



Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished. —Lao Tzu



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Obama's zeal for deals

President Barack Obama needs economic gains to get back his mojo. The battle to create American jobs is now at the heart of his 2012 re-election strategy and will twist aspects of his foreign policy. But someone should have shared James Carville's famous admonition: "It's the economy, stupid!" with longtime India hand Anish Goel who has been ousted from the White House for trying to go beyond short-term business deals to embedding an over-arching geopolitical strategic relationship with India.

Goel, a brilliant missile scientist with a PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was a science and economics officer at Foggy Bottom (US state department) before moving to the National Security Council (NSC). He was promoted as senior director for South Asia in the NSC and manned the India desk. Goel's exit, after a power struggle, threatens to throw the gears of foreign policy into reverse. Goel was one of the few remnants in this administration from the team that worked

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how New Delhi must be seen as a geopolitical strategic partner for Washington instead of a never-ending purveyor of Boeing and Lockheed defense deals. He didn't nickel-and-dime the relationship," harrumphed a former US South Asia hand.

At Goel's prodding, intelligence and law enforcement cooperation broadened, gathering momentum after the November 2008 Mumbai attacks. Goel's exit puts Obama's Harvard Law School buddy Michael Froman, deputy national security adviser for international economic affairs, in charge of framing Obama's India policy blueprint. In contrast to the cerebral Goel, Froman who is a former Citigroup managing director has a more one-dimensional commercial view of the relationship.

On cue, Obama took a triumphant tour this week of Schenectady, the birthplace of General Electric with job creation czar, GE's CEO Jeffrey Immelt. He crowed that the White House had helped broker a slew of deals in India, billions of dollars of contracts for companies like GE and Boeing. Obama said, "This plant is what that trip (to India) was all about. That new business, that power-turbine sale halfway around the world is going to help support more than 1,200 manufacturing jobs and 400 engineering jobs right here."

During Obama's visit to India the two countries committed to a total of \$15 billion in deals. Flush with deal-making success, Obama is now sending his salesman-in-chief to India next week. Commerce secretary Gary Locke will be in Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore from February 6-11 with 24 American companies to try and score new deals in defense, aviation and civil nuclear trade.

TEARS OF JOY

Women labourers work in an onion field in Pimpalgaon, about 215km north of Mumbai on January 23. The price of onions, which is an important staple, particularly in north Indian diet, had soared, causing hardships to the people and concern in the central and state governments. A series of government measures and a bountiful January harvest have now resulted in a glut that has brought down prices. While consumers are happy with the prices coming down, farmers are warning a further drop in prices will hurt them badly.



FREEZE FRAME

Learning to live with leopards

These big cats stray into human areas not because they lack prey in the forests but due to the abundance of easy pickings



ANIMAL FARM

JANAKI LENIN
The writer is a commentator on environmental issues

It seems like open season on leopards. Over the last two months, leopards accused of attacking people in Haryana, Maharashtra and Orissa, have been killed by hysteric mobs. On December 18, a leopard attacked three farmers in a village near Gurgaon, Haryana. Panicky villagers hammered it with iron rods and lathis, and later, one of them shot it dead.

On January 9, in Karad, Maharashtra, a leopard was spotted atop a house. When a crowd of people gathered, the cat snuck into an empty building. Instead of trapping it inside, the mob stoned it. The angered cat charged out and in the ensuing melee, six people were injured. The leopard collided with a man, and was shot by a police official. A few days later, on January 13, a leopard was spotted in a forest plantation, about 5km from Bhubaneswar. Before the forest officials could arrive, a mob beat it to death, reportedly instigated by a local television reporter who wanted dramatic visuals.

Conservationists have urged the National Board for Wildlife, National Tiger Conservation Authority, and the Ministry of Envi-

ronment and Forests to act against the people involved. In virtually all the cases reported by the press, the leopards were provoked to attack; left alone, they would have quietly skulked away.

One way of preventing an excitable mob from harassing a cornered animal is to impose curfew until the animal is safely out of the way. The other is for the police and forest departments to work in tandem. The former controls the crowd while the latter either traps or tranquilises the animal.

It is often surmised that leopards "stray" into villages and towns because infrastructure projects such as dams and mines deprive them of home and prey. Some activists have called for the restoration of connectivity between forest fragments and a stop to further forest loss. These are inherently sound conservation goals, but we also need to know what causes such man-animal encounters?

Leopard researcher Vidya Athreya carried out research in the agricultural fields of Junnar, near Pune, and Akola district in eastern Maharashtra and has some lessons in ending the man-animal conflicts. The foremost learning is that

it is not the absence of prey inside the forests, but the abundance of prey in the towns that encourages leopards (and wolves and hyenas) to live alongside humans. It is futile to manage leopards without first cleaning up the garbage and there-

One way of preventing an excitable mob from harassing a cornered animal is to impose curfew until the animal is safely out of the way

by controlling the numbers of stray dogs and pigs who live off the garbage. Moreover, livestock must be secured in paddocks for the night, which the Akola people now do and hence there are no conflicts.

Elsewhere, when leopards are spotted in the fields, the forest department hauls the animals away to a forest. But this has been found to pose a threat to human life. In Junnar, in the early 2000s, when leopards that had not hurt anyone were pre-emptively captured and relocated, they began attacking

people. Why such a seemingly benign action provokes the animal into attacking remains unknown. Despite this evidence, relocating leopards remains the tool of choice.

As juvenile leopards reach adulthood, these highly territorial animals need to find new land to claim as their own. It is only natural that they explore agricultural areas adjoining forests, where there is food and shelter. If left unmolested, they may settle down to live with humans without causing a problem.

The irrigation projects of the mid-1980s changed cropping patterns in this part of Maharashtra: tall, dense sugarcane stands began to dominate the landscape. This is also the time when the locals say that leopards began to live amongst them. Yet, over the last 20 years, the people suffered little anxiety. Astonishingly, leopards are even hunting in Akola town because of the concentration of stray dogs and feral pigs. Studying situations such as this, we've learnt that leopards are quite at home in the absence of forest and wild prey. Further insights into the lives and needs of these cats that live with humans will enable better management of leopard-man conflict in the future.



'All regions will be important at the same time'

The world is fixated with the rivalry between the two top Western and Eastern powers. America is still calling the shots in economics and politics, but we know how the story ends: the Chinese, or rather East wins, the West loses. Wrong. "The world we are moving into in 2011 is one not just with many more prominent nations, but one with numerous centres of power. It is, in short, a neo-medieval world," says Parag Khanna of the New America Foundation in his new book How to Run the World which turns on its head much of the assumed reality of 21st Century power. A foreign policy advisor for Barack Obama's presidential campaign, Khanna says life is now a retreat to medievalism. In the Middle Ages, corporations in Bruges and Venice competed for resources and wealth. Khanna extends the neo-medieval metaphor to suggest that today we see a blurring of boundaries: family businesses like India's Reliance are asserting themselves as the backbone of the world economy and Persian Gulf royalty control global investments. Khanna talked to Uttara Choudhury about how globalisation is diffusing power from the West, from states, to companies, religious groups, to billionaire philanthropists like Bill Gates, George Soros and celebrity do-gooders like Bono and Angelina Jolie.

Your book is blunt about saying the 'American century' is over. What is our new reality?
Instead of a world of just great and lesser powers, the emerging landscape looks a lot like the Middle Ages a millennium ago. That was the last time in history when, like today, both East and West were powerful at

the same time. The Song dynasty in China invented paper money (of which they have plenty today!), the Chola empire in south India ruled the seas from East Africa to Indonesia, the Arab-Islamic community was at its peak as the Abbasid caliphate stretched from Andalusia in Spain to Central Asia, while the Holy Roman Empire marked an unstable period in Europe. But rather than talk about the East replacing the West, the Pacific displacing the Atlantic, or China subverting America, I believe the world will be complex, multi-polar, and multicivilisational — all regions will be important at the same time.

You point out that Westerners have complacently forgotten one of the eternal axioms of world affairs: one who has the money makes the rules. China is challenging the role of the US dollar by calling for a neutral currency. Do you think this will come to pass?
We are clearly in an up-for-grabs era of economic management, one in which mixed models compete to pull their countries ahead. The response to the financial crisis looked more Chinese and European than American. Beijing controls its currency value to keep exports cheap, maintains strong oversight of the financial sector and selectively curbs imports to maintain high employment. Even George Soros has remarked that he is impressed by the 'Beijing Consensus'.

But the growing importance of China's currency doesn't need to lead to currency competition, but rather can be an impetus to create a neutral currency basket based on the Yuan, Dollar, Euro and Yen.

INTERVIEW: Parag Khanna



Indian leaders need to fulfill decades-old pledges to win over Kashmir the way China has increasingly done with Taiwan

I think this is an important cause to pursue global financial stability.

Your book argues that India needs to shift its approach to Kashmir the way

China has won over Taiwan — by buying its loyalty.
The Manmohan Singh government came to power a half-decade ago promising over \$5 billion in rehabilitation spending for Kashmir — at the time, it seemed as though the situation would turn a corner in terms of stability. But today the situation has again fallen into a fragile and dangerous state. Indian leaders need to fulfill decades-old pledges to win over Kashmir the way China has increasingly done with Taiwan. This would be more feasible if India and Pakistan declared the

so-called Line of Control the official border before pursuing goodwill missions across it. Opening official borders in the long term means more than unofficial ones in the short term.

Do you think what the colour line was to the 20th century, the faith line might be to the 21st century?
It's true that loyalties are strengthening beyond money, power and kinship, and toward faith. Islam is spreading today, its appeal equally political and social in Egypt and Lebanon, where the Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah are political parties and welfare providers. Christianity, too, is rerooting itself in Africa, Latin America, and even China, while millions of Americans are joining evangelical mega-churches. But I don't believe there will be one fault line, either political or religious. Instead, there are many identities flourishing such as the cause-driven or generational. Faith will certainly be important, which is why I include it in the set of actors that needs to be part of future mega-diplomacy.

You have said there is little in Obama's vision for the coming years, as reflected in the Afghanistan-Pakistan strategic review, to indicate anything beyond America muddling through. What should America do to stay relevant in the world?
America can lead again if it focuses on helping others help themselves. This is what America's post-World War II strategies achieved in Europe and Japan, ultimately making them self-sufficient powers and to this day America's only genuine allies in the world. The same can now hap-

LETTERS to the editor

Latent patriotism

The government as well as BJP leaders deserve praise for not letting the issue of hoisting the national flag at Lal Chowk in Srinagar lead to an ugly confrontation and endanger the security situation. The question, however, remains as to why the BJP leaders did not think of hoisting the flag all these years. One does not expect the separatists to be either reasonable or responsible, but we do want our elected representatives to behave in a sober and sane manner.
—SS Nair, via email

The TV footage of overzealous security forces snatching the national flag from youths who were trying to hoist at Srinagar's Lal Chowk on Republic Day implies that Kashmir is not an integral part of the country. Sensing the mood of the people, the state government should have converted the flag hoisting ceremony into an all-party function. The media even concluded that the "Triranga Yatra had failed", and they saw this as an embarrassment to the BJP. They failed to realise that they were celebrating the failure of the spirit of India, not merely the failure of a BJP programme.
—Krishna Kumar, via email



Serve the deserving

The murder of additional district collector Yashwant Sonawane by the petrol mafia in Malegaon on the eve of Republic Day is, to say the least, outrageous ("Yashwant Sonawane murder: Crack down on oil mafia; over 180 in police net", DNA, January 27). The state government and the ministers can only pay homage and promise speedy justice by bringing the perpetrators of this heinous crime to book. Most probably, the accused will get immediate bail and be let off the hook for many reasons. But life will never be the same again for members of Sonawane's family. They will have to wait endlessly for justice, for pensionary benefits and any other compensation that is due to them. Will CM Prithviraj Chavan see to it that apart from expediting payments to the family, he offers free education for his children and a job for the widow.
—Yash P Verma, via email

Trouble for Jagan

It appears that YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, former Congress MP and son of late CM Rajasekhara Reddy, is in deep trouble. Everybody knows it will be difficult for him to escape unscathed from the many cases that the state government has filed against him. There is also need for Congress to pinpoint wrongdoing during the years when the late Rajasekhara Reddy was at the helm. The Congress party and prime minister owe us an apology for ignoring the wrongs done then.
—KRP Gupta, via email

The editor welcomes your views and feedback: inb@dnaindia.net