

THE PARIS CLIMATE ACCORDS FRAGILITIES AND THE GLOBAL EQUIPOISE

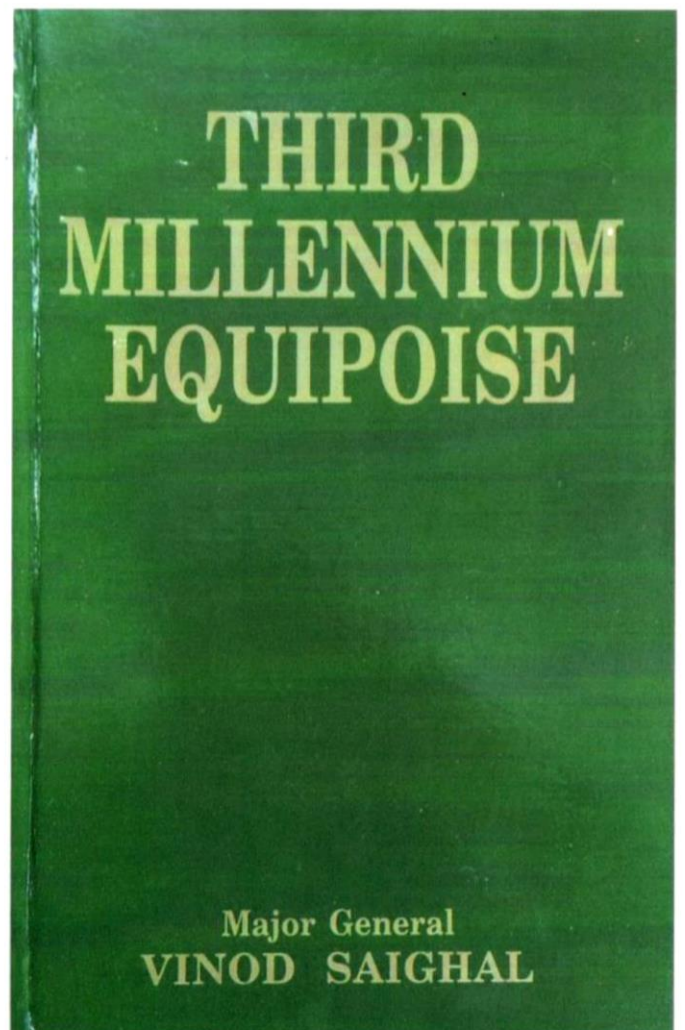
At the Paris Climate Conference (COP21) in December, 195 countries adopted the first-ever universal, legally binding global climate deal, which is due to come into force in 2020. In touching upon the continuing significance of his book '*THIRD MILLENNIUM EQUIPOISE*', **Maj. Gen Vinod Saighal*** outlined the protocols that must come into play for implementation of the COP21 agreement. Gen Saighal was kind enough to be interviewed by Diplomatist **

Q Sir, during your recent talk at the India International Centre, you stated that there were four significant factors which contributed to making the conference a success. Please elaborate.

Briefly these were: (a) outstanding diplomacy from the French team conducting the conference under the Foreign Minister and President Hollande himself remaining in touch with key players whenever the agreement looked uncertain; (b) President Obama taking a direct interest in seeing to it that the conference ended with a global consensus; (c) More importantly, early on he achieved a major breakthrough by getting President Xi Jinping to come fully onboard, something that was missing at Copenhagen and followed it up equally meaningfully by getting the Indian Prime Minister to pledge a significant contribution as well; (d) The understated but meaningful role played by the UN Secretary General and the UN team. Above all there was the realisation across the full spectrum of participants that this was indeed a make-or-break conference for the future of Humanity.

Q In your book, between pages 215 & 224, you note the measures necessary to halt or reverse global warming. Were any of your recommendations included in COP21? And if not, do you still think the agreement will accomplish its intent?

Unless the protocols spelled out under 'Blueprint for Eco-Revival of the Planet' and 'Environmental Policing of the Global Commons' are adopted under an UN mandate sooner rather than later the planetary decline that is upon us cannot be arrested. One of the winners of the Nobel Prize for



Economics in 2009, Elinor Olstrom has written extensively on the despoliation of the global commons. The comment from Dr. Ronald McCoy a former President of IPPNW (International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War) is a warning that needs to be heeded: "Some time in the next millennium, the inhabitants of planet Earth will be digging up our bones and exclaiming at the smallness of the human cranium, No wonder these creatures with small brains no longer exist."

I've read that the huge nuclear arsenal of one particular country includes warheads with 300 times the power of the one which wiped out Hiroshima; this is not to mention the might of its suggested opponent. If WWII breaks out, do you think we'll have to worry about global warming, or will it be the end of Planet Earth?

I believe that in spite of the present turmoil that is shaking the world the P5 countries who are permanent members of the UN Security Council with veto powers and now increasingly India which is being projected as a major economic power will not allow WWII to break out. The bigger worry is that nuclear proliferation and the refinements taking place in the arsenals of the first powers represent a far greater and immediate danger to humanity than global warming or climate change. Details spelled out in the article 'Climate Change and the Warfighting Doctrines of the Nuclear Haves' (accessible from site www.vinodsaighal.com) demand that 2016 becomes the year that meaningful roll back of nuclear arsenals of the P5 commences, lest the options still available to the UN and the global powers become redundant. The article that had good resonance worldwide makes it starkly clear that even a limited nuclear exchange could put paid to the recent global warming agreement and very likely the future of humanity on the planet. The criticality of 2016 for substantial progress in this field also lies in the fact that it is the last year for President Obama in the White House. His global stature as leader of the remaining superpower is unlikely to be matched by the next incumbent in the White House, irrespective of whether the person is from the Democrats or the Republican Party. Hence it becomes critical that President Obama counting on his global standing, linked to the personal rapport he has built with President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, brings about an irreversible momentum for an agreement among the major

powers towards the elimination of nuclear weapons within well-defined time frames.

You had also mentioned in your talk that unless the pre-requisites or 'first principles' laid down in your book are accepted in principle, humanity will not escape from the lasting threats to the planet that have been spelled out. Could you touch upon them briefly?

Very briefly: (a) The UN General Assembly should convene at the earliest to demand that, in principle and in the interest of humanity, the supreme national interest of countries yields place to the Supreme Planetary Interest from a given date, say, 2025 or 2030; (b) by the same reasoning important global protocols like the NPT, CTBT, painfully arrived at after years of negotiations, should not include the clause that allows countries to opt out in the supreme national interest. The logic is simple. Mistrust remains between the powers that pushed for these treaties to be adopted. If one country feels that the other could cheat (as often happens) clandestine options will be kept open going against the spirit of the treaties. An example will suffice. The 1972 ABM Treaty between the Soviet Union and USA that restricted the number of ABMs that could be deployed remained a linchpin of the global equipoise that prevailed for a quarter century and, most importantly, it kept in check the militarisation of space. President George W. Bush on coming to the White House unilaterally abrogated that treaty in the supreme national interest of the United States and released the genie of space militarisation from the bottle in which it had been kept sealed; (c) The sixth permanent security council seat with matching veto powers should go to a global entity representing humanity in the form of the Planetary-cum-Nuclear Council. It will exercise the veto only in cases where the planetary interest or the interest of coming generations is threatened. Details of selection, replacement and charter of this entity crucial for the future of humanity are given in the book. ■

** The profile of General Vinod Saighal can be viewed on the website www.vinodsaighal.com as also the other books authored by him as well as the language editions of *Third Millennium Equipoise*. A Chinese edition is being launched soon after the Chinese New Year starting from February 2016. Reviews from some of the most influential minds who have commented on it can also be seen therein.*

*** Interviewer: William Hawke*