

Nepal Abroad

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Stable Housing Seen as Key to Recovery

By Mil Arcega, Washington August 7, 2009 VOA

Economists agree the worst recession in decades was the result of the housing crisis. Using that logic, many believe the end of the housing crisis could also signal the start of an economic recovery.

With the housing market starting to show signs of life, can the recovery be too far behind? According to some economists, the answer to that question, is yes and no.

In yet another encouraging sign for the struggling U.S. housing market, sales of previously owned homes rose 3.6 percent in June - better than analysts expected. The report from the National Realtors Association marks the fifth straight month of higher sales and coincides with other positive trends in residential real estate.

Mark Zandi, the chief economist at Moody's Economy.com

says a healthy housing market is one of the leading indicators for an economic recovery. "I think it's a necessary condition. I don't think the financial system stabilizes nor does the economy gain traction unless the housing downturn comes to an end. And I think it is coming to an end," he said.

But a rebound in sales is just part of a larger equation. Although attractive mortgage rates and tax incentives for first time homebuyers have helped kick start sales, Zandi says U.S. house prices are still falling.

That means many homeowners are making monthly payments on homes that are worth less than the value of their loans.

"And this does highlight what I consider to be the most significant threat to the economy at

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Obama Welcomes Dip In US Unemployment

By Kent Klein, Washington 07 August 2009

President Obama says his administration has rescued the U.S. economy from catastrophe. "Today, we are pointed in the right direction. We are losing jobs at less than half the rate we were when I took office," he said.

U.S. stocks soared on Friday on news from the Labor Department that fewer jobs are being lost than earlier in the recession.

U.S. employers cut 247,000 positions in July, the smallest reduction of any month this year. The unemployment rate dipped from 9.5 percent in June to 9.4 percent in July. White House officials call it the least bad report in a year, but they say the president expects unemployment to top 10 percent in the coming months.

Global economist Jay Bryson, with Wells Fargo Securities

in Charlotte, North Carolina, agrees with the administration that a full recovery, including widespread job creation, is still far away. "The massive job losses that we saw earlier this year are starting to come to an end, but I do not think we are looking for positive employment growth any time soon, probably well into next year," he said.

While the White House says the \$787 billion Recovery Act, passed in February, has stabilized the economy, Bryson says the initiative has done little to stimulate it. "Tax cuts that were put into effect earlier this year have stabilized consumer spending, and that certainly has helped, but a lot of the bigger-ticket infrastructure projects have not really gotten underway yet," he said.

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Maoists Trying To Impose Communism: Gachchhadar

Biratnagar, Aug. 8 :Deputy Prime Minister Bijaya Kumar Gachchhadar on Saturday claimed that the leadership of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (UCPN-M) was trying to impose a communist rule in the country

Alluding to the communist system as practiced in China, the DPM said the Maoist agitation that undermined the achievements of people's movement was an attempt to impose a "system practiced to the north of Mount Everest".

Gachchhadar, who is also the chairman of newly established Madheshi Janadhikar Forum-Loktantrik (MJF-L), said the country had already been declared a Federal Republic and noted he did not understand what kind of rule the Maoists were looking for.

"The time has come to understand what kind of governance Maoist Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal wants to introduce. Whether it like the one adopted by the north-

ern neighbour China or India or maybe some other distant neighbors?"

He said the Maoists, though they promised to abide by democratic norms in the 12-point agreement, have not shown their commitment to democracy in practice.

Gachchhadar added that the liberal nature of two other big parties—the CPN-UML and the Nepali Congress-- had prompted the Maoists to pose themselves against the republic.

"Maoists should first look at themselves before charging that the government is unconstitutional and was formed on the basis of foreign efforts," he said.

Stating that Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal's claim to topple the government within 45 days had proved false, he said that Maoists alone could not do anything.

Maoist raised issues--- civilian supremacy and the President's role in reinstating the 'sacked' army chief --- were not on behalf of the nation, he said. (TRN)

PM's Efforts On Compromise Fails As Maoists Stick To Guns

President move figures in Nepal-Prachanda meet

Kathmandu, Aug. 8: Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal's efforts to resume the regular business of the Legislature Parliament on Saturday remained fruitless too because of uncompromising Maoist stance on president's move.

With an aim to seek a way-out to resume the House business, PM Nepal had called top brasses of the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M) including its party chairman Prachanda before the latter left for United Kingdom at PM's private residence in Koteshwor.

But the meeting failed to find a solution to end the House impasse outlining a proper way-out over the issues of president's move, civilian supremacy and some other demands raised by the Maoists.

Narayan Kaji Shrestha 'Prakash', deputy leader, UCPN-M, said to find a way-out, the Maoist leaders had suggested PM Nepal to allow

parliamentary debate on the President's move to reinstate the army chief removed by erstwhile Prachanda-led government.

PM Nepal, however, reiterated his position that the issue could not enter the House, saying it was untimely and that there was need for a new consensus among the parties.

"The PM was positive to form a separate taskforce for sorting out the differences among the parties after consultation with other coalition

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Whether
at home,
or
at work

Telegraph Nepal
telegraphnepal.com

Editorial:**Support Through Other Means**

The Nepalese expatriates, friends of Nepal and associated organizations in various countries have been involved in supporting developmental activities in various sectors throughout Nepal for a long time, and their efforts has benefited locals in many different ways. With the growing number of expatriates each year, developmental support, sector and locations have also increased in Nepal through this channel. However, what is no less frustrating to this group of people than those living in Nepal is the pace of progress challenged by political parties insincere (in actions) for the development of the country, those pursuing ethnic agendas more aggressively compromising national interests, and those political groups and activist in disguise promoting alien interests more prominently than their own regional issues.

In the US, Nepalese expatriates meet twice a year under different banners, annually; invite politicians and other prominent personalities from Nepal and Nepal experts from across the US and elsewhere, to discuss current political and other pertinent issues and share with attending participants from across the country. Cause for political impasse and Nepal's underdevelopment are also identified, discussed and various solutions get proposed. Often times, the activities of the various political parties and their leaders are discussed, but what seems to be missing most of the time is the role of India in shaping Nepal's politics.

This is a topic not commonly discussed in the mass medium in the past, therefore, it gave the impression that no issues existed. However, when these issues are actually being brought up fairly through various mass media, friends in India and outside are often reluctant to believe or even accept any improper dealings with Nepal by the Indian government. Thanks to the efforts of Indian mass medium that have succeeded in mobilizing country's population and their expatriates to think the way the central government wants to, and not wonder how things are viewed on the other side. When the Nepalese mass

medium continued to decry the open interference by India in the recent past through their representative Rakesh Sood, who was actively making political comments, visiting politicians and ministers' bedroom at odd hours in Kathmandu not a single news story was covered in Indian news paper. However, when the incumbent Prime Minister was named as the next prime minister, the Indian media feed their people with false information like Madhav Nepal – India born Prime Minister, and et al.

While this topic continues to dominate Nepal's politics, it divides the country's population, the expatriates and friends of Nepal to various thoughts, but the bottom line remains the same – Nepal remains underdeveloped. While the Nepalese Diasporas continues their support to Nepal on various sectors, there is now an urgent need to explore new avenues that would support Nepal as a State, which could help in advancing Nepal's interests outside.

The Indo-Nepal Treaty 1950, India's interests in investing Nepal's water resources, the Indian occupation of Nepalese lands, the atrocities of Indian forces along Indo-Nepal border, the deployment of Indian troops along the Nepalese border and others have always remained a concern for the Nepalese people. While some politicians talk straight on this issue (when not in the government), others try to getaway with this topic, but none fail to refer these issue to their advantage while projecting others as non-nationalist. Only those in the government talk real and provide reassurances– all contending issues needs to be discussed with Indian government, and would be initiated through a proper diplomatic channel, however, no progress is made public after such comments. But the assault on people living in the border areas continues, every month new reports on land encroachment on different place makes a headline, and the opposition finds a way to assault on the government of the day; and this is just another day.

The expatriates can explore on how best they can provide

Agencies Urge Rehabilitation For Former Child Soldiers

Kathmandu July 6: A proper rehabilitation programme for thousands of former child soldiers - many of whom are over 18 now - is needed in Nepal, say specialists.

"Unless there is a good rehabilitation package, there is less chance of them being released and this should be done soon before they lose their childhood years again," Tarak Dhital, from Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN), a national NGO, told IRIN.



Photo: Naresh Newar

Social workers speak to former child soldiers (file photo)

According to a report released this month by the UN

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support to the genuine issues Nepal is facing, through scheduled gatherings and an annual conferences like the one held in Oakland, CA during the July 4, 2009 and the upcoming convention in Raleigh, NC during the Labor Day weekend (September 5-7, 2009). Organizing protests program in front of the Indian embassies and their other missions abroad, sending emails protesting the land encroachment, writing in foreign papers, and appealing to various Human Rights group about the atrocities committed by the Indian security forces and others can be, but an example of what probably can be done to ensure support for Nepal's case.

Various norms and rules have been set for deploying troops across the international border, and it appears that when it comes to India deploying their troops in Indo-Nepal border, those norms don't matter. Can those involved in the legal profession come up with a way to help bring this non-compliance to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and work out a compensation for those victims in Nepal? Like wise, can the construction of dams along Indo-Nepal border be brought to this court for trail and review? In the same manner, can a means be explored for those groups and political parties that involve in violent agendas and recruit and employ child soldiers, to trail them in ICJ?

If these means don't directly help for the development of the country, it would at least expose what the world's largest democracy is doing to Nepal, and at the same time, prevent violent groups to recruit child soldiers that would otherwise help a generation of young people engage in constructive development of their life and the State.

Since Nepal's development is dependent on India's cooperation; hence working fairly with Indian government is the best way to ensure development. Let the government of Nepal handle the diplomatic channel, Diasporas can be supportive to the government's effort in building a healthy relations with India for Nepal's development and for the regional peace. This should not be, however, construed as submitting to India's unfair actions like constructing dams and deployment of troops in the border, and others, but more a civilized way of resolving an outstanding issue.

Nepalese Calendar

Sun August 09 / Shrawan 25'66

Tritiya

Mon August 10 / Shrawan 26'66

Chauthee

Tue August 11 / Shrawan 27'66

Panchami

Wed August 12 / Shrawan 28'66

Khasti

Thu Auguts 13 / Shrawan 29 '66

Janmastamiibrata

Fri Auguts 14 / Shrawan 30'66

Krishna Jatra

Sat August 15 / Shrawan 31'66

Nawami

Government "must focus on food"

Kathmandu August 4: Nepal's government must pay greater attention to food security - recognizing people's human right to food as a top priority - say specialists.

"Simply providing food aid is not enough to help the food-scarce population in the remote villages because we still see them suffer from hunger every day," Adheep Pokhrel of the Right to Food Network (RtFN), which comprises 36 NGOs advocating food sovereignty and rights in the Himalayan nation.

RtFN is advocating that the government fulfil the human right to food enshrined in the UN's International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), to which Nepal is a signatory.

But despite food insecurity and one of the highest rates of child malnutrition in the world, the country lacks a coherent food security policy, say activists, underlined by a 2007 Human Right to Food in Nepal-International Fact-Finding Mission. It was led by a Canadian institution, Rights and Democracy, with the University of Geneva, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the FoodFirst International Action Network (FIAN).

Although the government faces tough obstacles to provide sustainable access to food for all citizens, there were several areas where the state had failed to take minimum action to implement its food

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Maternal Mortality Down As Law Allows Abortion

Kathmandu, Aug. 8: Maternal mortality rate in the nation has gone down significantly after the endorsement of the safe Abortion Procedural Order and the related policies on legal abortion approved by Nepali Parliament in 2002.

However, women still are falling prey of unwanted pregnancy pushing them towards unsafe abortion due to the lack of awareness putting themselves at high risk of mortality and morbidity.

The women belonging to the disadvantaged and poor communities in the rural areas are the usual prey due to lack of awareness and limited health service, the senior's general practitioner, government officials and the domestic and international health concerned institutions claimed at a seminar on 'Scaling up of Medical Abortion Services in Nepal' here in the capital.

According to them, only 30 per cent women are aware of the legal abortion and this percentage belongs to the privileged groups. The social stigma, health service concentrated at district headquarters and the centre, absence of counselors, lack of contraceptive choices, sustainable subsidised drug supply and conventional technical backup existed in Medical Abortion (MA) were the reason that large portion of rural women have been engrossed with high mortality and morbidity rate, they pointed out.

As per the maternal mortality ratio figure, one-third of all births

are mistimed or unwanted, one-fourth of married women of reproductive age have an unmet need for family planning, and the maternal mortality is 281 deaths per 100,000 live births of which one cause is unsafe abortion.

The figures claimed that the maternal mortality rate has been reduced to 281 deaths per 100,000 live births from 539 per 100,000 live births. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has set target to reduce the existing maternal mortality rate by 75 per cent.

With the encouraging reduction in the maternal mortality rate after the safe abortion procedural order 2004, the Government of Nepal (Ministry of Health and Population) developed a strategic guideline to expand safe abortion services with this alternative method. For this, a six month pilot study was implemented in six district—Chitwan, Dhading, Jhapa, Kailali, Tanahu and Surkhet.

Dr. Meera Ojha, presenting the key MA pilot findings and recommendation for scale up, said that the pilot findings conducted in 32 listed services sites revealed that a total of 26,620 women received safe abortion service.

Of the 26,620 women, 1,718 women received safe abortion services using MA. According to the study, 96.44 per cent (1,657 women) of the total women (1,718 women) who received MA were successfully fol-

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Calendar of Events

August 13: Nepal Education and Cultural Center (NECC) invites all to celebrate Krishnajanmaasthmi on Thursday August 13 from 7.00pm to 10.00pm at Pashupati Buddha Mandir 9114 Margo Rd Lanham MD. For details visit nepalhorizons.com

August 15: Association of Nepalis in Minnesota (ANMN) invites all to participate in ANMN's Summer Picnic 2009 on Saturday August 15 from 12.00pm at West bush Lake Park Shelter 1. For details visit anmn.org **August 22:** 'Ladies only Teej Party' has been scheduled for Saturday August 22, 2009 in Doraville, GA, and the organizers invites all women from around the Atlanta metro area. For details, contact Srijana K Sharma of NASEA.

Sept 04: Association of Nepalis in Minnesota (ANMN) has scheduled group camping and workshop "Empower Nepali Women Workshop and Camping" on Friday September 04 from 2.00pm at Lake Maria State Park 11411 Clementa Ave NW Monticello MN 55362. For details visit anmn.org or contact Bijay Shrestha 952 944 8688 Sharada Joshi 952 941 5742 Ajib Shrestha 612 961 4487 Dadin pandey 651 808 0483 Bhasu risal 701 261 7518 Rashmi Sharma 952 997 2477 Arjun Ale 612 756 4135 Bishow Poudel 612 454 8030.

Sept 5th-7th: The NASEA and ANMA has scheduled to organize a Joint Convention 2009 on September 5th-September 7th at Raleigh NC. For details contact pr2009jc@gmail.com

Sept 13: Newah Organization of America (NOA) presents "VINTUNA" the first Newah movie show in the US on Sunday September 13 2009 from 4.30pm to 6.10 pm at Ciema Arts Theatre 9650-14 Main Street Fairfax VA 22031. For details visit nepahorizons.com

Thursdays: The Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi Bhajan / Kirtan is conducted at Durga Temple 8400 Durga Place, Fairfax Station VA every Thursdays from 7pm to 8pm. Sai Satsang in Dallas, TX: Sri Shirdi Sai Baba Satsang is held every Sunday between 4pm and 6pm CST in remembrance of Sri Sai Baba and Sri Babuji at Center for Spiritual Living, 4801 Spring Valley Road, Suite 115, Dallas TX 75244.

Saturdays: The Durga Temple & Chinmaya Mission welcomes everyone to **Bhagavad Gita Satsang** every Saturday at the Durga Temple 8400 Durga Place, Fairfax Station VA from 10:30am to noon. For further information contact coordinators at 703 793 8855 / 703 646 5924.

PM: No Treaty Will Be Signed With India

House panel clarified on visit

Kathmandu, Aug 7: Just a week ahead of paying a goodwill visit to India, Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal on Friday clarified that the government would not sign any new treaty or accord during the trip.

Responding to the queries raised by lawmakers at a meeting of International and Human Rights Affairs Committee under the Legislature Parliament, PM Nepal assured them that the visit would merely be a 'goodwill' one.

"There is no need to hurry up and dodge parties for signing new treaties. If there is a need to sign one, government will seek consensus," he said, adding the government had no plan to sign any long-term projects.

"There is no need to raise

questions over my goodwill visit. It will not be against the spirit of the Comprehensive Peace Accord. I have no vested interest besides the welfare of the general public."

Premier Nepal is all set to leave for India visit from August 18. He stated that around 98 per cent of border encroachment issues had been solved technically and unsolved cases would be sorted out after holding bilateral meetings of border experts.

"My goodwill visit will help to create a conducive environment for narrowing down the unsolved border encroachment issues," he added.

He, however, noted that the government wanted to attract Indian assistance on water resources and elec-

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New Configuration Of Obama's Asia – Part II

Cooperating and competing, China and the US to begin strategic dialogue

Shen Dingli, YaleGlobal, 23 July 2009

SHANGHAI: Seven months after the election of a new US President, China and the US are set to launch their first Strategic and Economic Dialogue. Tough words spoken about China's "currency manipulation" and predatory trading during and in the aftermath of the election are now a distant memory. The reality of the global economic crisis and the emerging issue of global climate change have added new impetus to closer cooperation between the world's two leading countries.

During the Bush era, Beijing and Washington initiated two high-level talks – a Senior Dialogue (or called Strategic Dialogue) and another Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED). They played an important role in addressing timely security and economic issues at national, regional and global levels, and coordinated their positions through adjusting their respective policies.

Some two months after being sworn into office, President Obama agreed with the Chinese President Hu Jintao to combine the aforementioned two talks and lift them to a higher level – to further their relations through the Strategic and Economic Dialogue (S&ED) platform.

Indeed, it is impressive that the two countries have set the tone of their relationship so soon under the new US President. It is more important to note, however, that the two countries will address security and economic issues – either pressing or long-range matters – at such a crucial time.

This is a critical time when the US has a new leadership with great challenges and new priorities. For the first time since the end of WWII, the US faces one of the gravest economic recessions due to the financial crisis. With the unemployment rate approaching 10 percent, such an economic downturn is affecting many aspects of American life and much of the society. It is likely that President Obama would list this as the most pressing national security threat if the White House were to draft a new National Security Strategy Report.

In a highly interdependent world, no one can be immune to such a global challenge. China has been

affected already: its GDP growth rate in the fourth quarter of 2008 declined by nearly half from the prior year, although in the second quarter this year it grew 7.9 percent. Tens of millions of Chinese migrant workers have felt the threat of America's lost interest and ability to consume. China's competitiveness in export, for decades, has suddenly turned vulnerable, making it more difficult to appreciate its currency.

As China and the US are highly dependent upon each other, they have to address this crisis collaboratively. Both need to stimulate their respective economies while creating opportunities for each other. Both could be tempted to "Buy America" or "Buy China" but have to distance themselves from such a simplistic vision. While the US needs China to keep buying Treasuries – and actually China has bought \$30 billion lately – the US government has to be more responsible for the recovery of American economy and foreign assets in America, including those of China.

Given President Obama's progressive policy on international cooperation on global issues, China and the US are seeing increasing chances to cooperate, as well as to collide. On cooperation, Beijing and Washington are now more inclined to consult each other at international forums before making major decisions, either for resuming the Six Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear program and imposing sanctions on DPRK's recent missile and nuclear tests, or for exploring the potential collaboration on clean energy technology.

The incidents at sea involving US reconnaissance and survey ships and Chinese vessels in China's economic zone in March, however, have underlined the growing tension over the control of waters and seabed resources. Recently there have been unfortunate incidents involving the USS Impeccable and Chinese vessels, as well as a Chinese submarine hitting an underwater sonar array being towed by the destroyer USS John McCain. Such incidents indicate increasing chances of physical collisions of the two navies in China's exclusive economic

zone, and deserve special efforts to avoid their recurrence.

The Bush administration was deaf to global efforts to cool down the earth and hence withdrew from the Kyoto Protocol. But President Obama is committed to reducing carbon emission and has thus presented a challenge to China. China and the US, especially under the Obama administration, could develop a type of new confrontation – the need to commit to reduction of greenhouse gases, with specific time-bound obligations.

As a signatory of the Kyoto Protocol, China has been supporting this regime, taking voluntary measures to reduce the increase of carbon dioxide, without being under a quota compulsion to do so. However, with the Obama administration re-committing America to climate change – which is certainly commendable – China feels unfair pressures to follow suit.

China doesn't feel the need to reduce its net increase of carbon emission, and is not ready to cut it. Rather, Beijing believes that as a major industrialized country, the US has been the lead emitter, on a per capita and total level, in the world for the past 150 years. While all countries have to cut their carbon emissions, they have to share their responsibility according to their ability and the amount they have emitted. Developing countries might echo this view while the developed countries would feel it unfair if China and the US, responsible for 43% of the world's carbon emissions, would not at the same time assume the responsibility to cut their total emissions rather than the net increase.

The White House and US Congress are debating a carbon tax scheme that would levy a tax on US consumers who buy commodities from foreign countries without spending adequate efforts on climate change. This has prompted a strong reaction from China as it views such a policy as a new trade barrier, violating WTO rules.



Photo: Yale Global

Getting to know you: China's President Hu Jintao meets President Barack Obama in London: the beginning of a new relationship

These issues – fixing the economic recession and climate change – will be tackled at the S&ED. They are of the nature of both cooperation and competition. It is obvious that China-US relations are increasingly more mature and complex: while those areas of collaboration are ever expanding, the focus of their competition, based more on interests than ideology, is also shifting. Apparently, those "traditional" areas of tension – Taiwan, human rights, nonproliferation, and trade imbalance – have not disappeared, but newly emerging issues – fair economic/trade relationship, currency conversion, carbon emission etc. – are defining how the two countries will nurture their partnership. Noticeably, the contentious maritime disputes underline their mutual strategic hedging, but these might be addressed at their future meeting of the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA).

Again, China and the US are going to handle their relations through talks and negotiation. Through giving

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Ethical Persuasion

"Feelings come from the deepest part of ourselves and give us spiritual connection. Managed well, feelings become the medium of caring and influence between people. Managed poorly, strong feelings become explosives that can harm any relationships."

I happened to go through these lines in Tom Rusk's "POWER OF ETHICAL PERSUASION." I did not quite understand this a few years back and thought to myself be not I always right? But, now I have realized that there is always a room for improvement in self attitude in everybody.

Do you remember the last time when you have had an important conversation that broke down to an unproductive painful argument? Or that ended with someone's bitter silence? Oh yes! This happens very often. Perhaps it was with a colleague,

your boss, a friend, parents, spouse, lover or any of your children. Isn't it ironic and mysterious that after millions of years of evolution and a hundred or so of psychological theories and research, we humans have yet not advanced in person to person communication? We generally exchange our thoughts and ideas pretty well but still often fail to understand each other. We either try to impose our thoughts or try to win over others or simply withhold ourselves in order to avoid a misunderstanding. What usually goes wrong in human understanding is not anybody's fault but yet everybody's problem.

We all live in our own unique and private worlds of personal experience. Nearly everyone is insecure to some extent. Thus when we feel threatened, hurt or angry, we generally blame

the other person in self defense rather than have an insight. We can avoid upset feelings in order to keep everything smooth but then this will bring only momentary solace. A key to all relationship is how these feelings are experienced, managed and communicated. Everyone has difficulty handling strong feelings and maintaining a balance between mind and heart. Rejecting one's feelings may make the person feel rejected as a whole.

The conclusion I have come up with is one should try and develop and Ethical Persuasion within oneself. Ethics (study and philosophy of human conduct with the emphasis of determination of right and wrong). Persuasion (the act of making one to do something with conviction). Thus Ethical Persuasion is an approach which persuades people to treat each



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others feelings with greater respect, understanding, caring and fairness. If we learn to recognize these four guidelines and hear others before coming to a constructive solution, I am sure it will definitely improve relations in all respects and give us a reason to smile.

I know things are easy said than done and it is difficult to bring about changes in our attitudes but we can still give it a shot.

US Immigration Policy Likely to Boost Population

Growth-driven immigration policy risks bringing unfavorable socio-economic and environmental consequences

- Joseph Chamie YaleGlobal, 30 July 2009

NEW YORK: As the new US Administration and Congress begin to tackle immigration reform they will again be faced with the weighty question of how large should America's population be in the future. Should America's population continue to grow indefinitely, perhaps doubling to 600 million by the end of the century? Clearly, any answer to this vital demographic question has serious and far-reaching economic, political, social and environmental consequences for America as well as for the international community of nations.

Some of America's leading policymakers uncritically accept that an expanding population with increased immigration is good for America, ensuring its prosperity, power and harmonious relations with other nations with little if any adverse effects. Most others simply choose to ignore or equivocate on this fundamental demographic question, as has so often been done in past.

Leaders in the Senate and Administration will likely focus their attention on narrow aspects of immigration reform, as they did in the recent report of the Independent Task Force on US Immigration Policy, which – except for the paper it was

printed on – ignored environmental implications of the policy. However, decisions and policies on US immigration, including future levels, priorities, high-skilled migration and illegal immigration, effectively load the demographic dice for America's future.

Contrary to popular thought, the dominant force fueling America's demographic growth is not natural increase, but immigration. This is because immigrants not only add their own numbers to the nation's overall population, but also contribute a disproportionate number of births whose effects are compounded over time. A couple of examples help to illustrate this important point.

The first example considers the contribution of immigration to America's population growth since its founding in 1776. If international migration had ceased after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, America's population would have likely been no more than 127 million today and perhaps closer to 100 million, far short of its current size of 307 million (Figure 1). Over this 233-year period, migration's contribution (migrants and their descendents) is dominant,

accounting for at least 60 percent of America's population growth.

The second example illustrates immigration's impact on America's population from a future perspective. By mid-century the US population is projected to reach 439 million, assuming current annual net migration of about 1.3 million increasing gradually to 2 million (Figure 2). However, if further immigration were to cease, the US population in 2050 would likely be about 100 million less, i.e., roughly 345 million. Again, the major force behind the future growth of America's population, at least 70 percent in this instance, is the addition of immigrants and their descendents.

Beyond its major impact on the size of America's population, immigration also has a significant effect on the country's age structure. Notably, immigration slows down population ageing. For example, the proportion of America's population aged 65 years or older in 2050 is projected to be about 20 percent with immigration versus 25 percent without immigration. Obviously, immigration trends have non-trivial implications for the future financial well-being of social security and health care systems for the elderly.

However, immigration is not a solution to population ageing insofar as the immigrants themselves also age and eventually retire.

Immigration is also altering America's ethnic composition and culture, i.e., less European and more Latin American, Asian and African. Throughout the 19th century and most of the 20th, the US foreign born population was predominately from European countries, e.g., Germany, Ireland, Italy and the United Kingdom. Today the top five countries are no longer of European origin but are Mexico, China, Philippines, India and Vietnam, with Mexico accounting for a third of the foreign born. As a result, America will increasingly look, sound and act differently over the coming decades – which is neither good nor bad but different. By mid-century, for example, one out five Americans is expected to be an immigrant - higher than ever before - with Hispanics accounting for 30 percent of the nation's population.

As a result of continuing high rates of immigration and fertility levels at replacement, America is the most populous developed country, representing nearly five percent of the

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Agencies Urge Rehabilitation For ...

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Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) 2,973 minors of the former Maoist army, also known as the People's Liberation Army (PLA), are being discharged.

The minors, aged between 16 and 18, are among around 20,000 former Maoist combatants staying in seven cantonment sites around the country since the November 2006 peace agreement was signed.

However, they have yet to receive the rehabilitation and reintegration assistance they need.

The Maoists reportedly recruited thousands of children during their decade-long conflict with the Nepalese state, which resulted in more than 14,000 deaths.

But more than two years since the agreement was reached, the plight of these young boys and girls remains unresolved, with many fearing time for their proper reintegration into society is running out.

Eligibility

Since 2006, many of the minors under 18 have since been classified as adults and Dhital is concerned that many of the underage soldiers are losing years waiting for the government to come up with a proper rehabilitation package.

But according to the UN, even if they are now adults, they will still be entitled to rehabilitation services once they are released.

"All disqualified minors are eligible for the reintegration services to be provided by the government. Even those who are no longer minors still have to go through the official discharge and reintegration process and, just like other minors, are entitled to the reintegration services of their choice," Jacques Boyer, deputy representative of the UN Children's Agency (UNICEF), told IRIN.

UNICEF, UN Development Programme (UNDP), UNMIN and UN Population Fund (UNFPA) have been providing technical assistance to the government to facilitate the early release and rehabilitation of disqualified minors, including guidance to the government in maintaining minimum standards during release and reintegration processes, as well as links to organizations involved in vocational training and psycho-social services.

Rehabilitation package

Child rights experts, however, say there is still no clarity as to what kind of rehabilitation package will be introduced or when.

Until now, there has only been a consensus between the Maoist leaders and the government to release the child soldiers, they said.

The Maoists are no longer in government after their leader, Prime Minister Puspa Kamal Dahal quit in May.

According to officials, a high-level team from the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction has visited the cantonment sites where the Maoist combatants are confined to interview the soldiers about their rehabilitation needs.

But while the government intends to release all the former child soldiers within three months, child rights activists and other specialists say more time will be needed.

Only two weeks have passed since the government team went to the cantonments, and it will take another few months to build a complete rehabilitation package, according to local sources.

In addition, it might take a long time to reach a consensus between the Maoists and the government on the reintegration services.

UNICEF says it is ready to support their rehabilitation, and that education support should be provided.

"If minors are unable to continue school because of their families' expectations for them to contribute to family earnings, then the families should be provided with income-generating support so as to allow those minors to continue education," explained Boyer.

Boyer expressed concern over the delayed release of the minors, as well as linking their release to the overall security-sector reform process. (IRIN)

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Government "must focus ...

cont'd from pg 3 ...

obligations, the mission team concluded.

These included failure to adopt a comprehensive right-to-food strategy, including adoption of a food security policy. In addition, the state failed to coordinate food-related policies and programmes between the capital, regions, districts and government ministries, the report said.

Cost of coping

Compared with other countries in South Asia, Nepal's food security has suffered badly over the past three years mainly due to the severe winter drought, according to the UN World Food Programme (WFP).

"The cost of coping with insecurity has increased dramatically," Richard Ragan, WFP country representative in Nepal, told IRIN.

"In rural areas, one in three families is regularly removing children from school; eight out of 10 households are borrowing money or buying food on credit, and almost half of all Nepalese are eating less."

He added that these coping mechanisms were not sustainable and that hunger in Nepal was no longer merely a household issue.

"Rather it is an issue of national and international concern, a reality which is destroying the future prospects of an entire generation of Nepalese," explained Ragan.

Most of Nepal's food-insecure live in the mid- to far-western hill and mountain areas, among the most remote and isolated communities in the world. Thus the cost of hunger remains largely hidden as few journalists, government officials or even aid workers venture to these areas, according to WFP.

"Even within Nepal, there is often publicly displayed denial,

acceptance or ambivalence towards the absolute seriousness of the situation and the critical cost of coping," said Ragan.

Severe crisis looming

"The food security situation has become so alarming that it has caught the attention of the human rights community," prominent human rights activist Subodh Pyakhurel, director of the NGO Informal Sector Service Centre, told IRIN.

He explained how traditional thinking in government as well as the aid community did not consider food as falling under human rights; however, according to WFP, more than 3.4 million people, out of a total 28 million, have become severely food insecure due to food price increases in 2007 and 2008 and the 2008-2009 winter drought.

Another five million people have potentially fallen below the poverty line in Nepal in the past three years.

Government strategy

The government maintains it is taking the food crisis seriously and is planning to develop a food security strategy; however, representatives were not available to comment.

But according to food security experts, the government's focus seems to be more on agricultural production and commercialisation than food security at the household level.

According to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Nepal - like all parties to ICESCR - has a core obligation to take all necessary action to mitigate hunger.

"It is therefore obliged to ensure that everyone under its jurisdiction has access to the minimum essential food, which is sufficient to ensure their freedom from hunger," Richard Bennett, OHCHR representative in Nepal, told IRIN. (IRIN)

Obama Welcomes Dip...

cont'd from pg 1...

Despite Friday's encouraging news, Mr. Obama says he will not be satisfied until the U.S. is seeing sustained job growth. "It will not be easy, though. Change is hard, especially in Washington. We have a steep mountain to climb, and we started in a very deep valley," he said.

The president is campaigning for policy changes on

health care, education and energy, which he says will contribute to the nation's economic recovery. (VOA)

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Stable Housing Seen as ...

cont'd from pg 1 ...

this point and that is the ongoing foreclosure crisis," Zandi said.

The government has launched a number of loan modification plans to allow cash-strapped homeowners to make smaller monthly payments. But unemployment, which is expected to peak next year, could complicate the recovery.

"One of the reasons why we're seeing such job losses is because businesses have really been fearful for their own survival. And of course, investors, until recently [were] very nervous, very scared," Zandi says. "It's been that loss of faith in our economy that made this a very difficult and different time. But it

also highlights something that I think is important and that is: confidence is a very fickle thing. It can turn. We can go from dark pessimism to something brighter than that relatively quickly." Zandi says consumer spending, which accounts for two-thirds of the U.S. economy, is crucial to restoring business confidence. But while the latest government reports shows spending rose nearly half a percent last month, economists say the increase was due largely to higher prices for gasoline.

The bottom line, according to experts, is that the signs necessary for recovery are starting to line up, but - not as quickly as everyone would like.

New Configuration Of ...

cont'd from pg 4 ...

and taking for thirty years, they are already experts in knowing that they share stakes too vast to risk with serious confrontation. Also, they are experts in conducting negotiations to balance respective interests. At such a vital time, the S&ED should serve not only to exchange strategic perspectives and test strategic intentions, but also to settle emerging disputes and strengthen cooperation. Such tasks entail the pressing demand and commitments of top-level leadership. The S&ED is the exact

Shen Dingli is a professor and Director of the Center for American Studies and Executive Dean of the Institute of International Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai, China.

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venue to attain such a purpose presently.

China and the US are both experiencing a significant transformation. America is at a crossroads between further decline on one hand and transcendence on the other. China could emerge as the second biggest economy in the world, and expects to assume more responsibilities commensurate with its added capacity. While a G2 between the two is quite out of the picture, their closer partnership is surely both a necessity and a reality.

PM's Efforts On Compromise...

cont'd from pg 1...

partners," Prakash said.

A source close to the PM said that he challenged the Maoists to file a case of impeachment against President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav if they thought he had violated the existing laws.

"But, he is no mood to allow discussion on the issues raised by the Maoists in the House," the source said.

The Maoists have been blaming that President Dr. Yadav acted 'unconstitutionally' in revoking the decision of the Maoist-led government to sack army chief Rookmangad Katawal and replace him Kul Bahadur Khadka.

The Maoist lawmakers have been obstructing the regular business of the Parliament demanding they be allowed to discuss their demands. The

party has declared a month long protest both in the street and the House.

The two parties, however, agreed to hold next round of discussions for further negotiations and find a solution at the earliest. Maoist leaders Mohan Bidhya and Prakash were also present in the meeting.

Meanwhile, Premier Nepal, interacting with the locals of Kathmandu Constituency-2, suggested the Maoists not to take a confrontational stance.(TRN)

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Maternal Mortality Down...

cont'd from pg 3 ...

lowed up in two weeks and they were all satisfied with the method. Only, 0.6 per cent of the women (10 women) experienced complication; among them two were treated in the referral hospital and eight received treatment at the service site, she said.

"Despite the tremendous achievement in the MA, there is a grave problem arising in the women of the rural areas," she added.

She said that MA should be integrated and scaled up into all safe abortion services and also harnesses the potential of the private sector in making these services more easily accessible, affordable and reliable.

She said that the donor community had stopped the medicine assistance to this purpose. "Now, the government has the responsibility to make this campaign successful to meet the target of the MDGs", she said.

Dr. Govinda Prasad Ojha, Director General, Department of Health Services pointed out that the maternal mortality had substantially decreased but the existing figure of 281 deaths per 100,000 live births is still high.

He said that the government was taking effective move to upgrading the community health service centers to health posts in every village. He said that the institutional effort should be blended in an easy manner and it should provide affordable MA services to the disadvantaged and poor community, which would help reduce maternal mortality as expected.

However, lack of awareness, infrastructure, equipment, qualified medical workers and medicines are the challenges that could hinder the government target to reduce the mortality and morbidity significantly.

Dr. Alexander G. Andjaparidze, WHO representative, said that the progress made by Nepal

in just five years was a huge achievement. He said that the WHO had been assisting the health documentation in the developing countries in order to bail out them from the serious health hazards. "However, the major constraints in the developing countries is the implementation part," he added.

He said that Nepal had done well progress in the health sector despite various emerging challenges. "We will continue our supports to Nepal in the coming days," he added.

Andrew C. Boner, country representative, PSI Nepal said that the legalisation of MA in Nepal had significantly reduced the maternal mortality. However, the problem related to unwanted pregnancy is taking a high toll. "Confronting with this reality Nepal still is far from the MDGs target," he added.

He underscored the need to improving the quality of the private medical services and the government responsibility towards it.

The programme was jointly organised by the Ministry of Health and Population Department of Health Services, the PSI Nepal and the IPAS.(TRN)

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[Source: Nepal Rastra Bank, for August 08'09]

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US Immigration Policy Likely to Boost Population...

...cont'd from pg 5

world population. In addition, America's demographic standing relative to the billion-plus club of China and India remains more or less unchanged for the foreseeable future. However, its demographic standing among developed nations as a whole is expected to increase from a quarter today to a third by 2050. Moreover, with respect to the European Union (27), America is projected to achieve parity with it in roughly 50 years and exceed EU's population well before the close of the century.

So then, what is the role of international migration in America's future? With current demographic trends likely to continue for some time, immigration can be expected to continue to play a major role in the future size, age-structure and ethnic composition of America.

However, it is important to keep in mind that while these population projections for America's future appear likely, they are not necessarily inevitable.

Demographic trends may change radically due to behavioral changes and unanticipated events impacting fertility and mortality as well as changes in America's immigration practices and policies.

These projections raise the fundamental question of how much larger should America's population be. Over the past several decades, the White House and Congress established various commissions to comprehensively address the future size of America's population. In general, these high-level advisory bodies concluded that in the long run, no substantial benefits would result from the further growth of the nation's population. And in particular, they recognized that America cannot grow indefinitely and recommended that the country welcome and plan for a gradual stabilization of its population.

Also, they concluded that there is hardly any problem confronting America whose solution would be easier with a larger population. Moving toward population stabilization would

contribute significantly to America's ability to solve its domestic problems as well as many of those abroad, especially energy and resource consumption, climate change and environmental sustainability. Moreover, without US leadership as demonstrated by domestic efforts to stabilize its population and thereby mitigate further damage to the environment, other nations would be reluctant to adopt policies and practices to stabilize their populations and work toward developmental and ecological sustainability.

As the new US Administration and Congress begin to deal with immigration, they could decide to alter the direction of the country's current pro-growth immigration policies and plan for a gradual stabilization of America's population, as the various advisory commissions have indeed recommended. This outcome would be environmentally beneficial and advantageous to America's long term interests.

Given the current economic and political climate, it seems doubtful that the US Congress will be able to address immigration reform any time soon. However, when they do begin debating US immigration policies, it would be wise to consider demographic realities, future population projections and likely environmental costs and not simply embrace the traditional pro-growth ethic that "more is better." Congress and the Administration have an opportunity to address immigration reform in the broader context of America's population. If they choose to do otherwise, expect another 100 million Americans to be joining us very soon.

Joseph Chamie, former director of the United Nations Population Division, is director of research at the Center for Migration Studies.

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PM: No Treaty Will Be Signed With India ...

...cont'd from pg 3

tricity for energy crisis mitigation. "We must take maximum benefit from our natural resources and energy. If they invest in this sector we must utilize their capital," he said.

He has made up his mind to express Nepal government's concerns about the delay in the implementation of Pancheshwor dam and Mahakali treaty during the meeting, including economic recession, Indian investment, dual tax system and implementation of past agreements with India.

Speaking at the same programme, Foreign Minister Sujata Koirala said that the visit would concentrate on border encroachment issue, water resources and enhancing

the bilateral and mutual relations. Lawmakers Narayan Kaji Shreshta, Dr. Shashanka Koirala, Radha Gyawali, and Sunil Babu Panta suggested the government not to sign any new treaty in a transitional period.

At another function in Kathmandu, Prime Minister Nepal called on the academic circle to contribute to take the peace process to a logical conclusion and draft the new statute within the stipulated time.

"It is necessary to make education sector more systematic, disciplined and qualitative in order to strengthen loktantra, consolidate peace and bring forward-looking changes in the country," Premier Nepal told a meeting of senates of Sanskrit University in Kathmandu.

Stating that education was only a means and not an end, the PM noted that skilled human resource was the necessity of the present time to

gear up overall development in the country.

He appreciated the University for its contribution in the field of education and culture.

He said that Sanskrit was the most scientific language of the world and stressed on developing it in the changed context.

Since the number of students studying Sanskrit is falling, the university needs to bring inspiring and promotional programmes, he said.

In order to keep alive the tradition of Gurukul, the government would pay attention to promote schools, universities, and institutions teaching Sanskrit, Nepal said.

He said that the university was an autonomous institution and asked it to reform existing curriculum and examination system in order to produce manpower that would be able

to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

PM Nepal appreciated the role of Ayurved and Yoga as sciences and stressed on their development.

"More research and dissemination is needed in these sciences," he said. "We are rich in herbs from the hills to the flatlands, but then, we are using them for fuel wood."

Nepal stressed on the collection of herbs and processing them into medicines. (*The Rising Nepal*)

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