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tion in a collaborative manner because of the scale and complex challenges involved.

Some of the institutions have a small wing for environmental sustainability provided with a small budget, but it is rarely used for the purpose for which it has been earmarked. Such institutions are satisfied with bringing up ornamental plants and exotic species around their place. But apart from the aesthetic sense and faster greening of the area, sincere approach

for conservation of biodiversity could be taken up at least by some of the establishments. Expertise to initiate this noble cause is available within our manpower itself. A few in the private sector have taken up this task. But, it is time for the major players to initiate this activity in right earnest as a mission and use vast expanses available with them towards wealth generation and as an 'investment for the future'.

Manipulating foreign hands

The editorial on 'The Foreign Hand' by Balaram¹ raises interesting and important issues regarding the future of India. However, in my opinion the editorial underestimates the dangers of foreign influence in Indian affairs.

First of all, behind the idea of inviting so-called foreign 'experts and consultants' are two tacit assumptions, the first being that these foreign individuals and institutions are interested in the welfare of Indians or are at least impartial. A brief analysis of world history and of contemporary political landscape clearly leads to the conclusion that this assumption is simply wrong. To the contrary, foreigners are interested in keeping us subservient to their interests. Organizations with high sounding names such as UN, WTO, FAO, World Bank, IMF, etc. have been created to consolidate the grip of some countries on the world economy and enable them to manipulate the world economy to their own advantage with obvious results. The second assumption is that the advice of these individuals/institutions is better than that locally available. This again is not necessarily true, as problems of their host countries amply demonstrate.

Therefore, it is foolish and dangerous to invite these foreigners to help plan our future. Those in official positions unable to carry out their assigned tasks without foreigners should acknowledge their incompetence and resign from their posi-

tions, opening the way for those who are competent enough. A one-billion plus population is capable of creating its own competent leadership, if foreign meddling is minimized! Perhaps inviting foreign advice has little to do with advancement of India. Rather, it may be a deal between some Indians and foreigners to open up India for foreign exploitation in exchange for some crumbs from the foreigner's table.

It is next to impossible to learn to manipulate the foreigners as the editorial suggests, specially when they occupy influential positions in national organizations. After all, foreigners have been in India from around 950 to 1948. Has India been able to manipulate them to her own advantage? Recent history of India teaches us that all attempts of local rulers in India to manipulate European presence to their own advantage, have, without an exception, led to their downfall, with the foreigner gaining an upper hand. It is almost impossible to manipulate a militarily superior power to our advantage.

As the editorial correctly points out, it is the lack of direction and purpose not only in national institutions but also at the national level which constitutes the problem. Such direction and purpose can come only from Indians, not from foreigners.

Contrary to the impression created by the editorial, foreign hands have become bolder than ever, thanks to the political 'literacy' of the Asian populations and

the 'great strategic insight and vision' of Asian political and intellectual leadership. They no longer bother to operate covertly. In the West and Central Asia, former foreign clandestine organizations are appointing their former employees as heads of states and are also openly engaged in 'peacemaking'. Although these countries are practically run by foreigners, their fortunes are visibly dwindling day by day, while the foreigners drain the resources and continue to destroy them.

Is it not surprising that a big country like India let herself to be pushed around in the world arena? Just as India was extensively used in the centuries preceding the 20th to finance the industrialization of Europe and the colonization of America and Australia, today attempts are being made to use Indian manpower to counter industrial competition from East Asia.

1. Balaram, P., *Curr. Sci.*, 2004, **87**, 723-724.

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