Paleri's musings: India Integrated—the 75th Independence Day

By Dr Prabhakaran Paleri

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On India's 75th Independence Day one gets to reminisce about the life gone by thinking about a nation that in many aspects is a world by itself. India remained integrated as a unified human system retaining the independence of all its constituent subsystems. The inherent power of India today is visible in its stasis as the longest surviving human continuum in the world never succumbing to the forces of mutative transformations and interruptions as in the case of many geoentities past and present. This is in spite of holding the world's largest demographic count; well almost. There were efforts by extreme divisible forces to break balkanise and transform India under nefarious designs and toxic intentions all the time in its continuum narration. India never succumbed to these forces despite the violence, agony, humiliation and pain it had undergone. One of the reasons was the determination and consistency shown by its people and their leaders throughout its continuum passage. History is replete with stories of human sacrifices to keep India integrated and continuous. The last of the serious attempt was by the colonisers especially during the British period.

It was amazing how the leaders of India kept the 565 princely states of India cohesively bound during the freedom movement keeping them independent. India was in two sections—the provinces directly administered by the British and princely states ruled by the natives under treaty relations with the British. It was a clever arrangement by the British.

India faced serious obstacles in its passage to independence from people who were politically vile and toxic. They included Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Lord Wavell and the then British Prime Minister Winston Churchill who had just won the war pushing the country on to the verge of bankruptcy making the victory almost pyrrhic. All of them were powerful and influential. Their plan was to create a third dominion along with India and Pakistan using a few powerful and colluding princes. That would have been disastrous for continuum India. There were 565 princely states that the vile team wanted in the third dominion retaining British Paramountcy. It was not to happen as they faced opposition from Indian leaders. The Purna Swaraj declaration during the 1929 Lahore session of the Indian National Congress had already declared and promulgated 26 January 1930 as Independence Day of India. The session called upon the people to continue the demand for complete independence. Gandhi emphasized activities on social empowerment, cohesive interactions between different sects of people, prohibition work and other social positives during the period.

The War had economically weakened the British Empire. It also impacted their colonial holding power besides the strong resistance and demand from India for complete independence. The British government decided to grant independence to India latest by June 1948. The new viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, advanced the date subsequently after various negotiations to 15 August 1947. He also heeded to the mounting demands of the Muslim League to partition India a day before.

The Indian Independence Act 1947 of the Parliament of the United Kingdom partitioned British India into two independent dominions of India and Pakistan with complete legislative authority upon the respective constituent assemblies of the new countries.

On the first day of Independence on 15 August 1947, dawn at the stroke of midnight, India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru delivered his historic "Tryst with Destiny" speech transcending India's continuum legacy projecting its unwavering determination to continue progressively into the future carrying generations of Indians to their destiny. Nehru called upon the people of India to redeem their pledge of dedication to the service of India and the people very substantially in the larger cause of humanity.

The partition saw the world's largest-ever exodus of people across borders and the agony associated with it. It was far too serious for any government to handle. There was massive bloodshed. It was perhaps the most shameful period in human history. About a million people died in inhuman violence. Hate ruled the period. Gandhi marked the day of Independence with a 24-hour fast in Calcutta. He didn't participate in celebrations. He asked for peace among the people of India.

India, though wounded badly, moved on along the continuum path. The state of Jammu and Kashmir was initially hesitant to accede to India in a turbulent affair on 26 October 1947 under the provision of the Indian independence Act 1947. The issues did not settle down still as articles 370 and 35-A stoked issues of separation among people. 71 years after independence, on 5 August 2019, the government made these articles constitutionally inoperable. The state was bifurcated into two union territories—Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. It was a watershed decision and moment for India to remain one and integrated and prolongs its journey along the continuum path.

India today is a responsible nation that the world recognises for global sustainability. It is an indispensable geostrategic entity in the new century. India likes to work with all for everybody's benefit under their confidence. Deception and division are not in its geostrategic theme. But it will have many tests to withstand as times pass by. It is in its destiny.

Is Pegasus fear Real?

By Dr Dr. Padmalochan Dash

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Pegasus project now found to be scandalous narratives promoted by a ring of media and non-state entities. The revelation of the Pegasus project is now found to be part of that larger agenda, which precisely aims to alter the now-dominating nationalistic narratives upside-down. Newer facts point to a worldwide conspiracy behind the Pegasus project revelation. Things are now emerging that there are certain billionaires like the Open Society Foundations (OSF) who provide the active stimulus in shaping such narratives across spheres. A deeper examination into the Pegasus project raises stern questions on the legitimacy of the revealed Pegasus plot; rather, it is unearthing the connections of the organisations like OSF unremitting.

The OSF connection:

OSF is that organisation, which does not accept the legitimacy of Israel. Further, it is the same, which funds the organisations in Palestine that have been designated as terrorist organisations by Canada, US, EU, and Israel. In India also, the OSF footprint is remarkable with abysmal objectives. Things are emerging in the media report tell the fact that OSF has already floated its billion-dollar plan with profound anti-nationalistic programs. In its outline, last year, OSF declared to carry forward its institutionalised project, which would directly stimulate students' resistance movement against growing nationalism in India. Soros, who is in control of the OSF, by his statement is against a "Hindu nationalist state".

OSF-Amnesty link:

The revelation of the fact that two global entities viz. 'Amnesty International' and 'Forbidden Stories', which are very much in the forefront of the Pegasus project, are beneficiaries of grants from the OSF. The Media Research Centre of the US reveals the fact that media organisations with links to Soros were part of the Pegasus project. It is also revealing that Sherpa, a French NGO, which continues its petition on the Indo-France Rafale deal, is also a recipient of indirect funds from OSF.

"Why Pegasus was on the radar of Amnesty International" is a billion-dollar question that the people in the national security establishment must ask themselves. Now researchers are of the legit view that, when the Pegasus-like Spywares are developed with the finest forensic tools and used in wild, it was hardly possible by the outsider to even smell its presence in a potential device. One-way detection of potential device infection, therefore, does not stand to the logic. Unless Amnesty has the same clients or it is in the same business, it was hardly possible for Amnesty of getting so much information about the play of Pegasus tools.

Invasive tools:

In the larger public domain, there are a lot of digital snooping tools in play. Snooping tools, by random use, are generally employed in three stages with certain purposes. First, it is sneaked randomly into public devices as a mere exercise of data collection to understand the trends in the public mind in a target country. At the second stage, to faster the intended snooping, better tools are sneaked into selected targets, which play their tricks of influencing the hearts and minds with a designed method of cyber manipulation and imposed narrative deliverance. And at the third level, there are shroud snooping tools, which are then installed into the potential opponents to keep eyes and ears on their activities, with an objective either to control or perish their choice. This is the great game of snooping, which goes in circulars incessantly, and most of the security establishments as well as the private interest groups now subscribing to the same practice.

The Legitimate Concerns:

Globally, the thing of spyware is a multi-million market, with numbers of entities in the sprint. And, in an ICT-driven cyber-world disorder, they must not be working within the national boundary limits. There are all sorts of cyber tools available in the open global market for both the governments and the non-state parties to subscribe for purposes. Therefore, in a world of anarchical cyber world disorder, all are subject to random malicious cyber snooping and attacks. When the cyberworld is increasingly getting dominated by non-state interest groups, there must be certain legal constraints put in place to pursue accountability and to regulate the vastly challenging surveillance culture. There is a need for normative as well as a legal framework to deal with the emerging challenges to be imposed upon the non-state entities that use snooping as their potent weapon. There is least doubt that India requires a solid domestic legal framework that must transform beyond sovereign limits, making all parties subject to legal process and counter-snooping sanctions.

Responsibility of the Opposition:

The parliament of India was expected to debate on the regulation of the cyber-intelligence industry in length. However, the onus was upon the opposition parties, rather than playing opportunism and hurling the parliament proceedings, to push for such a serious debate. It was expected that each aspect of the surveillance controversy in question including the development, use, sale, transfer, and accusation of snooping tools must have been debated in a stretch in the parliament. So far the Pegasus project is concerned, the alarm raised by the opposition followed by the government's deniability; both can neither be validated nor rejected. While, the possibility of snooping through malware remaining ever probable, opposition to the Pegasus project should not be downplayed. Though the opposition's concern remained genuine, the problem was that their narratives were dominated by the very interest groups like Amnesty, putting the real intent of the opposition in question.

THE WORLD NEEDS ANSWER FOR THE COVID19 PANDEMIC AND MUST HOLD CHINA ACCOUNTABLE FOR ITS ACTION

By Bharati Choudhary

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On 11 March 2020 WHO carried out virtual press conference and confirmed our fears, covid19 declare as the pandemic with such a wide reach and explosive magnitude, the world break itself for the impact. Lockdown were imposed and economy was brought to growing hard and travels were shutdown. WHO issued its first Disease Outbreak News report. This is a public, web-based platform for the publication of technical information addressed to the scientific and public health communities, as well as global media. The covid-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presents an unprecedented challenge to public health, food system and world of work. The pandemic has been affecting the entire food system and has laid to the border closer, trade restriction. The pandemic has decimated jobs and placed millions of livelihoods at risk. Migrant agriculture workers are particularly vulnerable, because they face risks in their transport, working and living conditions and struggle to access support measures put in place by government.

The covid19 pandemic is wreaking havoc across the global and so far, around 150 million people have been infected and about to reach 3.2 million people have died from it with it globally, in India alone the number of people who died from this pandemic is about to reach 2.5 lakh. But in China, from which the virus spread over the world, everything has become normal. In Wuhan city,

the epic centre of the virus, people are now living without mask and social distancing in this situation, the question in everyone's mind is, what did China do that the coronavirus is now in control there? This question also arises in China because it never co-operated with the WHO to investigate it. Once a Chinese scientist also wrote that if the virus was used as a weapon, then it would spread in the whole world so that it would very difficult to control it. Chinese scientists refused to share raw data that might bring the world closer to understanding the origins of the corona virus pandemic, independent investigators for the World Health Organization in February.The Chinese scientist has thought this 2015, and sees it happening in the world now. China understood that if it wants to compete with other countries, then it will have to develop the virus as a weapon because no country in the world has technology to fight with virus. If it is right and this virus is not spread among human from its lab, then why China is afraid of investigation? This is a big question. If the research paper work by newspaper of Australia is completely correct done, it would not be wrong to say that 3.2 million people who died by coronavirus were murdered and China is responsible for the massacre.

Before the second wave of covid-19 India was sending vaccine to many countries. And this is the strengthened the image of India on the international stage. But as soon as India is in the entering in the second wave of the covid-19 China took it as an opportunity and now it takes advantage of it to brightened its image by helping neighbour countries by sending medical help. By doing so China thinks that the world will forget about the pandemic which is started from China itself.

We must hold China accountable to establish deterrence. This is not the last pathogen that will be generated on Chinese soil and we cannot slow it to think that they can spread the next disease with similar impunity. China has been criticised widely across the world for its alleged role in the spread of the novel corona virus that has infected over 116 million people across the world. More than 2.5 million people have lost their lives to the virus.

So even if we do not care about justice or compensation, we have to impose severe cost on China so its leaders will not do this again.

India-ASEAN : An Opportunity To Recalibrate In The Purview Of Cybersecurity

By Shubhangi Jain & Gautami Nair

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With the evolution in warfare strategies in the age of digitisation and the coming together of network technologies in every domain, the threat of cyberwarfare has become greater than before. This change has been actively recognised and captured by China who since the 1990s had started working on developing its technologies. The Chinese military's aim was developed as 'winning local wars under conditions of informationization' by 2004. Within a decade it addressed cybersecurity for the first time in an official military document entitled 'China's Military Strategy. In 2015, a service branch called the SSP (Strategic Support Force) was established to secure electromagnetic space and cyberspace.

The following year, CCP labelled cyberspace the 'new frontier of the modern state'. Lyu Jinghua writes it defined cyberspace as a "new pillar of economic and social development, and a new domain of national security," and declared clearly that "China is confronted with grave security threats to its cyber infrastructure" as "international strategic competition in cyberspace has been turning increasingly fiercer; quite a few countries are developing their cyber military forces."

Based on experiences from the previous centuries wherein Britain and the US asserted themselves in various seas undermining China's sovereignty, the PRC is more than ever determined to protect it now which explains the great firewall it boasts.

It believes cyber sovereignty to be essential to achieve the 'Chinese Dream'. Then employing a similar strategy as theirs, it is exceeding into the sovereignty of others- namely through cyber espionage. The US-China conflict in the South China Sea is one such notion of China's claim to sovereignty.

Cyber Warfare on the shores of the South China Sea

For China, the use of cyber espionage is a reflection of a strategic currency it employs to title diplomatic decisions in its favour. Given the intensity of conflicts in the South China Sea, the neighbouring countries have been extremely vulnerable to state-sponsored cyberattacks on the government departments. At the regional level, ASEAN is on track to becoming one of the world's top five digital economies by 2025. In 2011, McAfee researchers reported that a campaign with links to China attacked Asian governments, including the ASEAN Secretariat as well. China has been running at least six different cyberespionage campaigns in the Southeast Asian region since 2013. These campaigns are capable of stealing data from highly secure air-gapped networks. Indonesia, Myanmar, Taiwan and Vietnam are reportedly the main targets of these operations. Following the standoff at the Scarborough Shoal between the Philippines and China in 2012, a major Chinese cyber campaign was launched against the government and military networks using an AI-Powered surveillance system. Furthermore, in 2014 Vietnam became the 'most targeted country in cyberspace' following Chinese threats.

Even then the response to China is fragmented across ASEAN countries, with Vietnam and Singapore promoting active hedging. Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and the Philippines are involved in hesitant hedging. Finally, Cambodia, Laos and Brunei are on the bandwagon. With Brunei chairing the association this year and Cambodia the following year, the coming together of ASEAN to strongly respond to China is bleak. The options for the ASEAN are limited as the status quo helps China to assert its claims and change the geographical features to support its claims. What is essential for ASEAN is to look out in the neighbourhood and identify a strategic ally to counter the massive amount of technological threats from China. One such potential ally is India.

India in the battleground

India as its immediate neighbour is also not immune to cyber-attacks which could be mostly traced back to the Chinese government. In 2008 many computers of the government offices, security institutions, Dalai Lama's office all were attacked and which is infamously termed as Ghostnet. It is believed to be the largest and a high profile security breach in India. Currently, amidst the recent clash between India and China, there was an alleged Chinese government-linked company's attempt to monitor the digital footprint of Indian citizens. In November 2020, the government was bewildered by a malware threat in segments of its power infrastructure. Red Echo used malware called ShadowPad, which involves the use of a backdoor to access servers.

Although private companies like Zhenhua Data Information Technology Co. are involved in cyber attacks, experts have the opinion that these companies are incentivised and backed by officials as information that is usually extracted is beyond the usage of private entities. It could also be an attempt to test and lay the grounds for further operations in the future. An assertion could be made that these offensive operations are carried out to distract people from other places that they might be targeting or other activities that might be occurring.

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Nation is Indebted to:

Dr Sarada Menon
India's first female psychiatrist

Dr M Sarada Menon, a Padma Bhushan awardee, has worked tirelessly to end the stigma that still looms strong on the topic of mental illnesses

Mambalikalathil Sarada Menon is an Indian psychiatrist, social worker and the founder of Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF), a Chennai-based non-governmental organization working for the rehabilitation of people afflicted with Schizophrenia and other mental disorders. An Avvaiyyar Award recipient, she is a former Madras Medical Service officer and the first woman psychiatrist in India. The Government of India awarded her the third highest civilian honour of the Padma Bhushan, in 1992, for her contributions to society.

Sarada Menon was born in a Malayali family on 5 April 1923 as the youngest of eight children of her parents in Mangalore Her father was a judge and when he was transferred to Chennai, young Sarada moved with him for her early schooling at Good Shepherd School and later at Christ Church Anglo-Indian Higher Secondary School after which she graduated from Women's Christian College. Graduating in medicine from Madras Medical College in 1951, she studied for the post-graduate degree of MD which she obtained in 1957. Subsequently, she successfully completed the Diploma in Psychiatric Medicine, a two-year course in psychiatry, at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), thus becoming the first woman psychiatrist in India.

Menon joined the Institute of Mental Health (then known as Government Mental Hospital) in Kilpauk in 1959 and superannuated from the institution in 1978. She became its first woman Superintendent in 1961. It was during her tenure, the institution started the department of psychiatry, opened an out-patient facility and established regional psychiatric centres at all the district hospitals in the state. Her efforts have also been reported behind initiating participation of social organizations in the rehabilitation of mentally ill patients. AASHA, a community-based organization assisting the families of mentally-ill people based in Chennai, is one such organization. On the personal front, she converted one of the rooms in her residence into a shelter.

In 1984, she gathered a few like-minded people and founded Schizophrenia Research Foundation (SCARF), a non-profit non governmental organization, for the rehabilitation of people afflicted with schizophrenia and other mental diseases. Over the years, SCARF has developed into a full-fledged research base and is one of the few Indian institutions recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a Collaborating Center for Mental Health Research and Training.

The Government of India awarded her the Padma Bhushan in 1992. In addition to this she is recipient of many prestigious awards in India as well as from other countries, recognising her contribution for mental health.

In one of the interviews, she tells that when she opted to do MD in Psychiatry, comments were "A female psychiatrist?" People would have frowned back then. Gynecology and Pediatrics were the sections 'allotted' to a female doctor. That was the time when Dr Menon saw the condition of patients in the asylums, which came to her as an absolute shocker. "There was no treatment for mental illness. The condition of the patients was deplorable. They wouldn't eat or listen to others. And there were no drugs," she recalls, painfully. That was when she found her true calling in helping the mentally ill. Soon, she found herself attending a specialisation in Psychiatry at the All-India Institute of Mental Health (now called NIMHANS) at Bengaluru.

Dr Menon is obviously happy about the increase in awareness and the fact that more people are seeking help for their troubles. "Five decades ago, people would invite me for weddings, but they wouldn't want me to attend those. They wouldn't wish to publicly accept that they know a psychiatrist. But that isn't the case now," she says.

Even now, though she is 98 years old, she provides consultation and treatment from her home clinic for any needy person. Great lady.