve the world through serving one's own people. By his spiritual and moral dialectics he synthesised the idea of nationalism with that of internationalism. He went so far as to say that he would sacrifice India, if need be, for the good of the world.

Gandhi's prescription of truth and non-violence for achievement of world peace may sound Utopian but in a world motivated by selfishness, hatred, exploitation and violence, the remedy of non-violence and the means he advocated for applying that remedy are the only beacon light which can dispel the darkness and gloom which envelop mankind. As already stated Gandhi demonstrated the efficacy of non-violence in South Africa and India. Martin Luther King\(^1\) inspired by the same ideals was also able, a few years after Gandhi's death, to lead a mass

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1. Martin Luther King (1929-1968)
An American Negro Leader founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a movement which aimed to achieve civil rights for American Negroes.
movement against racial discrimination and segregation in America: advocating non-violence, appealed to his followers for understanding and love for those who opposed human and civil rights for every one. Both Gandhi and Martin Luther King paid for their principles with their lives. This does not, however, detract from the validity of the precepts and the means advocated by them. They are as valid today, as they were when they were practised, albeit on a limited scale.

But before one can think of applying the Gandhian principles to contemporary international problems, a great deal of preparation is needed; the conditions prevailing in the modern world call for transformation of energies of hatred and violence, competition and strife, distrust and suspicion into moral forces of cooperation and service, sacrifice and love. It is the moral education of modern man, in step with his intellectual attainments and technical achievements which is perhaps the most urgent task facing humanity.

Be that as it may, the nut has to be cracked and a beginning made while violence continues and non-violence remains a distant (but realisable) dream. Switzerland's security policy affords some idea of the principles which can be applied and practised to achieve some semblance of national and international security. The main principle followed is called "dissuasion" which lays a great deal of emphasis on purely defensive measures which do not pose a threat to other countries but are adequate to meet the threat of an attack by the aggressor and thereby dissuade
it from aggression. According to a paper contributed by Dietrich Fischer on "Defence without Threat: Switzerland's Security Policy" an effective defence must serve two purposes. First it must prevent aggression or seek to do so and second, if a country should still be attacked, the defence must seek to protect as much as possible, what it is intended that it should protect i.e. serve people's survival and prepare the way for liberation from the aggressor. It is argued that purely offensive arms threaten the security of a potential opponent but do not contribute to a country's own security, whereas purely defensive arms increase a country's own security without reducing the security of potential opponents. Tanks, Bombers, Landing Boats are cited as examples of predominantly offensive weapons while tank barrages, anti-tank weapons, mine fields, anti-aircraft guns, radar warning systems, bomb shelters, shore batteries and coastal mines are defensive in character. Under plausible assumptions, so runs the argument, the acquisition of offensive arms contributes to mutual fear and therefore an intense arms race while defensive arms help to slow down or stop an arms race. It is claimed that it is possible for a country to make a contribution towards peace without sacrificing its national security by (i) increasing purely defensive arms and non-military defence efforts; (ii) reducing offensive arms that stimulate the arms race, so as not to pose any real or imagined threat to other countries that would make them insecure and thus tempt them to initiate a
pre-emptive first strike; (iii) making the structure of the entire society as invulnerable as possible through decentralised federal forms of organisation, economic self reliance at various levels and creating an equitable social order which is perceived as being worth defending; and (iv) undertaking peace initiatives by offering assistance to other nations when they need it, sharing useful information, strengthening just international law etc. It is claimed that overall Switzerland's security policy has served the country well, that Switzerland's defense preparations do not threaten security of any other country and therefore it is not afraid if other countries follow the same security policy but welcomes that fact. The underlying principles and concepts appear basically to be sound and with suitable modifications and adaptations well worth a trial. It is however, the security of the whole world comprising more than 160 states i.e. genuine security for all and not security for one or a few in a world with nuclear stockpiles, which is at stake.

The catastrophic state of affairs we have landed ourselves into has compelled serious reappraisal of the forces at work and led to new political thinking. In this context the last three years have been quite eventful. Apart from the withdrawal of the Russian forces from Afghanistan and the cessation of hostilities between Iraq and Iran after a devastating eight year war which were events of great importance, there has been a remarkable change in political thinking. It was not long ago when
Nikita Khrushchev, dissatisfied with the actions of the U.N. Secretary General in the Congolese peace operation, demanded that the division of the world into socialist, capitalist and neutral, and non-aligned countries should be organisationally reflected in the structure of the U.N. executive body. This was "troika" and the U.S.S.R. assumed that its political affiliation with the non-aligned countries which were expected to follow the socialist path would doom the rotten capitalist camp and eventually eliminate it. The policy of one upmanship was in evidence. Since then and the days of "shoe diplomacy" there has been a sea change in political evaluations with "troika" being replaced by "Perestroika". The evidence of change came with the change of leadership when the mantle fell on Mikhail Gorbachev. A beginning was made in Geneva and Reykjavik. Later in 1987, the treaty on the "Elimination of Intermediate and Shorter-Range Missiles" was signed and apart from making a dent in the deadly doctrine of nuclear deterrence opened the doors of good will leading to civilized dialogue and personal contacts. A mechanism of cooperation was activated. In December 1988, Mikhail Gorbachev declared from the U.N. rostrum that the Soviet Army is to be reduced by 500,000 men and the Soviet armaments deployed in the European part of the U.S.S.R. and on the territory of the Warsaw Treaty allies by 10,000 tanks, 8500 artillery systems and 800 war planes: also that Soviet troops stationed in GDR, Czechoslovakia and Hungary will be reduced by 50,000 men and 5000 tanks. These declarations came as a sensation.
There has also been a spate of unilateral declarations thereafter. In January 1989, Gorbachev announced that the country's defence budget would be slashed by 14.2 per cent and the armament and military hardware production by 19.5 per cent. In May, during a visit to China, he promised substantial troop withdrawals in Asia, urging the nations of the region to forge a collective security net work. The promise was carried out by actual withdrawal of a large number of troops from the Sino-Soviet border. This was followed by a stream of proposals regarding armaments in Europe including short range nuclear weapons. Again it was Mikhail Gorbachev, who has cried a halt to the game of bluff by accepting the "Zero Option" i.e. the withdrawal of intermediate missiles from both sides of the ideological divide in Europe as proposed by Reagan in 1981. Whether these unilateral declarations are indeed a reflection of a change of perceptions and represent a sincere attempt to usher in an era of peace or are the result of domestic compulsions and a devious attempt at gaining political mileage is beside the point. It is significant that a beginning has been made, and it is far more significant that the initiatives which were taken captivated public opinion the world over and created a situation in which the other super power and its NATO allies were compelled to sit up, take notice and come up with matching proposals at the Summit in Brussels on May 29, 1989, when President Bush unveiled its package providing for a 20 per cent cut in U.S. combat forces in Europe, new ceiling on tanks, armoured troop carriers and artillery for NATO and the Warsaw Pact with any equipment which is withdrawn being
destroyed, and a reduction in attack and transport helicopters and land based combat air crafts. The initiatives are well conceived and having gathered momentum augur well for the future. Given continued good will, sincerity and readiness not only to negotiate but to give and take, wisdom and statesmanship on the part of our leaders coupled with boldness and the requisite build up of public opinion, humanity may yet save itself from the impending doom. The path is long and perilous, beset with difficulties and obstacles seemingly insurmountable, but man with his genius and his capacity to think is capable of reversing the tide and changing the shape of things to come. In the words of S. Radhakrishnan, \[1\]

We have to protect humanity against war. Peace is not the absence of war. It is the presence of fellow feelings and of respect for man as man regardless of his race or nation, class or creed. It is the disarmament of minds that is called for. The future is not all bleak. An old Arab proverb says," Do not grieve that rose trees have thorns, rather rejoice that thorny bushes bear roses."