

REASONS OF STATE: EXCLUSIVIST NATIONALISM AND BHUTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

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Making the Bhutanese foreign policy understandable is a difficult task for me, at least, for two obvious reasons. The first is that I am a Nepali who has studied the historicity of the state to state relations subsisting between Nepal and Bhutan in both spiritual and cultural terms. But I am amused to learn about the same traditional, spiritual and cultural heritage as being reasons for the Bhutanese state now to forcibly evicting the Bhutanese national of Nepali origins from their adopted home. The second is, I am finding myself in a very awkward position in defining and analyzing a state's foreign policy which, as a matter of fact, is "guided by the advice of the Government of India." My dilemma, therefore, is obvious: whose foreign policy shall I explain? For me these situations are still an unresolved intellectual puzzles. Reasonably because of this, I do not pretend impartiality in this paper. Nor do I claim that my views are the only objective interpretations of reality conversant with the Bhutanese state's foreign policy.

However, the reality is that Bhutan is a state. Likewise, it has a foreign policy crafted on the basis of the role and objective of state in the international community. Hence, there is a need to understand foreign policy behaviour with an "appreciation of goals and priorities, the internal and external constraints, and perceptions and expectations which guide", as Moon points out, the state action. Accordingly, "any theory of foreign policy behaviour must contain within it a theory of the state, however unconscious or incomplete (Moon 1992)."

Till recently, foreign policy analyses of smaller states were peripheral to the studies of international relations primarily because such states were insignificant unit of analysis in view of the significant issues confronting

Cold War politics. Smaller states were mostly treated as a group of states as falling under the sphere of influence, within certain alliance structure and concern for the hegemonic stability either of a world power or a major regional power. For example, a typical case of the foreign policy analysis of smaller states (primarily focused on the European context but with applicability in South Asian situation too) analogous to the pilot-fish behaviour which keeps "close to the shark to avoid being eaten" was the normative thrust defining the role of smaller states (Schulu and Olav 1971:33). South Asian states like Bhutan.(Nepal as well) were fortunate (unfortunate) duly because of geopolitics unfolding out of the Cold War envy between Capitalism and Communism that had broadly helped them secure their territorial and juridical statehood. The fundamental premises of the cold War being not to allow any state to fall under either camp perhaps have secured the territorial integrity and independence of countries like Bhutan by conferring international recognition through the United Nations (1971).

However, a crucial ingredient in the evolution of the foreign policy of Bhutan, and also of a majority of Third World states, is the organic shift in the world politics from colonialism to post colonialism. Independence of India and the creation of Pakistan in 1947 has undeniably a lasting impact on the three critical questions of state-formation, state-building and 'national' independence and self-determination in the political processes of South Asian States. The moment of decolonization had eventuated both with disintegration as well as voluntary accession to the state of India. Trampled with the question of self-determination, irredentist claims and unresolved questions of nationalities the South Asian States continue to be in flux as they have not been able to find any alternative to the 'State system' pioneered by the West against whom they had waged the struggle for self-determination in the past. As the major states of South Asia, India as well as Pakistan, reverted back to institutionalizing the same process of state-formation their colonial masters had invented through monopolizing the central authority, state sponsored collective violence and coercion to ensure territorial integrity, regime security and control over resources in the name of inalienable sovereign rights of the state, the learning for the smaller states like Bhutan is complete with the availability of a ready-made formula of the state-building process. The basic feature of domestic as well as foreign policy of the Bhutanese state, however smaller it is in size in comparison to mega-states like India and others, is the same. Perhaps the

only difference in their approaches to domestic security and territorial integrity is that whereas Bhutan rely on the Indo-Bhutan treaty of 1949, the more powerful India has opted for a nuclear deterrence for the same purpose. Hence the nature of the state.

Nature of the State

Bhutan in my clumsy definition, is a monarchical state, not a constitutional state where the relations between the state and society is clearly defined. Though monarchy, in its narrowest sense, is only an "institutional expression of the state", it has continued to maintain its omnipresence as a collective urge of an "idea of the state" in a situation where the "physical base of the state" is the weakest. For Barry Buzan, the "idea of the state" remains the crucial component in the formation of the state as this concept incorporates the societal response to the sense of belongingness as well as togetherness of the people constituting the territorial state (Buzan 1983). The idea of the state, therefore, pertains to the state-society relations and the importance of social cohesion in the formation of a domestically coherent state. The fragility of social cohesion perhaps is the reason why Bhutan has also become one of the prominent refugees producing states in the recent years despite its territorial consolidation and expansion of physical base through exploitatin of hydel power in cooperation with India. Its claim of economic prosperity in the 1990s however is belied by the fact that it has foreited the citizenship to more than 135 thousand Bhutanese people by persecuting them to leave their homeland and refusing to share the resources appropriately.

Notwithstanding Bhutan's emergence as a coercively monopolistic state predominantly controlled by the patrimonial system under the absolute monarchy, it is constantly under the pressure of democratic ethos of the people and demands for self-determination, the two most powerful collective urges of the late twentieth century. As democracy has become a distinguish feature of the nationalist movement, the concern for the regime security has become synonymous to the state security to the institutional authorities in Bhutan. Articulation of the enemy within and to repress it under the domestic law by deliberately raising the spectre of external threat has been a classical approach that the Bhutanese ruling elites have beneficially adopted in the context of their failure to manage domestic crisis. Herein lies the relevance of Nepal to Bhutan in its search for an alleged outside detractor which, in the words of the Bhutanese king, has given shelters to 'anti-

nationals', provided "military trainings" to Bhutanese rebels and encouraged destabilizing activities inside Bhutan committed by the Bhutanese of Nepali ethnicity.¹

Bhutan is, no doubt, an interesting case so far the foreign policy behaviour of the state is concerned. Bhutan was closely bound to India before 1971; its diplomatic presence outside India was nonexistent; it has even requested for the deployment of Indian troops in 1971 (fearing the Chinese incursions during the Bangladesh war). After securing its membership at the United Nations in 1971, it expanded its diplomatic contacts with Bangladesh. It didn't bother to turn to Nepal, traditionally the closest ally, to establish even a "non-resident" diplomatic relations till 1983 after the informal advent of SARC in 1980. Bhutan, on the other hand, was quite assertive in presenting an independent identity apart from India. Its voting pattern at the UN since 1973 demonstrated a position which was not always pleasing to India. On issues like Cambodia and Afghanistan, the Bhutanese positions were diametrically opposite to Indian. Bhutan was in fact at the loggerheads with India at the 1979 nonaligned conference in Havana, Cuba. While returning from there, the king of Bhutan had left no ambiguity as such in his preference to a 1949 treaty revision during his Bombay stopover. What Bhutan had done by then was realistically assessed by Muni who suggested that "... without making the revision of the Treaty a major controversial issue ... Bhutan has tactfully rendered the restraining Article II ineffective by taking foreign policy initiatives without seeking, or abiding by, the 'advice of the Government of India' (Muni 1984: 519). The more distressful issue for India was the Bhutanese initiatives to independently negotiate with China on its long festering border problem. India had to reluctantly concede to the Bhutanese determination to go ahead with the plan in view of certain positive developments in Sino-Indian relations. As described by the Bhutanese foreign minister Dawa Tsering, these initiatives were taken as part of the "process of breaking the political and psychological barriers erected by many countries of the region. (Muni 1984:519)"

This quest for independent identity initiatives had led Bhutan closer to the position of Nepal vis-a-vis India, although these two states were never in identical situation in relations to their southern neighbour. The expansion of cultural and religious ties cemented by the monarchical affinity however has never been substantially strengthened by more tangible interactive processes of trade and economic transactions. Usually, the Druk

Air boards more foreign tourists from Kathmandu to Thimpu than Nepali passengers.²

But this warmth in Nepal-Bhutan relations soon disappeared as Thimpu decide to an unwanted population dumping policy victimizing the Bhutanese of Nepali ethnicity and forcibly evicted these domiciles under various pretext. An easy pretext to flushing these rejected people out was terming them illegal economic immigrants within the purview of a domestic law that, in the words of the Bhutanese Home Minister Dago Tsering, were as follows:

Any Bhutanese national leaving the country to assist and help the anti-nationals shall no longer be considered as a Bhutanese citizen. It must also be made very clear that such people's family members living under the same household will also be held fully responsible and forfeit their citizenship.

This government circular signed by the Home Minister on August 17, 1990 had indeed spread a wider net to identify the people it did not like and forfeit their citizenship making them the case for natural deportation. Bhutan's rights to expel and deport any illegal economic migrants or encourage migrant workers to the timebound development projects to meet the manpower gap or even absorb the foreign workers by providing them citizenship of the state is within its domestic law. But classifying a group of citizens "anti-nationals", "anti-monarchists" and "terrorists" overnight and labelling them as non-Bhutanese along with threatening their underaged and dependent family members with the denial of rights to citizenship is definitely an international concern. Again people like Tek Nath Rizal, Bhim Subba and their likes holding top ranking positions in the government of Bhutan were never illegal immigrant workers nor were and are they anti-nationals but their fate is no better than other 135 thousand people of Bhutan who are denied rights to domicile in Bhutan. About 100,000 of these people are presently living in Nepal as refugees and the rest are spread over the Indian Union.

The problem that the rejected people of Bhutan raised, besides the psychological trauma of the refugees, human tolls, and the relative socio-economic burden to the host country like Nepal, is the underlying question why have all those people whose culture, religion and ethnicity differed from those of the dominant ruling elites become a deliberate target of the

illegal economic migrants policy of Bhutan. Has multi-ethnicity, as elsewhere in South Asia, become a cause for identity crisis for Bhutan? Have the Bhutanese elites determined to transform the state into a composite whole of a homogeneous community consisting of a single race, culture, language, religion, possessing a common historical consciousness, a venture on which the majority of South Asian states and the multiethnic world at large has failed so far.

Assertion of monoethnic tendency is fraught with distrust and distress. It is conflict generating rather than conflict ameliorating process. It is a process that intends to use state power and exercise control by a dominant ethnic group with unintended effects of alienating the other nationalities of a multiethnic state and a policy inviting domestic chaos and foreign concerns. As there are cases of a strong reaction of the Indian government on the Fiji episode and actions on the Sri Lanka Tamil tragedies, it is but natural for Nepal to take a position on the refugees repatriation and mobilize support for the refugees cause which is definitely not "anti-Bhutanese" that the Bhutanese king along with his relations holding the high power positions in that state are spreading to impress the "shangrila-prone" Western world.

In both cases outlined above there is *a priori* in Bhutan's concern for an independent identity in the community of states. The positions it took independent of India in several international fora are inculcated as enhancing its concerns for national security and sovereignty. The same feeling is embedded in flushing out the unwanted population with direct fallout affecting Bhutan's relations with Nepal. In both these cases the concern for regime security and territorial integrity are the basis for the Bhutanese decision making necessitated by the need to concentrating the leverage of power and influence in the hands of centrally dominant elites. This motivated a need to constructing an idea of exclusivist nationalism grounded on the philosophy of the "land, race and faith" rather than promoting unity among diversity in the project of state-building through national integration.

Exclusivist Nationalism and Foreign Policy

The predominant thinking in Thimpu today, if king Jigme's words were to be believed, is the Bhutanese "struggle for survival" amidst the multiethnic demands for democracy and religious-cultural tolerance of the Bhutanese state. Out of generally accepted 1.4 million population comprising four major cultural groups, with whom had the king identified the Bhutanese

“struggle for survival”, is really not clear. The reason being that the population figure 1.4 million, officially in use till 1989, was drastically revised to a lower figure of only 600,000 persons in June 1991. Was the previous figure just an exaggeration or the latter figure is concomitant to a thoroughly planned strategy of vanishing people?³ No one bothers to question what happened to these missing people. In view of the demographic nightmare facing South Asia one is starkly intrigued by this decline in the Bhutanese population. Or is this simply like a record of 74 million missing women in South Asia (Haq 1997:24)?

For me, the regime construct of population is simply the beginning of a version of reconstituting the Bhutanese state on the line of an exclusivist nationalism. In their project of constructing a homogenous state, the Drukpas as the ruling group found the Bhutanese of Nepali origins conspicuously different from themselves as well as the Sarchops and the people living in Duars, and numerically larger with the possibility of posing threats to the monarchy, the Lamanist tradition, religions and the law of the land as well. The Bhutanese people of Nepali origins' exposure to the outer world in comparison to the Drukpas themselves has been an additional cause for concern to a semi-theocratic state authorities in Bhutan. It is easier to draw a long line of distinction between Drukpas and the Nepalis in Bhutan by halting the earlier process of ethnic assimilation by the regime.

After the policy of nationalities' assimilation was abandoned, the state required to construct an identity from a multiethnic society to a religiously purified, culturally identical and racially similar, homogeneous state built on the ruins of dehumanized national ethos of Bhutan. In constructing a new identity, the Drukpas have adopted a process of counterposing of an imagined “self” against an “other”. In every instance, it appears, even as nationalism celebrates community, society, unity, coherence and identity within the territorial boundaries of the state, it simultaneously casts various “others” as dangerous, treacherous, exploitative and alien. In this sense, the Bhutanese ruling elites have presented themselves as participant of the modernist discourse of the state which is inherently exclusivist and chauvinistic. Their attempt to fixate a new “national” identity has been increasingly met with all manners of resistance from the affected groups in domestic context. And their search for a new identity has energized movements based on ethnic, linguistic, religious and regional affinities cutting across the “national” boundaries, with explosive potentiality of inter-state conflicts.

On the other hand, in such an insecure domestic (self-inflicted) and regional environment (in view of South Asian ethnic turmoil), the Bhutanese elites are systematically violating all notions of human and intrinsic rights of its domiciles in consolidation of their project of 'national unity and national security'. In their project of preserving the Bhutanese identity, they have in fact fixate the "nation" in terms of singular, exclusivist narrative of the state by marginalising and oppressing all those "others" whom they despise as aliens, thus destroying even their provisional rights to exist within Bhutan. It disguised the ethnic cleansing policy under the pretext of a smaller state's (territory only 46,500 sq.km.) inability to sustain religious cultural and linguistic diversity by undertaking decisions to revise citizenship act, distort census, articulate Drukpa identity and transmitting it to the singular notion of "land, race and faith" by advocating uniformity in language, culture and religion. This self-preserving project perhaps was in mind when king Jigme asserted that his people are indeed struggling for survival.

Bhutan has been successful so far in manipulating the soft spot of the internatinal community distinctly expressed towards the Lamanist tradition, Buddhist religion and the people of Tibetan origin as well because of their spiritual link with the Dalai Lama (at a time when "free Tibet" movement is on the anvil). The dedicated diplomatic offensive initiated by the Bhutanese monarch himself has brought many dividends. Foremost among them is the Bhutanese success in portraying thesemlves as the victim of a Nepali conspiracy. Reports (fabricated or real) published by the Thimpu newspaper *Kuensel*, and copied frivolously by some academic and journalists about the excesses committed by the "anti-nationals" including terrorist raids from across the border, murder, rapes, kidnapping, looting and arsoning, and their evident consequences in southern Bhutan have become a tourist attraction. The Royal audience to some academics and chosen journalists both from India and abroad has done the magic of turning the tide of sympathy from the actual victims to the predators. Bhutan's coopting of India through negotiating several agreements, including the *Chuka* hydelpower project, is another success story in neutralizing New Delhi's role on the refugees issue and using India against the refugees whenever necessary which was evident in the Indian governmental actions against the refugees' marching back to Bhutan, their imprisonment and again pushing them back to Nepal in 1996. This Indian partnership has been based on the premise of integrating the Bhutanese economy, which in the words of

foreign minister Dawa Tsering, was an imperative. Accordingly, he surmised, "For a small landlocked country like Bhutan, a close relationship with India is vital for its survival as a nation and for the well being of its people."⁴

The active use of foreign policy by Bhutan to sustain the state's need of international identity relative to its domestic political and economic problems, in fact, is a study in contrast to that of Nepal. Amidst the international democratic upheavals, ethnic revivals and the growing discourses about people's versus state sovereignty couched in terms of the question of national self-determination, Bhutan has successfully consolidated feudocracy than giving up to the demands of the period. The timing it correctly choose to deal with ethnic revivalism (and demand for democracy) is against the background of state-centric anxieties growing in South Asia leading to a policy of repression rather than accommodation unleashed by the state power to prevent any eventuality of "national" disintegration. The determination of the South Asian states to foil the causes of instabilities advocated by the peoples's rights to 'economic, social and cultural development' and the phenomenon of the state-sponsored persecution of the people on the ground of 'race, religion and nationality' in the name of state security, stability and drive for homogeneity has largely created a grotesque scene of mass expulsion following the communal violence and the breakdown of civil order. But the state as the legitimate authority to use coercion and violence has always found the "other" namely the rejected people or the demanding people as the murderous hordes, which explains the case of "destruction" in southern Bhutan as projected by the Bhutanese state (Kumar 1995, Muni and Baral 1996, Khanal 1998).

Actually, Bhutan has benefitted by the default of India's failure to manage the long festering ethnic conflicts, particularly in the north-east. Repressive measures that India (the largest democracy in the world) has encouraged by even mobilizing the military apparatus of the state to contain domestic crisis have unintended effects on decision makings of underdemocratic regims like Bhutan. India's aversion to any semblance of militancy (armed or unarmed) has buttressed the Bhutanese resolve to suppress domestic dissent. And the stated influential opnions, though unofficial, in support of the Bhutanese state by a person like the former foreign secretary of India, J.N. Dixit, have endorsed Thimpu's measures of dealing with internal problem. When probed on the Indian response to the

possibility of militancy among Bhutanese refugees, Dixit had candidly responded by suggesting that,

If there is a move towards militancy, India would take firm and decisive action. Rather than ask the Bhutanese to take back the refugees, it would be more likely that we would suppress militancy. India's interest would be to quash it. We will not allow something that has a bearing on internal security to be resolved by resorting to diplomacy.⁵

For its own internal and external security reasons, India has also been maintaining a tight security cordon and surveillance system down from the Tawang trijuncture of the Sino-Bhutanese-Indian border in the north-east to the trijuncture of the Chumbi valley in the west, and the chicken neck where the Corkhaland militancy along with Bodo and a variant of other rebellions have in themselves become the Indian headache. Then how on the earth one can just imagine that those "poverty stricken, illegal economic migrants" to Bhutan from Nepal "who had again gone back to the refugee camps in Nepal to receive the charitable dole of US\$ 3 a day, which is more than the earnings of the average Nepali citizens" (note these are king Jigme's allegations), could have possibly wrecked the havoc in southern Bhutan by defying the security arrangement of both India and Bhutan? Disinformation is the game played both by politicians and diplomats. Any systematic analysis of the information filtering out of Bhutan requires one to scrutinize the nature of the state system diligently, not to report the sweet-talks delivered by the king or his foreign minister Dawa Tsering. As I have said in the beginning of this paper, I am at a loss to understand Bhutan. But are others, who had closely watched Bhutan from the *University of North Bengal* (Siliguri) or the *North-Eastern Hill University* (Sillong), also in my leage? Perhaps the scholarship on Bhutan in these two universities are near to objectivity than in my country where Bhutan is not a problem, only refugees are a burden.

Scholarship and Statesmanship

Scholarships on Bhutan, particularly, on politics of the Bhutanese state, are few and mostly fuzzy (Dutt 1988). Except from Ram Rahul's introductory work *Modern Bhutan* (1971) and Leo E. Rose's *The Politics of Bhutan* (1977), a book-length study on Bhutan is still a rarity. The merits of these

studies lie in understanding how has a theocratic state transformed itself into a monarchy after 1907. More recent studies are of different genre. Dhakal's (1994) voluminous work and Rose's article⁶, among others, are focused studies on the contemporary ethnic problems facing Bhutan. Dhakal vividly expresses his concern for the victims of state-led suppression of the "other" and the denial of rights to domicile. Rose, on the other hand, see the "principal obstacles" to the resolution of the ethnic problem in Bhutan predominantly as "psychological" in relations to the identity of contending groups rather than economic in nature and, by implication, the control of state power (by the Bhutanese of Nepali origin).

What then are the reasons for racial discrimination? Is a demand for democracy a threat to monarchy or an urge for the continuation of previous policy of cultural assimilation (even through inter-marriage) has damaged the process of racial purification? Without any serious inquiry into these queries, to seek answers could be at the most tentative. But a policy of racial purity in a multiethnic state could surely be aversive to the social cohesion. Bhutan has the evident lessons from around the world on the consequences of ethnic conflicts, particularly, while hosting the negotiations between the warring factions of Sri Lankan conflicts not so long ago.

The Bhutanese state, however, belied all the conventional wisdom of scholarship by dramatically inventing a cause to involve itself into an uncalled for ethnic imbroglio. The statesmen in Bhutan knew that their domestic decisions on ethnic cleansing will have far reaching implications on the regional ethnic equilibrium and repercussions on their relationships with Nepal. But they did not care about how Nepal will react on the issue. It was clear to them that Nepal remains on the lower rung of their foreign policy priority. In the absence of any tangible trade and economic interactions the need to be sensitive about Nepal in actuality does not arise. Practically, even the snapping of diplomatic relations by Nepal was not the Bhutanese worry. Such a Nepali decision would be complementary in hardening the Bhutanese position on the refugee issue by projecting the Nepali hostility.

The Bhutanese decision on ethnic cleansing has been thoroughly calculative, not a product of idiosyncrasies of its partimomial elites. Taking advantage of the Gorkhaland movement in India and by raising the bogey of "Greater Nepal", they worked seriously to take India into confidence on their project of state-building.⁷ They tied the economic interests of energy

starved India by successfully completing several water resources sharing deals and raising the Indian stakes in Bhutanese security and stability. A comparably advantageous geographical position and an alternative access to the sea led to further consolidation of Bhutan's relations with Bangladesh bilaterally. Bhutan's previously adopted pro-West policies were equally rewarding when it fired the shots. It also successfully used the closer monarchical ties with Nepal leading the latter to commit the first of a series of blunders in repatriating or secretly deporting Tek Nath Rizal in 1989 who was charged with criminal offenses in Bhutan.

Negotiations that were held on the Bhutanese terms since 1993 at the Home minister's level on the question of refugee repatriation which was not changed to the foreign ministers' level till the seventh round of negotiations in 1996, was another crucial lapse on Nepal's position over the refugee problem. More substantially, when Nepal agree to the Bhutanese terms of incorporating the phrase "Bhutanese involved in criminal offenses" as one of the four crucial categories of verifying refugees living in the camps in Nepal, it provided a leeway to Bhutan to dabble on the issue and also call these Bhutanese involved in criminal acts as "anti-nationals" to forfeit their citizenship under the domestic laws. Negotiations, in fact, have stalemated after the seventh round in April 1996 and is yet to resume despite the Nepali foreign secretary's recent jaunt to Thimpu.⁸

To surmise, I would say that the Bhutanese state has successfully used foreign policy as an intricate instrument in fulfilling its domestic objective of ethnic cleansing. I personally appreciate the way in which the Bhutanese statemanship has used its Nepali counterpart as a pawn in the game of realising Thimpu's defined objectives. The delaying tactics it adopted while negotiating with Nepal and the nervous responses of the Nepali negotiators while being entangled on the issue have strengthened the Bhutanese resolve to gradually part away even with the negotiating problem. Bhutan has systematically analyzed and contemplated about the consequences of the Nepali state's position on the question of refugee repatriation. The negotiation option is now stalemated; request for the Indian mediation is not forthcoming; and internationalization of the issue, though, awaits political decision, now carries little sense with the time lapse. Preoccupied with the frequency of changing political equations and making and unmaking of coalition governments, Nepal has little energy left at the moment to concentrate on more taxing problems of bilateral negotiations with Bhutan.

Some Observations

My considered view on Bhutan is that a monarchy which is moreover guided by the Council of Ecclesiastic Affairs (Dratshang Lheshong) formed in 1984 to determine the affairs of a multiethnic state is bent onto turning the tide of any centrifugal pressure for secularism by celebrating Lamanist nationalism and reinventing the state as a Dragon Kingdom. Of course, for the hapless Bhutanese of Nepali origin, the draconian measures the Bhutanese state has taken after revising the citizenship act of 1985 accompanied by the *Driglam Namza* were like the dragon's bite. *Driglam Namza*, projected as Bhutan's national security ideology, in its cultural context, provides the state to retain its unique identity, hence independence and security. This concept of cultural purifications also provides an excuse to dispossess the "others" appearing to be incompatible in fostering the Druk national ethos. The records of the 71st State Assembly meetings in Bhutan, thus, clearly indicate:

The Home Minister pointed out that while different customs, languages and dresses added colour and enriched the culture of large country, for a small country with a small population like Bhutan, and which did not have the advantage of economic strength and military might, *different customs and languages would only erode the national identity and undermine the unity and security of the country.*⁹ (emphasis mine).

There never was and probably never will be a democratic space in the Bhutanese state under the self-defining elite Drukpa rule. Evidence to this could be found in the Bhutanese state's assertion of 1991 that the Royal government cannot "afford to discontinue the policy of national integration and the concept of one nation and one people. These policies are vital for ensuring Bhutan's longterm security and well being as a *united and cohesive nation* (emphasis mine). Such a policy posture is not only distinctly racist, it also belies the repeatedly asserted Bhutanese position that they have only deported the non-Bhutanese illegal economic migrants from Bhutan.

My conclusion, therefore, is that when many states have failed in their ethnic cleansing ventures, many are still war-ridden, and many had already disappeared as a consequence of such dehumanizing experiences, Bhutan perhaps may emerge as a homogeneous state and may survive as a monarchy thriving on powerful Indian bondage. But as some noted

American scholars, including Morgenthau, have said: "Nothing is permanent, but the national interest". The scholarships await to be proven true. Till then I would say, Deuce: Advantage Bhutan.

Notes

1. For the Bhutanese King's remarks, see his interview he gave to the *Times of India*, January 7, 1993, p. 20.
2. Evidently, if there are only a few Nepali passengers to be picked from Kathmandu on Scheduled flights, the Druk Air pilots do not bother even to land in Kathmandu. Rather, they will directly fly back to Thimpu from New Delhi. This happened last year when my friend Dipak Gyawali had to wait at the international terminal of the Tribhuvan Airport hoping to board the Druk Air to go to Thimpu to attend an international Seminar organized by the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo. Later on, he was told that the airlines had flown directly from New Delhi to Thimpu without arriving in Kathmandu. He missed the seminar.
3. There are conflicting reports on population figures on Bhutan. Normally, the authoritative international documents had enumerated the population figure of Bhutan to be between 1.2 and 1.4 million. In 1979, the Bhutanese government information bulletin (*Bhutan: Himalayan Kingdom*) contained the population figure as 1.2 million. The Department of Education of Bhutan Stated the total population as being 1,375,000 in 1989. But these all became history after June 1991. Along with Drukpas (the dominant elite group), there are Sarchops, Nepalis, and the people of Indian cultural origins settle in Duars and southern foothills.
4. See the interview given by the Bhutanese Foreign Minister to the *Times of India*, September 7, 1994.
5. See his interview he gave to *Himal Magazine*, July/August 1994.
6. Rose (1994: 103-119), and also see Dutt (1988: 73-79).
7. As India's relations with all its neighbouring states in the 1980s were mired by controversies and disputes and even with China was not progressing satisfactorily due to the Tawang incident and the subsequent Chequered-board military exercise initiated by India, it was imperative for India to substantially improve its dealings with Bhutan. Even in comparison to Nepal and Bangladesh which were previously top aid receiving countries from India, Bhutan was fairing well in

Indian foreign policy drive. In his memoris, the former foreign secretary, J.N. Dixit has opined that "India has a responsibility to ensure that socio-political changes in Bhutan occur in an orderly and gradual manner. We must be supportive of the King and his government. Any abrupt destabilization of Bhutan or disruption of its institutions (meaning primarily the absolute monarchy) would constitute a serious strategic threat to India's security". See Dixit (1996:94). Prior to Dixit, his predecessor foreign secretary, Muchkund Dubey had also assured Bhutan that India will not allow any activities directed against Bhutan from its soils. "In more specific terms, we would extend all possible assistance that the Royal government might seek in dealing with this problem, and that we would prevent any group which wants to enter Bhutan illegally and disturb law and order." As cited in *Kuensel*, October 27, 1990.

8. Before the Seventh round, King Jigme in an interview to *Indian Express*, March 7, 1996 said that 99 percent of the refugees are not of Bhutanese origin, to preempt the talks. Earlier in an interview to BBC, he accused that the 'prime minister and other leaders of Nepali Congress are instigating Bhutanese of Nepali origin to leave their country and come to Nepal. Arms training is being provided in Nepal for terroristic activities against Bhutan. Indeed, Nepal is engaged in a conspiracy to divide Bhutan and set up an independent state. Nepal is providing shelter and encouragement to terrorists". (as reported in *Nepali Patra weekly*, April 22, 1993).
9. See the Bhutanese official weekly *Kuensel*, November 14, 1992 (71ST ASSEMBLY SUPPLEMENT).

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