2015

MCA

1st Semester Examination

COMMUNICATION ENGLISH FOR MCA

(PRACTICAL)

PAPER—MCA-108

Full Marks : 100

Time : 3 Hours

The figures in the margin indicate full marks.

Candidates are required to give their answers in their own words as far as practicable.

Illustrate the answers wherever necessary.

1. Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow :

Each time Islamist terrorists act out their cult of death in Europe's capital cities, brave citizens march to affirm the ideals that these violent fantasists would deny, governments make resolute sounds, Muslim minorities, locked in ghettos, brace themselves, right-wing parties scent an opportunity, left-wing parties wring their hands and every hack who cheered on the invasion of Iraq rushes to his keyboard to rewrite with minor tweaks (this date, that place) his call to arms.

It's impossible to overestimate the sense of sullen impotence that grips this cohort of middle-aged men. They haven't lived down the disgrace of being George Bush's embedded intellectuals, of being catastrophically, world-historically wrong. Those few amongst them who acknowledged their complicity in the destruction of Iraq and its neighbourhood managed to move on. The rest remain queued up at the tap of terrorist violence, washing their hands.

The only way they will ever be free of that stain is if invasion and occupation can be shown to work. The angst about Libya, the dirge about the Surge, the ecstasy of self-righteousness about Obama's Syrian equivocations are symptoms of this near-religious need for absolution.

The perfect expression of this tendency was supplied by the right-wing British historian, Andrew Roberts, on the day of the carnage in Paris. "Boots on the ground to hunt ISIL" was how his piece was headlined and it called for a massive ground invasion of Iraq and Syria to destroy the nerve centre of Islamist terror, the ISIL's 'caliphate'. Confronted with the reluctance of Western governments for Middle-Eastern adventures after Iraq, Roberts makes an argument that he has made elsewhere - this is something of an anthem for interventionists - that the cost in blood and treasure would be less than the long-term implications of letting ISIL continue to inspire and fund global terror. "This is war," he writes, "and it needs to be brought into the homes of the enemy as swiftly and devastatingly as possible."

Indians know the feeling. In November 2008, after the Pakistan-sponsored fanatics of the Lashkar-e-Toiba rampaged around Mumbai killing people at will in hotels, cafes and the city's busiest railway station, the temptation to visit retribution on the State that had organized this atrocity was strong and completely justifiable. But tamping down visceral urges is the business of responsible nations; going to war with Pakistan would have been cathartic but catastrophic so the Indian State took a deep breath and didn't.

Roberts and his ilk think differently and it's worth exploring how, unlike India, they intend to translate this urgent need for war into reality. The cost of it is not a consideration. Roberts has elsewhere argued that Britain helped pacify Iraq and Afghanistan on the cheap; it lost fewer soldiers than it had on a normal weekend on the Western Front. He likes Second World War analogies; he has elsewhere described Tony Blair's decision to support the invasion of Iraq as "Churchillian".

Given Hollande's promise to respond ruthlessly to ISIL's act of war, given the fact that, unlike Pakistan, the 'caliphate' isn't armed with nuclear weapons, given Roberts's cost-benefit alliance, what prevents Britain or France or Britain and France, top-table states, permanent members of the security council from going in and doing what needs to be done? The absence, apparently, of a strong leader. These European hawks, these tigerish defenders of Western civilization, who want to visit war on ISIL "as swiftly and devastatingly as possible" are waiting for Obama to serve out his term. "The world will

have to wait," writes Roberts, "until Obama is finally gone in January 2017 before any kind of meaningful counter-attack against Islamic fundamentalist terrorism can take place." It turns out that this existential struggle against evil can be postponed for a year and a bit.

Roberts is a historian; he shouldn't need to be reminded that Churchill's claim to being Churchillian rested on his willingness to take Britain into the war against Germany alone. Britain held the line against the Nazis before the Soviet Union and the United States of America committed themselves to the war. Roberts's Britain, on the other hand, will wait upon a new American president and his war machine to do the job for it. The minimal loss of blood and treasure, the war on the cheap, is now ex-plained: the war is to be underwritten by America, the *karta* of the Anglosphere.

To understand the blithe belligerence of Roberts and his counterparts in countries like Canada and Australia, it's important to recognize that for them their countries aren't really sovereign nation states; they are part of a super-state, the Anglosphere. They live out their fantasies of global influence by identifying with the Anglosphere's daddy, the US. When a president like Obama interrupts this yearned-for union, they feel orphaned.

There's a pathos to this; all the revelations about the run up to the invasion of Iraq tell us that Blair was more poodle than Churchill, but it doesn't stop true believers from waiting for an American president who will give them bragging rights again. Roberts, Canada's Stephen Harper and Australia's John Howard aren't even serious

militarists; they are auxiliaries, scurrying about their supporting roles for the privilege of being touched by the *frisson* of real power. It's why Justin Trudeau's decision to withdraw Canadian jets from bombing missions in Iraq and Syria provoked such rage amongst Canadian hawks: those jets were their ticket to the top-table.

The carnage in Paris is merely an occasion for rehearsing these fantasies. Twelve years ago, the French were craven "cheese-eating-surrender-monkeys" for English-speaking interventionists like Roberts. Now that their president has allowed himself to say "guerre" they have been enlisted in the campaign to get America to go to war. The war against ISIL is to be won by these brave camp followers on the backs of the American dead.

Or the dead of any country foolish enough to volunteer substantial ground forces. When the Iraq war happened, India was urgently pressed to join the Coalition of the Willing. Luckily, good sense prevailed. Yasmin Khan, Raghu Karnad and Amitav Ghosh have written books that show us how the British got Indians to fight their wars for them. If this ageing army of armchair warriors has its way, those recruiters will be back, asking others to die for their countries. Because the one French institution that the Anglosphere would dearly like to reinvent is the Foreign Legion.

(a) What does Andrew Roberts prescribe to destroy Islamist terror? What are the pitfalls of such an action? 5+15

(b) What are the points of contrast between the position of Andrew Roberts and that of Churchill? 20

(c) How, according to Kesavan, India will be affected by the 'Anglosphere's' fight against terrorism? 20

(d) Compose an email to Mukul Kesavan expressing your reaction on reading his article. 10

Internal Assessment — 30

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